

# Interregional cooperation helps public authorities make better policy





ESPON

Has assisted regions, cities and national governments in improving the quality of their decision-making by supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of their policies and strategies.



INTERact

Since 2002 Interact has been supporting Interreg and co-operation programmes, maximising the efficiency of territorial cooperation by providing specific services, events and tools.



Interreg Europe

EU regions can benefit from Interreg Europe to get involved in interregional cooperation projects and thematic communities.



URBACT

Financed knowledge production, capacity-building, and exchange & learning activities for networks involving cities and more local actors across the Member States, in order to improve their local policies.

Four interregional programmes - ESPON, Interact, Interreg Europe and URBACT - covering all EU member states and partner states, share the aim to increase the capacity of policy-makers to develop and implement better policies. They provide evidence and a framework for policy learning from the European perspective, and an exchange of experience among national, regional and local bodies in different countries.

This paper aims at informing policy-makers at the EU level about the benefits and added value of the interregional programmes in times of resource scarcity.

**We offer evidence and cooperation opportunities to improve policy-making**

**Policy-makers all across Europe - in local governments, cities, regions and national ministries - face a variety of political and societal challenges: reducing unemployment; adapting to migration effects; promoting social inclusion; boosting green economy; improving transport links. What unites them is the challenge of designing and implementing policy in an increasingly complex and interdependent environment. With a competition for resources, tight in many contexts, where budgets are being squeezed, the need for policy that brings results and meets public expectations for quality of life is high. This is where these Europe-wide cooperation programmes can help.**

# We serve better policy-making



# Our stakeholders say...

"The advantage of targeted analysis is that it focuses on your needs. In our case, with the **ESPON** Targeted Analysis TransMEC - Transnational Support Method for European Cooperation, we had the opportunity to make a SWOT analysis based on ESPON evidence that was used for our operational programme".



**Ruut Louwers, Interreg North-West Europe Programme Director**

"I think the biggest added value of **URBACT** is that it helps to define problems and work out common approaches with other stakeholders".



**Anna Wierzbicka, City of Lodz**

"The added value for us of an **Interreg Europe** project is finding that there are other organisations and regions that share the same challenges that we face in our own regions. And through coming together, through learning about different approaches and different countries, we can really make a difference and try some new and exciting programmes and projects to make positive changes in our own region and across Europe".



**Steve Samson, Kent County Council, UK**

"**Interact** has helped us a lot to increase cooperation in Europe and to improve results. The added value of cooperation became undoubtedly more visible. What makes Interact so valuable and successful? It simplifies EU jargon, it responds to real needs and works with practitioners on the ground and EU institutions to remove implementation bottlenecks. It enables peer-learning among people of different cultural backgrounds and different working cultures across Europe. Summing up, Interact is a great knowledge-hub for European cooperation".



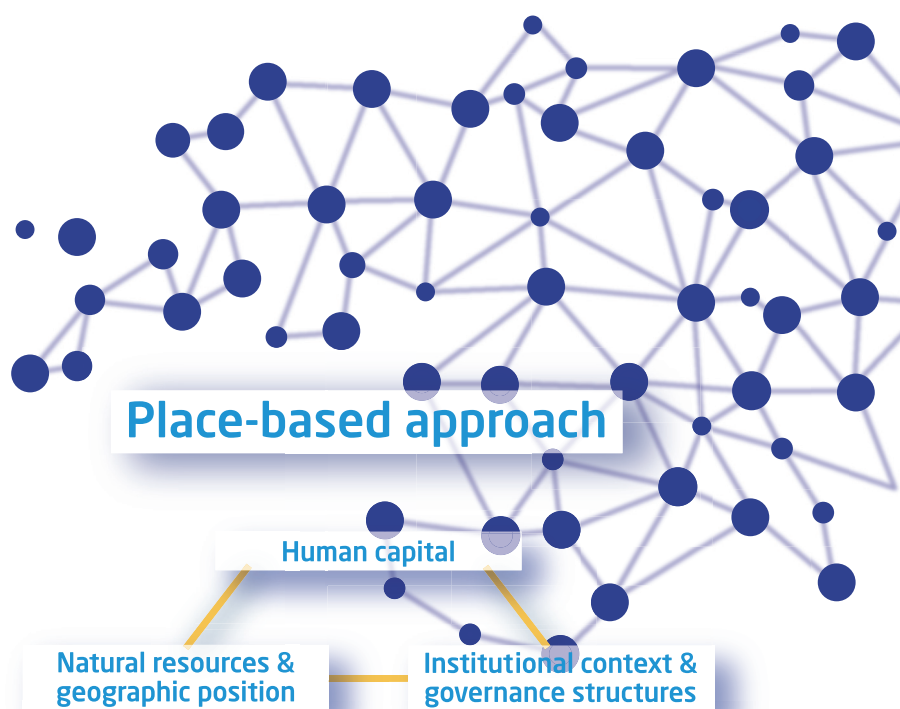
**Sabine Stölb, Ministère du Développement durable et des Infrastructures, Luxembourg**

# How cooperation can support policy-making

The tools and services offered by different European programmes help policy-makers respond to their specific needs; but together they constitute a powerful and complementary toolkit of policy solutions for national governments, cities and regions. Here are just a few examples.

## Understanding territorial potential and diversity is a basis for efficient policy-making

The demand from a group of stakeholders from Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Cyprus, Sweden, Malta and Romania for evidence on how territorial potentials of insular, mountainous, sparsely populated or peripheral regions can be identified and used to contribute to the objectives of the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategy was the starting point of the ESPON TeDi (Territorial Diversity in Europe) targeted analysis. The ESPON TeDi provides a better understanding of development processes in territories outside the Pentagon characterized by geographical specificities. The results of TeDi were elaborated by consulting ESPON indicators and mapping tools and were used by the involved stakeholder countries for the development of regional development strategies. They were also found to be helpful in drafting spatial planning documents in the



respective case study regions addressed by the project. At the local and regional level, TeDi results were used in the elaboration of local strategic documents and in raising the awareness of local authorities about the importance of territorial development and planning. Finally, on a macro-regional scale, the findings were considered useful in the preparation of the macro-regional strategy for the North Sea Region (2020).

## Developing and implementing integrated and participatory urban policies

Problems at city levels are always integrated and any actions to tackle them need to take into account local social, economic or environmental dimensions involving concerned citizens and local stakeholders. Through participating in the URBACT USER network,



URBACT user network. Sundholm, Copenhagen.

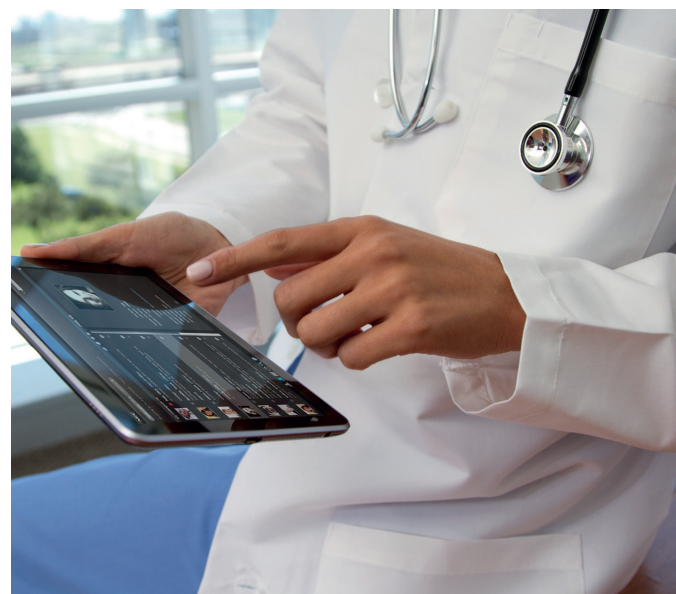
City of Copenhagen attempted to reduce social tensions in the Sundholm district, an area with 60 000 inhabitants and a high concentration of disadvantaged groups that suffered from low social cohesion and feelings of insecurity.

A local stakeholder group working with the city brought together current and new residents, landowners, local institutions and marginalised inhabitants through different actions. One was the conversion of an open space into an urban garden with crops and flowers, taken care

of by local residents. The city also created a beekeeping enterprise which offered training and employment for the homeless people living in the surroundings. A public meeting place for residents to get to know each other better and overcome any stereotypes was another concrete outcome.

## Interregional cooperation helps public authorities make better policy

Cyprus partnered with seven other European regions in the Interreg Europe HoCare project to boost delivery of homecare innovative solutions. HoCare aims at optimising Structural Funds investment to strengthen regional innovation system in the field of health care. In the course of the project, Cyprus discovered 'eCare', the smart system of integrated health care developed in Slovenia.



Smart systems of the Interreg Europe HoCare project.

This practice has raised so much interest that Nicosia Development Agency has already received the endorsement of its managing authority, the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development (DG EPCD), to test a new project inspired by the Slovenian experience. This project will be implemented by the Ministry of Health, a member of the HoCare local stakeholders group. It will be financed through the Operational Programme of 'Competitiveness and Sustainable Development' and is currently estimated at EUR 350.000.

## Mutualising and simplifying procedures

Using a joint monitoring system for Interreg programmes provides a great opportunity for harmonisation, simplification and saving programme funds. Interact, together with interested Interreg programmes, jointly developed the common monitoring system "eMS". This is the fruit of intense

work to harmonise programme implementation tools. eMS provides features, functionalities and user interfaces that support programmes in their day to day work. As of September 2017, over 35 Interreg programmes have signed the license agreement and are either testing or already using the system. In total the jointly developed monitoring system saved Interreg programmes an estimated 15 million Euros in software development costs.

## Building a stronger and more connected Europe

Over 2007-2013, the four programmes have brought together a wide range of stakeholders across Europe to work together, share their experiences, practices, develop policies and projects, and improve their regions and cities. Drawing on the positive impact of the programmes at city and regional level, ESPON, Interact, Interreg Europe and URBACT continue and reinforce these activities for 2014-2020. It is through interregional cooperation that the real European spirit is brought to life. In this phase of discussions, building up the future of the European project, a stronger investment in projects that creates links and improve citizens' quality of life, also with the help of the four programmes, should be Europe's priority for 2020 and beyond.



**Save millions of euros.**  
**► Cooperate!**

Can cooperation save millions of euros, be fun and provide solutions for everyone involved? The eMS software shows that the answer is yes. Here is a great example of how Interreg programmes don't just manage cooperation, they live it.

# information

# More



**ESPON** inspires policy-making by territorial evidence at the European level.

ESPON supports evidence-based policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. The programme (1) produces comparable, pan-European territorial evidence on regions, cities and larger territories, (2) offers stakeholders targeted analyses that help policy-makers to add a European perspective to their strategies and (3) provides data and tools for policy making. Moreover, ESPON stimulates the use of European territorial evidence in policy making and programming through (4) wide outreach activities and policy briefs tailor-made to the ongoing policy discourse.

[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

**Interact** strengthens the capacity of EU regions to implement cooperation programmes more efficiently and more effectively.

Interact offers advice and support to make Territorial Cooperation simpler by providing tools, trainings and exchange platforms to stimulate better, more targeted and more visible projects in Europe.

[www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net)

**Interreg Europe** acts as an exchange and learning programme to improve regional development policies.

Many regions in Europe are facing similar challenges related to research and innovation, SME competitiveness, a low carbon economy and environment and resource efficiency. With the "Interregional Cooperation Programme Interreg Europe", the EU provides regional and local authorities with a tool to share implemented good solutions for common problems, to avoid losing time and money by reinventing the wheel and repeating the mistakes others already made. The programme serves therefore as an accelerator for local and regional development in particular the Structural Funds programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes.

[www.interregueurope.eu](http://www.interregueurope.eu)

**URBACT** is the European programme fostering integrated urban development across Europe.

Since 2002, URBACT finances and enables cities to work together to develop new and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges, through networking activities, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building for urban practitioners. With these actions URBACT contributes to the urban dimension of the Cohesion Policy.

[www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu)

These interregional programmes are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

