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**Joint Cross-Border Criteria  
for Programmes and Projects**

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**4th Speech**

Operational programmes incorporate general medium-term strategies with regard to the strengthening of regional and cross-border commercial locations and economic power as well as cross-border integration. These general objectives and the other contents of the programmes must remain measurable (quantitatively and qualitatively) because they are subject to assessment, analysis and evaluation. This means that the strengthening of regional and cross-border commercial locations and economic power must also be measurable as well as the development of cross-border integration.

In addition, the following points are stated in the programme because they should be subject to assessment:

- in the context of superordinated (i.e. European or national) and regional objectives;
- internal and external cooperation (participation of the internal regional, local and social actors and the external partnership with national and European authorities);
- cooperation with neighbouring border regions in projects which not only affect the individual cross-border region but the entire border or several INTERREG IIIA programmes;
- state of the implementation of existing cross-border strategies in areas such as infrastructure, environment, tourism, waste disposal;
- promotion of endogenous potentials, for example, in the following main points: cooperation between small to medium-sized companies, socio-cultural integration, tourism;
- development of a labour market, e.g. cross-border vocational training, mobility beyond the border and development of jobs;
- joint management (incorporation of Euregio, joint fund management, steering and accompanying committees);
- joint funding principles, e.g. joint fund management, sharing of EU and national funds from both sides of the border.

In addition, it proved to be sensible to incorporate at the beginning those things which should be assessed and measured at a later date and to regulate those things which may be subject to dispute.

What are the joint criteria which should be defined in a preliminary programme? They are:

- important programme criteria;
- important criteria for areas of activity;
- project criteria.

## A. Important Programme Criteria

- introduction of the EU programme regulations from the Framework Regulations;
- observance of the contexts of the main principles and objectives;
  - regional policy;
  - coping with development problems on the internal European borders
  - facilities.....beyond internal borders;  
(completion of the internal market, co-funding by joining countries to the EU);
  - improvement of the population's living conditions;
  - strengthening of the economic structures and the labour market;
- regional development;
  - observance of the main objectives;
  - observance of regional objectives;
- implementation of cross-border, Euro-regional strategies and objectives from the fields of:
  - regional development;
  - environment;
  - transport;
  - tourism;
  - labour market;
- participation of all partners in the development of programmes;
- cooperation with neighbouring border regions within the framework of programme presentation;
- clarifying of funding and co-funding;
- agreement of liability issues of one cross-border organisation towards the national authorities on both sides of the border;
- programme management and fund management (political and technical).

## B. Important Criteria for Areas of Activity

*Main point: regional structure*

Objectives:

- strengthening of commercial locations and inter-regional links;
- improvement of the regional and cross-border regional development;
- removal of bottlenecks in the infrastructure and transport networks.

*Main point: the economy, technology and innovation*

Objectives:

- strengthening of the economic structure;
- strengthening of practical innovations and innovations;
- improvement of cross-border cooperation in the economy, technology and tourism;
- removal of gaps in the touristic infrastructure and marketing.

*Main point: environment, nature and countryside*

Objectives:

- conservation and improvement of the environment, nature and countryside;
- improvement of cross-border networks and coordination between organisations and authorities;
- promotion of an agriculture orientated towards the future;
- implementation of an environment and waste recycling programme for Euregio.

*Main point: qualification and labour market*

Objectives:

- opening of a cross-border labour market;
- improvement of the mobility of employees and students;
- improved cooperation and development of cross-border vocational qualification and training programmes;
- development of cross-border cooperations;
- resolution of daily border problems;
- reduction of the unemployment rate, particularly of long-term unemployment.

*Main point: socio-cultural integration*

Objectives:

- improvement of cross-border communications and cooperation between citizens, public and private facilities and associations;
- improvement of the regional ability to organise;
- conservation of the region-specific cultural, historic and touristic heritage.

*Main point: technical aid*

Objectives:

- support of the programme through studies;
- programme implementation through qualitative management.

### C. Project Criteria

- are these projects based on joint regional sector strategies (tourism, waste disposal, environment, infrastructure);
- do these joint sector-specific criteria for projects clarify the value of the project (e.g. for jobs, infrastructure, tourism, SMEs, the economy, private economy);
- what is the minimum and maximum extent of a project, for example, the minimum must not be below EURO 50,000 or 100,000 and the maximum of a project must not be so big that it uses the funds of an entire sector (e.g. a road would use up so much funds that there would be nothing left for the other projects of the programme);
- what is the cross-border character of a project;
- how does the possible development of a project look, its viability with regard to the economy, jobs etc.;
- how high is the regional share which is regarded as proof that there is an actual demand for the project?
- is the project of importance for the border or is it actually a cross-border project?
- how is a cross-border project defined ? (e.g. cooperation between the partners from both sides of the border with regard to the content, organisation, staff and/or funds).

### Basic Document on Criteria and Indicators in Operational Programmes

EU funds and national promotional funds must be implemented carefully. Based on an analysis of various INTERREG programmes, particularly of further developed programmes with integrated structures, the following levels can be fixed as criteria indicators which are measurable with regard to quantities and quality:

- programme level;
- main points and areas of activity;
- project level.

### **Programme Level**

The following programmes may be developed which clarify the objectives of operational programmes at this level, for example:

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- in the context of superordinated regional objectives;
- internal partnership (inclusion of economy and social partners of local and regional authorities) and external partners (provinces, senior civil servants, prefects, states, national governments, EU etc.);
- cooperation with other border regions in joint projects;
- cooperation in sensible joint programmes with other INTERREG programmes at the trans-national and inter-regional level;
- implementation of existing cross-border programmes and strategies (e.g. in the areas of infrastructure, waste disposal, environment, tourism, logistics etc.);
- promotion of endogenous potentials, for example
  - improvement of the regional production structure (e.g. cross-border cooperation between SMEs); cross-border qualification of professional people; cross-border improvement of the tourism sector);
  - improvement of regional factors with regard to commercial locations (e.g. interlinkage of the transport infrastructure, cross-border strengthening of commercial location factors and of the environment, cross-border selection and development of new commercial centres);
  - improvement of the regional ability to organise (e.g. regional and cross-border interlinkage, improved cooperation between authorities and private service providers, aid with daily border problems, strengthening of the cross-border organisation as a hub);
- joint management structures and regulations with regard to competence;
- ex-ante funding principles at programme level with regard to the EU quota (e.g. 50 or 75% from the national level and 30% from both sides of the border or 15% in Objective 1 Regions) and the regional quota (20% or 15% in Objective 1 Regions).
- allocation of funds per operational programme;
- INTERREG agreement between the partners to regulate competences and responsibilities (e.g. the cross-border structure, steering committee, accompanying committee) and with regard to the joint possibility of being assisted;
- internal and external liability;
- these regulations of criteria must, with the corresponding indicators, guarantee at programme level: firstly, the external coherence of the programme and, secondly, internal coherence and, in addition, this will regulate cross-border issues at the beginning in such a way that no disputes can occur at a later date.

### **Main Points and Areas of Activity**

Various and as yet very good qualitative and quantitative criteria and indicators were developed for main points and areas of activity, for example:

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*Main point: regional structure*

Quantitative effects:

- number of plans in which cross-border aspects were considered;
- number of bottlenecks removed;
- cross-border utilisation of infrastructural facilities;
- jobs within the framework of INTERREG projects;
- number of travellers on cross-border links.

*Main point: the economy, technology and innovation*

Quantitative effects:

- jobs within the framework of INTERREG projects;
- number of cooperations;
- increased cross-border utilisation of technological transfer points and research facilities;
- number of gaps removed in tourism;
- number of overnight stays in the tourism sector.

*Main point: environment, nature and countryside*

Quantitative effects:

- number of concepts to improve the environment, nature and countryside;
- utilisation of cross-border facilities;
- jobs;
- increase of recycling quotas or reduction of (production) waste.

*Main point: qualification and labour market*

- number of cross-border cooperations;
- jobs within the framework of INTERREG projects;
- utilisation of cross-border agreed professional qualification and training programmes, exams, diplomas;

- number of participants in training, apprentices, students and pupils;

*Main point: socio-cultural integration*

Quantitative effects:

- participation in joint events, exchange programmes, language courses etc.;
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- number of information transferred;
  - utilisation of cross-border cooperation opportunities;
  - number of measures for the conservation of and care for the region-specific cultural, historic and touristic heritage.

*Main point: technical aid*

Quantitative effects:

- number of INTERREG projects;
- involvement of the region in the co-funding of projects;
- development concepts, progress reports and evaluation.

## **Project Level**

At the beginning it is important to define what a cross-border projects involves (e.g. participation of partners from both sides of the border with regard to the organisation, content, staff and funds).

There are many and diverse qualitative and quantitative project indicators which, however, are measurable in a different way. It would be sensible to develop indicators per area of activity and to agree them with the project organisers. The creation of jobs may, for example, be sensible and measurable in the short-term in the infrastructure (road construction) but these jobs may be lost after the road is completed. On the other hand, jobs created through cooperation between SMEs are mostly permanent. In the tourism sector, jobs are mostly measurable directly by establishing whether or not the tourism sector has increased which, however, cannot entirely be traced back to INTERREG.

It is important to retrieve results regularly and to integrate the progress reports in the operational programmes. Examples for indicators at programme level are, as explained, differentiated in accordance to main points:

quantitative indicators (as a direct consequence of projects)

- jobs;
- number of visitors;
- number of participating facilities, companies, participants;

- number of overnight stays;
- number of kilometres of bicycle trails.

qualitative indicators (as a direct consequence of projects)

- if the programmes and projects are very well known;
- intensification and extension of cross-border contacts;
- radiation effects on other Euregios and facilities;

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- encouragement of goodwill;
- internationalisation of companies;
- staff exchange;
- extension of stays by monitoring trends;
- advertising campaigns;
- catalogues;
- number of inter-regional visitors;
- more transport > more jobs.

### **Remarks on the Quality of Projects**

Future INTERREG programmes must particularly ensure the quality of projects, their influence on the economy and commercial locations, coherence and their cross-border importance.

The INTERREG secretariats will examine the projects with regard to their completeness before the applications are submitted, their cross-border importance, their possible future development and their regional share of co-funding. In addition, it must be examined whether these projects can be assisted under national plans, programmes and regulations. To avoid great bureaucratic efforts, the authority responsible for the project organiser should give a general statement whilst the authorities responsible in the neighbouring country need only give a secondary statement, i.e. only with regard to points and criteria which can be examined by them (e.g. staff costs arising in the neighbouring country). In addition to the criteria incorporated in the INTERREG statements, region-specific criteria may be developed which must be considered in the projects. As an example, I would like to mention some definitions:

- a project is a cross-border project if the partners from both sides of the border participate with regard to contents, organisation, staff and funds.
- *With regard to contents means:*  
German/Dutch cooperation with regard to the project's contents and objectives, even if there is only one national location.
- *With regard to organisation means:*  
a joint organisational body on both sides of the border chaired by one of the partners as legal organiser. This applies also if only one national location exists.
- *With regard to staff means:*  
joint implementation of the project through organisational bodies on both sides of the border.
- *With regard to funds means:*

the project organisers raise jointly their minimum share of 20%. The financial participation of the regional level must also be ensured if the project is located on the other side of the border. In addition and besides the German/Dutch quota of a maximum of 30%, funds made available by the German and Dutch Ministries of Economic Affairs will flow into the co-funding. This also applies for projects with only one national location.

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All projects therefore incorporate project indicators, whether in the form described or in the form of an evaluation matrix which mainly concerns the following points:

- synergy effect;
- correspondence with the cross-border plans and programmes existing in the Euregios;
- added value of the project;
- contribution of the project to the strengthening of the situation in the labour market;
- contribution of the project to the removal of border obstacles;
- Euro-regional effect of the project (e.g. improvement of commercial locations, acceptance in the population).

Along the German-Dutch border, «people-to-people» projects were developed for the first time (1991/1992) which incorporated location-strengthening, socio-cultural measures below the threshold of EURO 50,000. These projects in particular contribute to the Euro-regional acceptance, i.e. to the creation of political awareness in the population. They create in the region a wide basis for the INTERREG programme, amongst others through the bridging of language barriers, overcoming of cultural differences, becoming better acquainted with other administrative procedures etc.

There are forms for an application procedure - in this case an electronic application system - agreed and developed between the INTERREG partners