Interregional co-operation programme between regional and other public authorities

The INTERREG III C programme is part of the European Community Initiative INTERREG III which is designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union. INTERREG III’s other two strands focus on cross-border (strand A) and trans-national (strand B) co-operation. The objective of interregional cooperation (INTERREG III C) in general is to improve the effectiveness of policies and instruments for regional development and cohesion. This is done through encouraging large-scale exchange of information and know-how and promoting the sharing of experience and best practice among European regions. Structured, coherent interregional cooperation actions are favoured instead of a series of individual projects.

INTERREG III C promotes interregional co-operation between regional and other public authorities across the entire EU territory and neighbouring countries. It allows large regions without joint borders to work together in common projects and develop networks of co-operation. At the Community policy level, these actions aim to promote cohesion and strengthen regional competitiveness.

To describe the methods of implementing interregional cooperation activities under the INTERREG III Community initiative designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union (during the period of 2002-2006).

The programme covers the following five areas for interregional cooperation:

1. Activities supported under Objective 1 and 2 of the structural funds (meaning structural adjustment of regions whose GDP is less than or close to 75% of the Community average and regions with structural problems affecting industrial, urban, agricultural or fisheries areas):

   The intention is to offer more opportunities to exchange information and experience by promoting direct cooperation between public authorities or equivalent bodies across Europe on the types of projects supported in the above mentioned Objectives.

   - Partners do not need to be located in Objective 1 or 2-type of regions but need to
be interested in becoming involved in the types of activities supported by those Objectives.
- Actions can cover exchange of experience or dissemination of successful projects' results.

2. Interregional cooperation linking public authorities or equivalent bodies involved in other INTERREG programmes:
The aim is to promote exchange of experience and networking among border areas and trans-national areas.
- Partnership is limited to public authorities or equivalent bodies involved in current or previous INTERREG programmes.
- Actions can cover cooperation on cross-border and trans-national activities or be focused on the implementation dimension of INTERREG programmes (i.e. networking among several secretariats).

3. Urban development:
Aims to encourage wider cooperation actions related to urban development issues.
- Partnership is open to all cities and urban areas, including small and medium-sized towns.
- Actions include dissemination of urban development practices through concrete exchange of experience. This includes exchange of best practice ideas concerning implementation, and the diffusion of project ideas and results.

4. Regional innovative actions on the following three priorities:
a) regional economy based on knowledge and technological innovation;
b) e-EuropeRegio; the information society and regional development;
c) regional identity and sustainable development:
Different regional players will define and agree together on a strategy for innovative measures. Individual projects will be implemented in the framework of this strategy, which will also serve for exchange of experiences between the regions.
- Partnership is open to different regional players.
- The strategy may be based on one or several of the above-mentioned priorities.

5. Other appropriate actions:
In addition to the above mentioned four fields, other appropriate actions may be taken on maritime and coastal cooperation; insular and ultra-peripheral issues; research and technological development; SMEs; information society, employment; entrepreneurship; tourism; culture; and environment. Operations under this category may involve co-operation on spatial planning, on tackling natural or man-made disasters or on helping areas with disadvantages such as mountainous areas or areas with low population density.

The only condition for an application's compliance with these topics is that it contributes to the overall objective of INTERREG IIIC i.e. improvement of regional
development policies, strategies and instruments. Within this framework a wide range of topics can be covered.

All of the European Union territory can participate in INTERREG III C. Regions from third countries, especially the candidate countries, are encouraged to participate. Insular and outermost regions should be given priority in the selection process. The financing for third country partners will be provided from their own resources or through relevant EU funding source (Phare, Tacis, CARDS, MEDA, EDF).

The areas covered by the programme, Member States and eligible areas in the Member States for INTERREG III C are detailed in Annex A of this programme. The mandatory content of each INTERREG III C programme is set out in Annex B. The leading partner submits the operation to the programme in whose territory he is located. The rules for financial and administrative management of operations are the same as for other structural funds programmes.

Three kinds of interregional cooperation activities may be financed under the INTERREG C III programme:

1. Regional framework operations:
   - Aim at promoting cooperation among group of regions.
   - A large-scale regional cooperation covering a limited number of smaller projects.
   - Actions can cover all the topics described in the 'Subdivisions of Programme'.
   - Consortium needs to include at least three different countries of which at least two must be Member States. The partners must be regional authorities or equivalent regional bodies. The partners of the sub-projects funded within the regional framework operation must be public authorities or equivalent bodies.
   - A detailed list of requirements for a regional framework operation is set out in Annex C of this programme.
   - Around 50-80% of the funding under each INTERREG IIIC programme is allocated to this activity. The total ERDF contribution may normally be between 500,000 and 5,000,000 euros.

2. Individual projects:
   - Aim at promoting exchange of experience on methodology and project-based activities.
   - Actions can cover all the topics described in the 'Subdivisions of Programme'.
   - Consortium needs to include at least three different countries of which at least two must be Member States. Partners must be public authorities or equivalent bodies with capacity and mandate to manage public funds.
   - Around 10-30% of the funding under each INTERREG IIIC programme is allocated to this activity. The total ERDF contribution may normally be between 200,000 and 1,000,000 euros.
3. Networks:
- Aim to link the various regions inside and outside the European Union on project implementation methods and development.
- Actions can cover all the topics described in the 'Subdivisions of Programme' except the 'Regional innovative actions'.
- Consortium needs to include at least five different countries of which at least three must be Member States. Partners must be public authorities or equivalent bodies with capacity and mandate to manage public funds.
- Actions can cover all the topics described in the 'Subdivision of Programme' -part except the 'Regional innovative actions'.
- Around 10-20% of the funding under each INTERREG IIIC programme is allocated to this activity. The total ERDF contribution may normally be between 200.000 and 1.000.000 euros.

Context

From:  
1 January 2000

to:  
31 December 2006

Previous programme:  
REG-INTERREG 2

Programme funding:  
€ 330 million

Official Journal reference:  
2001/ - 2001-05-15