



Federal Ministry
of Transport and
Digital Infrastructure

Measuring Interreg B Specific Impacts

Impacts of Transnational Cooperation in Interreg B



Interreg_B
Zusammenarbeit. Transnational.



BBSR

Content

0.	Summary.....	3
1.	Objectives and impacts in Interreg B	4
2.	Systematisation of the impacts in Interreg B	6
3.	Requirements to be met by analyses in Interreg B.....	9
4.	A possible concept for measuring the specific impacts of Interreg B	12
4.1	STEP 1: PROJECT ANALYSIS.....	13
4.2	STEP 2: REGIONAL STOCK-TAKING.....	15
4.3	STEP 3: OBJECTIVE DEFINITION.....	17
4.4	STEP 4: DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS	18
4.	Conclusion	19

0. Summary

- ⇒ The specific objective of Interreg B, “to promote cooperation [in Europe] by measures contributing to an integrated regional development in accordance with the priorities of the cohesion policy of the Union”¹ is two-dimensional: **the cross-sectoral dimension** (improving cooperation in Europe) and **the sectoral dimension** (supporting the priorities of cohesion policy).
- ⇒ The implementation of the two dimensions, therefore, entails **two forms of impacts: cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts**. It is imperative to better recognize and take account of the interaction of the two dimensions in order to adequately illustrate the **added value of the funding scheme**.
- ⇒ **Measuring the specific impacts of Interreg B is an extremely challenging task**. The careful and realistic assessment of the existing options makes it obvious that the **methodology is to be found in the intersection** between the application of the highest methodical standards, the comprehensive consideration of the spatial heterogeneity and the resource-efficient implementation.
- ⇒ The objective must, therefore, be to apply a suitable approach for monitoring and evaluation **to generate sound information on how Interreg B contributes to the development in the relevant programme area**. The approach outlined in this document meets this requirement.
- ⇒ Therefore, the paper provides an **impetus for impact analyses in Interreg B** which do not only attach great importance to the thematic but also to the cross-sectoral impacts. For this purpose, **a possible concept in four steps** for measuring the impacts specific to Interreg B is described:

Step 1: **Project analysis** - Examination of the development of transnational cooperation in the sectoral fields of the funding scheme

Step 2: **Regional stock-taking** - Analysis of the regional outline conditions in the sectoral fields of the funding scheme

Step 3: **Definition of objectives** - Development of funding objectives specific to Interreg B

Step 4: **Indicators** - Definition of result indicators to present the achievement of the objectives

¹ Cf. Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

1. Objectives and impacts in Interreg B

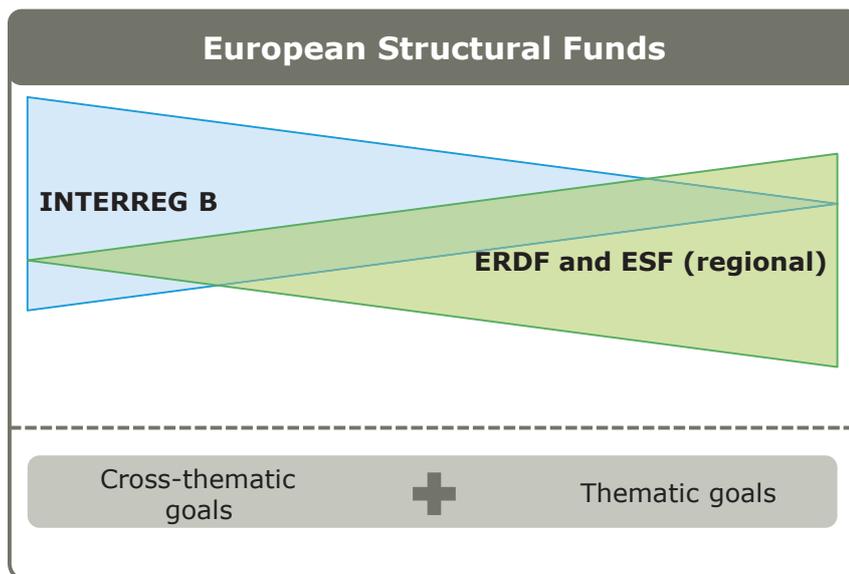
Since the introduction of Interreg in 1990, the support of a well-balanced economic, social and territorial development in Europe has been a focal area of financial assistance. Since the introduction of Interreg B in 1997, the transnational strand has developed and established itself as a specific approach of territorial cooperation. This is illustrated in the legal and organisational framework as well as in the implementation of the **funding scheme** in the transnational programme areas. Thus, the objective of Interreg B is “to promote cooperation [in Europe] by measures contributing to an integrated regional development in accordance with the priorities of the cohesion policy of the Union”² This wording, taken from the current ETC Regulation, illustrates the **specific objective of Interreg B**, which is **two-dimensional: the cross-sectoral dimension** (improving cooperation in Europe) and **the sectoral dimension** (supporting the priorities of cohesion policy).

The **sectoral objectives** of the funding scheme under Interreg B are oriented towards sectoral elements, e.g. the increase of research and innovation activities, the reduction

of CO2 emissions or the strengthening of the competitiveness of SMEs. Besides, Interreg B also pursues **cross-sectoral objectives**, i.e. intersectoral, procedural, organisational and cooperative objectives. These objectives are cross-sectoral since they equally apply to all sectoral areas and are pursued irrespective of the sectoral objectives of the funding scheme. Examples include the introduction of new or the improvement of existing structures and processes in organisations, the improvement of the capabilities of stakeholders to work on a transnational level or the enhancement of institutional capacities.

One of the central characteristics of Interreg B as compared with regional structural funds programmes is the weighting applied to the cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives: while the cross-sectoral objectives, i. e. the integrated and regional development objectives, are of specific importance in Interreg B, it is evident that in the regional structural funds programmes the focus is more on the sectoral objectives.

Figure 1: Comparison of the specific importance of thematic and cross-thematic objectives when implementing regional structural funds programmes and Interreg B (simplified representation)



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

² Cf. Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

The **specific objective of Interreg B** and its two dimensions is to obtain two types of impacts: cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts. These impacts are defined as effects caused directly or indirectly by the funded intervention and reach out beyond the stakeholders directly involved in the project. They can occur already during the period of the funding scheme or after termination of the intervention.

The targeted **sectoral effects** can be directly derived from the structure of a cooperation programme: from the priority axes via the investment priorities right through to the specific objectives there are clear sectoral targets which are to be achieved by providing the funding scheme (e.g. strengthening of research, technological development and innovation). Sectoral impacts can be captured on the basis of statistical data and are as such already recorded in the monitoring system of the programme in terms of result indicators (e.g. increase of the R&D intensity or reduction of CO2 emissions). Moreover, such sectoral impacts are in many cases already assessed in detail in evaluations.

The **cross-sectoral impacts** refer for example to new or improved structures and processes in organisations, increased capacities of stakeholders to work transnationally or enhanced institutional capacities. They are the central added value of Interreg B. Unlike the regional structural funds programmes (e.g. ERDF and ESF as regards the “Investment in growth and employment” objective) which are more focused on the sectoral impacts and which are endowed with considerably higher financial means, this second dimension in Interreg B is of special significance.

The two impact dimensions are reflected in the specific objective of Interreg B which is laid down in the current ETC Regulation. The requirements of the Regulation to be met

regarding measurement of results do however not yet systematically take account of this specific character of the funding scheme. In principle, Interreg B is subject to the same standards as the regional programmes which are more theme-driven. The envisaged monitoring systems are designed in such a way that they have to primarily use statistical data in order to illustrate the impacts of the assistance. Since this approach is only to a limited extent applicable to Interreg B, some programme areas have, during this programming period already, thoroughly investigated the possibility of better illustrating the cross-sectoral impacts of Interreg B as well. This means that the cross-sectoral impacts are already taken into consideration more explicitly in some programmes than has been the case up to now, even if the specifications do not require this. On the whole, the cross-sectoral impacts are, nevertheless, less pronounced in evaluations and the monitoring of the programmes and are not yet considered within a seamlessly systematic and cross-programme framework.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide **impetus for impact analyses in Interreg B** which take more account of the **cross-sectoral impacts** besides the sectoral ones. For this purpose, suggestions for the evolution of result indicators are formulated and proposals for practicable methodological procedures are made. Thus, the paper is to be understood as a source of ideas, addressing the stakeholders of the programme management, in particular those responsible for **monitoring and evaluation**. What is more, the content can also be relevant for the national representatives in the Member States and the European Commission as regards the shaping of the legal framework of Interreg B.

2. Systematisation of the impacts in Interreg B

Against this background, an in-depth investigation of the cross-sectoral dimension of the impacts of Interreg B is of importance in a first step.

In 2015, the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) has, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, commissioned the research project “Investigation of transnational cooperation, taking Interreg IVB projects as an example.”³ The intensive analysis of the challenges inherent in the various impacts of transnational cooperation contributes to the further familiarization with the issues. The special focus is on the creation of suitable tools which make it possible to more precisely illustrate the specific impacts of Interreg B. The cross-sectoral impacts can, in principle, also be measured quantitatively: the methodology is, however, inter alia due to the spatial dimension of Interreg B, significantly more complex and its application requires the relevant resources and competences.

As part of the research project and on the basis of extensive empirical analyses, **six specific impacts of Interreg B** were identified and defined which have a cross-sectoral as well as a sectoral dimension.

³ Between 2015 and 2017, a comprehensive empirical investigation of 25 selected projects from Interreg IVB was carried out. Apart from the cross-sectoral impacts and their systematisation, the central success factors of especially effective Interreg IVB projects were investigated. Further information on the research project is published on the web page of the BBSR: <http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/ReFo/Raumordnung/2015/transnationale-zusammenarbeit/01-start.html?nn=1380582>

⇒ **Impact: Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act due to greater knowledge and more competences**

The key stakeholders are shown new approaches, methods and technologies which purposefully extend their scopes for action. This is done in particular by a targeted address and awareness-raising (e.g. by consultancy services) as well as by specific offers concerning the build-up of knowledge and competence (e.g. by workshops and seminars).

⇒ **Impact: Better representation of interests at national, regional and European level**

The stakeholders join forces in networks or the like, pool their common interests and, thus, open up more effective communication channels. This results in a stronger influence on political decision-makers and a raised awareness of the relevant subject. Consequently, the subject will feature more prominently on the agenda of decision-makers and the findings made will be taken into account in decision-making processes.

⇒ **Impact: Stronger joint action in political decision-making processes**

The technical and organisational foundations for a stronger political cooperation at transnational level are created. For example, new communication channels are established, partnerships are forged and strategies developed in order to be able to better master the relevant challenges in the programme area by joint action.

⇒ **Impact: Improved ecological, social and economic (living) environment**

Common planning processes and steering structures are established and specific pilot projects are implemented. This will bring about positive changes which noticeably improve the living conditions and the scope for action of the stakeholders in the region. These changes may be economic and structural improvements as well as improved social and environmental outline conditions.

⇒ **Impact: More frequent use of social and technical innovations**

An intensified exchange of knowledge between academia and industry, the creation of outline conditions which will promote innovation as well as the

initiation of awareness-raising measures lead to a higher innovation performance of various stakeholders. For example, better research tools are provided, access to capital is made easier or relevant research findings are specifically made available to enterprises.

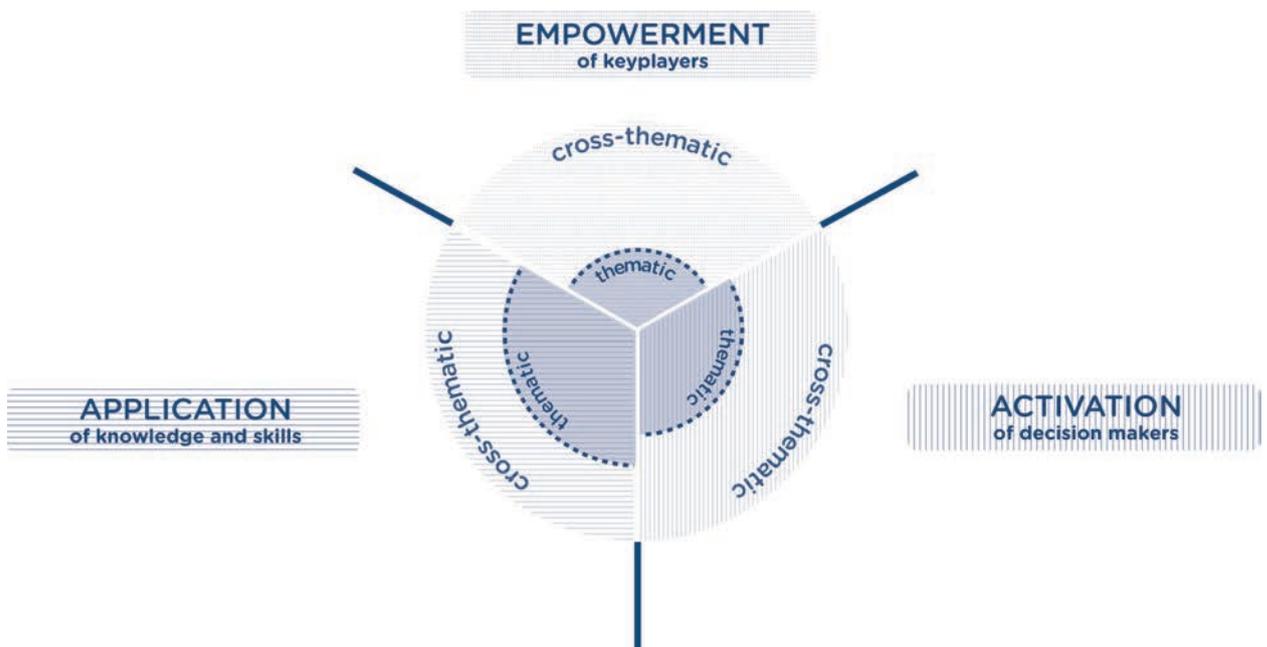
⇒ **Impact: More efficient and effective organisation of work processes**

The further development of procedures and approaches in public as well as in private organisations will improve processes. This includes in particular that decisions are taken which are more forward-looking, existing processes and procedures are evolved and standardized and/or new methods and approaches are integrated into the work processes.

The six specific impacts of Interreg B are systematised in **three impact categories**: Empowerment, activation and application. The three impact categories interact and in some cases build on each other. Depending on the objective, the initial situation and the outline conditions, Interreg B projects can address the impact categories to varying degrees.

The impacts achieved in each category are either cross-sectoral or sectoral. The difference between the three categories is the **weighting between the two impact dimensions**.

Figure 2: Categorisation of the six specific impacts of Interreg B: Qualification, activation and application



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

Impact category: Empowerment of key stakeholders

⇒ Impact: Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act due to greater knowledge and more competences

This impact category is to be seen as the basis and prerequisite for the two further impact categories, i.e. “activation” and “application”: First of all, key stakeholders must be enabled to recognize new opportunities for action. New information will be made available to stakeholders, making it possible to build up knowledge and competences. For projects which are particularly based on “empowerment”, the special emphasis is on the achievement of procedural, organisational, cooperative and, thus, cross-sectoral impacts.

Impact category: Activation of decision makers

⇒ Impact: More targeted communication of interests at national, regional and European level

⇒ Impact: Facilitation of political decision-making processes by stronger joint action

The “activation of decision makers”, too, is strongly focused on processes and cooperation and that is why the cross-sectoral dimension is also of special significance in this category. Here, greater attention is, however, attached to the sectoral dimension than in the “empowerment” category. In the specific sectoral context of each project, the relevant stakeholders from the technical and political levels are brought together and attracted to work for a common goal, new or in-depth partnerships are established.

Impact category: Use of knowledge and competences

⇒ Impact: Improved ecological, social and economic (living) environment

⇒ Impact: More frequent use of social and technical innovations

⇒ Impact: More efficient and effective organisation of work processes

Knowledge and competences can be used successfully because the required organisational, procedural and

collaborative bases are available. Therefore, the stakeholders are capable of using their joint knowledge within the context of a transnational collaborative scheme. For these projects, too, the procedural, organisational and cooperative dimension is of great importance. But, the sectoral dimension is also coming more and more to the fore here: for example, the trialling of a technological innovation always directly generates a sectoral impact (e.g. contribution to the reduction of CO₂ emissions).

To summarise, it can be noted that the **combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts** is necessary to achieve the specific objective of Interreg B, i.e. the funding scheme in accordance with the ETC Regulation. In the transnational collaborative schemes, it is first of all very important that a common knowledge base is created, which means that all relevant stakeholders have the same empowerment. This step focusses strongly on **intersectoral, procedural and cooperative impacts**. Since Interreg B programmes regularly define new challenges, **empowerment** is an important and legitimate objective, even in cooperation areas which have been existing for many years. The same applies to the impact category “activation” which is also predominantly characterised by cross-sectoral issues. The most important added value is the **pooling of interests** and the **establishment of transnational partnerships**. It will only be possible to proceed to “application” if at least the empowerment and possibly also the activation have been successful. For the **application** of knowledge and competences, the sectoral impact dimension plays a stronger role. Knowledge and competences are, as a rule, used in a **specific sectoral context** in order to bring about **direct sectoral impacts** (e.g. increase of the innovative capacity or reduction of CO₂ emissions).

3. Requirements to be met by impact analyses in Interreg B

In order to adequately present specific objectives and impacts of Interreg B and to emphasize the special value of this type of assistance, it is increasingly necessary to also pay attention to the cross-sectoral impacts and to illustrate them. This places special demands on the stakeholders at legislative level (especially the EU Commission) as well as on the officials implementing the programme.

Raising the awareness for specific impacts of Interreg B

The awareness for the outlined special characteristics of Interreg B (compared with the regional structural funds programmes) has increased during the last few years: there are first signs that cross-sectoral issues are more explicitly taken into consideration. Thus, for the programming period 2014-2020, there is for the first time a separate Regulation for the ERDF funding instruments within the framework of the objective “European Territorial Cooperation”. It lays down “provisions specific to the European territorial cooperation goal concerning scope, geographical coverage, financial resources, sectoral concentration and investment priorities, programming, monitoring and evaluation, technical assistance, eligibility, management, control and designation, participation of third countries, and financial management”.

But apart from the specific provisions of the ETC Regulation, the transnational cooperation programmes during the current funding period continue in many respects to be subject to the same standards as apply to the regional ESI funds programmes. An **explicit recognition of the great extent of the cross-sectoral impacts** cannot be derived from the ETC Regulation. Instead, the rules and regulations applying across all funds provide for a stronger (sectoral) outcome-based orientation. Thus, the two impact dimensions in Interreg B are currently not systematically taken into account. Although the current systems permit a more explicit consideration of the two

impact dimensions they do not encourage it. The awareness of the specific features of Interreg B which can be found in many cases is, thus, not yet adequately reflected in the standards. For this reason, the focus on the **legislative level** during this funding period must, for the time being, be on the **stronger acceptance and recognition of the cross-sectoral impacts achieved** in Interreg B.

With a view to the the funding scheme after 2020, the aim should be to reflect the specific features of Interreg B with their combination of sectoral and cross-sectoral objectives also **in the legal guidelines for funding**. This means that, apart from the sectoral objectives of structural funding on the whole, there must be **objectives specific to Interreg B**. They must reflect the specific combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives which characterise the the funding scheme under Interreg B. The scope and the addressing of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives depend on the outline conditions in the relevant programme area and on the sectoral field of the funding scheme. This, too, has to be taken into consideration in the standards in so far as **projects with a focus on “empowerment” are classified as equally legitimate** and as generating the same added value as projects which focus on the impact category “application”.

In order to support the aforementioned developments on the legislative level, Member States are called upon to **continue their current commitment and support the discourse**. They can trigger relevant investigations, encompassing all programme areas, and effectively support the **operational as well as the legislative level** with the findings. The BMVI and the BBSR as the coordinating stakeholders in Germany should continue to advocate a stronger consideration and acceptance of cross-sectoral impacts and introduce this requirement **in the legislative process at European level**.

Meanwhile, there are methodological approaches which have been tested for many years and which were continuously evolved and can now be used for **measuring sectoral impacts**. Besides some counterfactual evaluation approaches, especially **theory-based approaches** are applied in order to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the the funding scheme with regard to their sectoral objectives. By contrast, the highlighting of the cross-sectoral impacts was only addressed in very isolated cases.

The administrative level, i.e. the bodies implementing the programme, are confronted with specific challenges as regards the **analysis of the impacts in Interreg B**. In order to adequately capture and analyse the specific impacts in Interreg B, it is, in principle, necessary to strike a balance between three intentions.

- **Emphasising compliance with the highest methodological standards:** A strongly scientific approach requires enormous temporal capacities and specific methodological competences. Conceivable options would, among other things, be a far-reaching investigation of the projects funded as to their quality (e.g. case studies involving all projects funded) as well as a representative survey among stakeholders from the programme area which is to be carried out several times during the funding period. The result would be very precise and valid evidence concerning the impacts achieved by the funding. It must, however, be noted that the bodies implementing the programmes do, as a rule, not have the required temporal capacities and methodological competences. When entrusting external service providers with the task of carrying out the analyses, high costs, probably in the six- or even seven-digit range would have to be expected.
- **Emphasising spatial heterogeneity:** The well-balanced consideration of regional imbalances requires the close involvement of a great number of regional stakeholders. The bodies which are responsible for programme implementation have a good overview of the programme area, but they normally have only limited knowledge of the particularities in the sub-regions of the programme. Regional experts can be involved to provide precise estimates for the relevant sub-region. These experts should not only have profound knowledge of

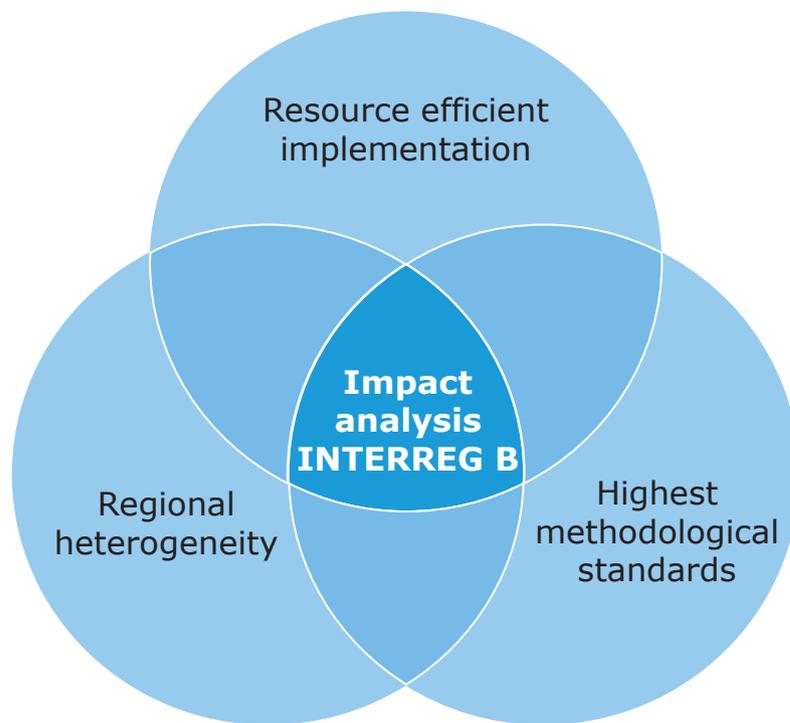
their region but also specific expertise to identify and assess further developments. The first identification of the experts as well as the conduct of repeated surveys are connected with high methodological demands. For example, the comparability of the findings in the course of time can be achieved either by means of their representative character or by means of the consistency of the participants in the surveys. In both cases, the programme implementing bodies will be faced with enormous temporal or financial requirements (commissioning of an external service provider to carry out the survey). Moreover, it has to be taken into consideration that the experts will have to be selected to adequately represent all sectoral fields of the programme as well as the sub-regions. Although it is desirable to emphasise the spatial heterogeneity and its precise consideration in the analysis of the impacts, the practical implementation is very difficult.

- **Emphasising a resource-efficient implementation:** Compared with the regional structural funds programmes as well as other financial assistance programmes of the EU, the funds available in the Interreg B programmes are very scarce. This is also evident from the limited funds which are made available to the programme implementing bodies for the monitoring and assessment of the programmes. The methodological approaches which would be most suitable, according to current knowledge and with a view to the applicable legal requirements, to capture the impacts of Interreg B are, from the methodological perspective, enormously complex, require a lot of time and involve high costs. Even if these approaches delivered the desired findings concerning the impacts achieved, the efforts and costs involved would be disproportionate with regard to the Interreg B funds. Taking the available funds into account, the amount of time required for and the cost level of the analysis should be carefully considered.

In order to create a suitable methodology for Interreg B to measure and illustrate the impacts, it is of great importance to take a realistic view of the existing options. This assessment makes it obvious that an optimum solution with

the application of the highest methodological standards, a comprehensive consideration of the spatial heterogeneity and a resource-efficient implementation is not practicable.

Figure 2: Assessment of the three central intentions for impact analyses in Interreg B



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

Therefore, this document shows approaches enabling further progress towards the measurement of the impacts in Interreg B. Tools are outlined to be used for this very de-

manding task in a pragmatic way, i. e. with a very conscious weighing of costs and efforts as well as benefits.

4. A possible concept for measuring the specific impacts of Interreg B

In the following, the **most important aspects of possible approaches** are described which can be used by the programme implementing bodies in order to better capture and illustrate the specific impacts of Interreg B in the future. In some transnational programme areas, a few promising approaches to capture and illustrate the specific impacts of Interreg B via the monitoring system (result indicators) were already developed and tested in the run-up to the current funding period.⁴ The precise form of the approaches outlined strongly depends on the general conditions in the programme area and on the capacities of the stakeholders involved. According to regional circumstances, a further differentiation and, if necessary, an adaptation of the approach is necessary.

⁴ Cf. inter alia, cooperation programmes Interreg VB 2014–2020 for the Baltic Sea Region, the North Sea Region and the Alpine Space.

4.1 STEP 1: PROJECT ANALYSIS - Examination of the development of transnational cooperation in the thematic fields of financial support

For the cooperation programmes, a more precise consideration of the specific impacts of Interreg B means for the time being that a careful **analysis of the current situation in the programme area** has to be made (What do the stakeholders in the programme area need to effectively cooperate?). It has to be analysed to what extent the key stakeholders are already qualified, whether the activation of political decision-makers is necessary and has possibly already been initiated and whether the application of knowledge and competences can take place in the transnational context. The results of this analysis can extremely vary within a programme area in the different sectoral fields. On the basis of the analysis, the appropriate **balance of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives** for the funding period to come can be determined, enshrined in the strategic orientation and implementation of the programme (e.g. strategic objectives, sectoral priorities, monitoring and indicator systems) as well as taken into consideration for the implementation of the the funding scheme (e.g. classification of the projects into the three impact categories in the course of the selection of projects which makes it possible to steer the shares of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives).

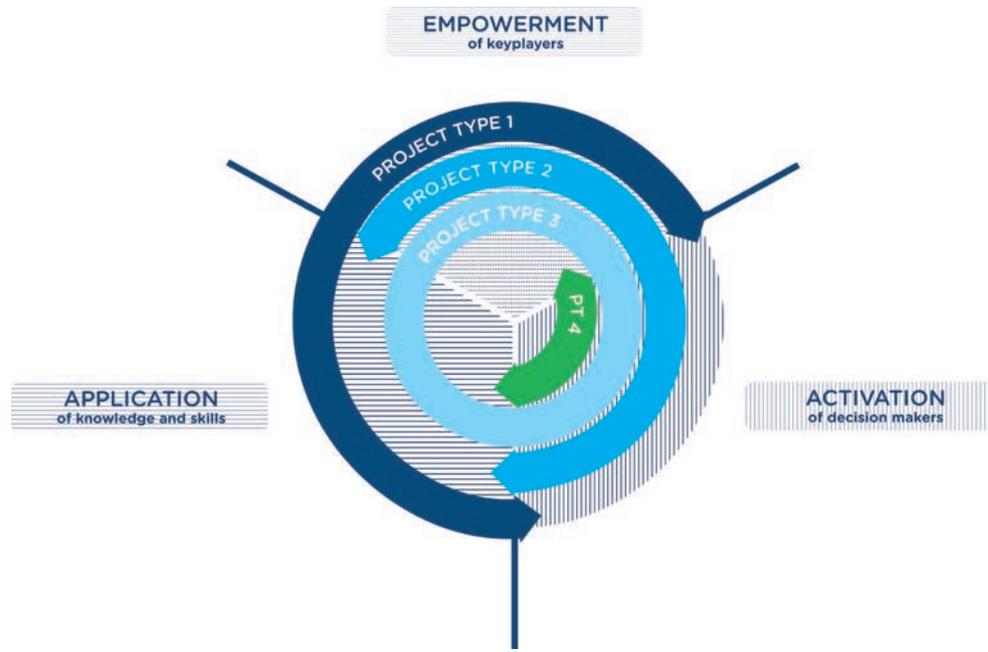
The **projects formerly funded** are a very good starting point for the analysis of the current situation in the programme area. They have addressed specific requirements and challenges in the programme area and, therefore, provide concrete information as to the scope of transnational cooperation. The **four project types** described in

the following can be used for the systematic classification of the projects funded. The project types illustrate the extent to which a project complies with the impact categories empowerment, activation and application. All combinations of impacts identified in the course of the research project commissioned by the BMVI/BBSR are reflected by the four project types. It becomes evident that in all projects more than one of the six impacts and more than one impact category was addressed. This underlines the high complexity of transnational projects in the context of Interreg B.

Every project can, according to its character and impacts, be assigned to one of the four types. This makes it possible to draw conclusions on the impacts to be endeavoured in the future in order to evolve transnational cooperation in a targeted manner.

The **allocation of the projects to the project types** depends especially on the consistency of the issues treated in a programme area as well as of the stakeholders involved: if new challenges are taken up and new stakeholders are included, empowerment might be paramount for many projects. If there are already established networks in the programme area and the intention is to primarily push forward their concerns, one priority might be activation. Projects which also serve the “application” category (project type 1) are especially those, where subjects are continuously evolved and established stakeholders make common use of their knowledge. It has to be noted that within one programme area there might be **considerable differences between the sectoral fields** as regards the addressing of the project types.

Figure 8: Four project types, assigned to the three impact categories



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

The coloured segments mark the impact category (categories) which are served by the projects of this type during their Interreg B funding. The shaded sections of each circle which are left blank illustrate those impact categories which were passed through already in the run-up to the funding of the project by Interreg B or which will be served following the Interreg B funding.

Project type 1

Impact categories: Empowerment + application

⇒ Balance of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts

Projects of type 1 support the build-up of knowledge and competences by key stakeholders (“empowerment”), who implement concrete activities and measures on this basis and/or use new possibilities for action which have been identified (“application”). In this context, there is a direct causal relationship between the empowerment in a first step and the application in a second one. For example, new data bases and planning strategies for a more sustainable and efficient forestry industry are developed, thus raising the necessary awareness in this respect (“empowerment”).

Consequently, the relevant stakeholders can use this information for their work in the region concerned (“application”).

Project type 2

Impact categories: Empowerment + activation

⇒ Focus on cross-sectoral impacts

Project type 2 describes projects which qualify the key stakeholders and also activate the decision-makers. In most cases, new knowledge is generated and systematised within the context of these projects (“empowerment”) which forms the basis for a stronger cooperation of political decision-makers in order to address current and future challenges in a targeted manner (“activation”). Thus, projects of type 2 show a causal relationship between the impacts “increased capacity to act for key stakeholders by greater knowledge and competence” and “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes”. For instance, the evolution of structures is initiated (“empowerment”), prompting politicians to engage not only at national but also at transnational level.

Project type 3

Impact categories: Empowerment + activation + application

⇒ Cross-sectoral impacts as preparation for sectoral impacts

The projects described as type 3 show complex impacts in all three impact categories. Unlike the projects of type 1 and type 2, the impacts in the impact categories, however, occur not necessarily in the causal sequence mentioned above (empowerment - activation - application). And there is not always a causal link between them. Thus, projects of this type create for example new knowledge bases (“empowerment”), which permit key stakeholders (e.g. SME, stakeholders from the scientific sector, social enterprises) to trigger off innovations (“application”). At the same time, the extended knowledge base can also open up new scopes for action for the political decision-makers which result in a stronger international cooperation (“activation”). In this respect, “activation” is largely independent of “application”. Other projects can, on the basis of new states of knowledge (“empowerment”) and by using new communication channels, accordingly influence political decision-making processes at regional and European level. Equally, the knowledge can be directly used by other stakeholders, for example in order to make work processes more effective (“application”).

Project type 4

Impact category: Activation

⇒ Focus on cross-sectoral impacts

Project type 4 describes projects the impacts of which activate decision-makers. These projects serve both impacts assigned to “activation”. The merger of different stakeholders will, for instance, make it possible to develop a common strategic approach and institutionalise cooperation. At the same time, this contributes to a better communication of the interests of the individual stakeholders at transnational level.

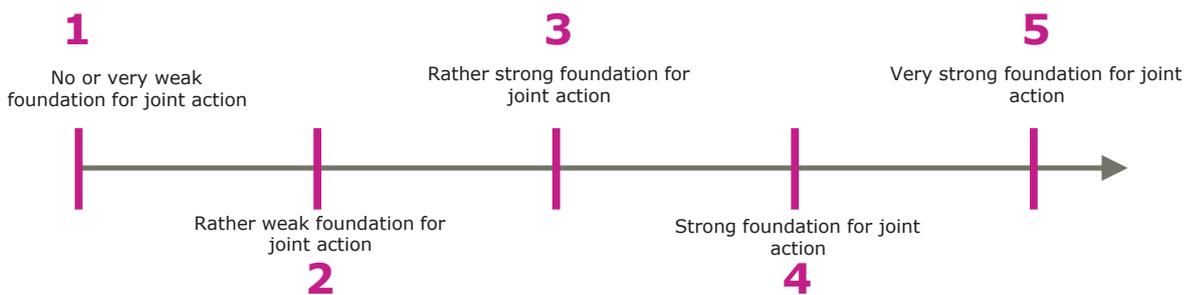
4.2 STEP 2: REGIONAL STOCK-TAKING - Analysis of the regional outline conditions in the thematic fields of financial support

In the run-up to a funding period, a careful analysis of the regional outline conditions should be made in order to be able to make statements on the achieved **developments in the sectoral fields addressed by the programme** in the course of the ending funding period. For this purpose, regional institutions could be involved and asked for their assessment of the maturity of transnational cooperation in their respective specialist area. The selection of suitable institutions is a **challenge**: It should be taken into consideration that the selected institutions are working in a **sectoral field addressed** by the cooperation programme (e.g. specific objective) and have experience

in this field but do, if possible, not directly participate in the programme. Ideally, the **regional composition of the programme area** and the frequently existing **heterogeneity** among the regions involved should be reflected by the institutions. Not only in a federal system like Germany, the challenge is, on the one hand, to represent all sub-regions adequately and, on the other, to make the survey not too complex.

To illustrate the status quo, it is conceivable to use a **scale for each of the six cross-sectoral impacts in every sectoral field** (specific objective). The six impacts could be scaled in each case, for example using a scale ranging from one to five. It forms the basis for the assessment of the situation in the programme and in the individual sectoral fields.

Figure 3: Scaling of the impact “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes”



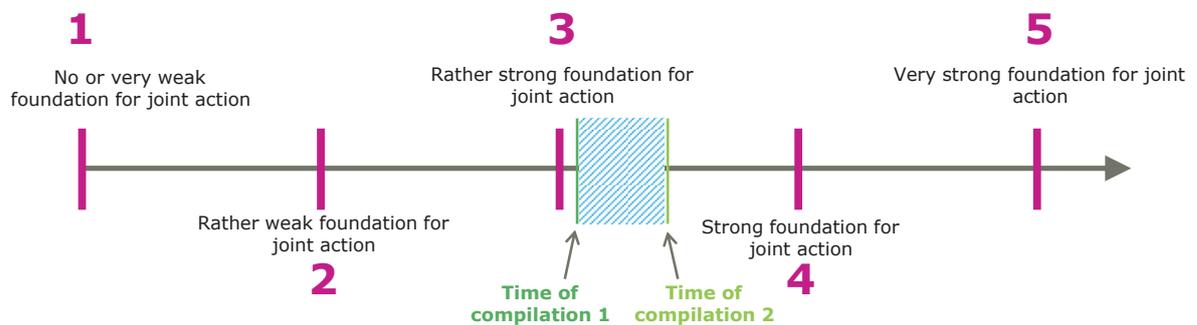
Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

In analogy to the outlined approach for the impact “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes”, the other impacts could also be scaled. In order to **further facilitate assessments and enhance their comparability**, the individual steps could be described by **short and concise texts**. It is, thus, ensured that all regional stakeholders share a similar understanding of the individual levels of the scale.

Over the duration of the cooperation programme the **survey can be repeated to illustrate developments**. Ideally, the group of the institutions surveyed remains

unchanged. Since this is hardly possible in real life, the short texts mentioned above which describe the individual levels of an impact are useful again. It would also be conceivable that the experts, when making their assessment, also prepare a short text explaining and substantiating this assessment. In the case of a change of experts it would, therefore, be possible to understand the reasons underlying the assessment of other experts. In this way, the scale could reproduce the development of the individual regions in particular and of the programme area as a whole.

Figure 4: Illustrating developments of the impact “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes”



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

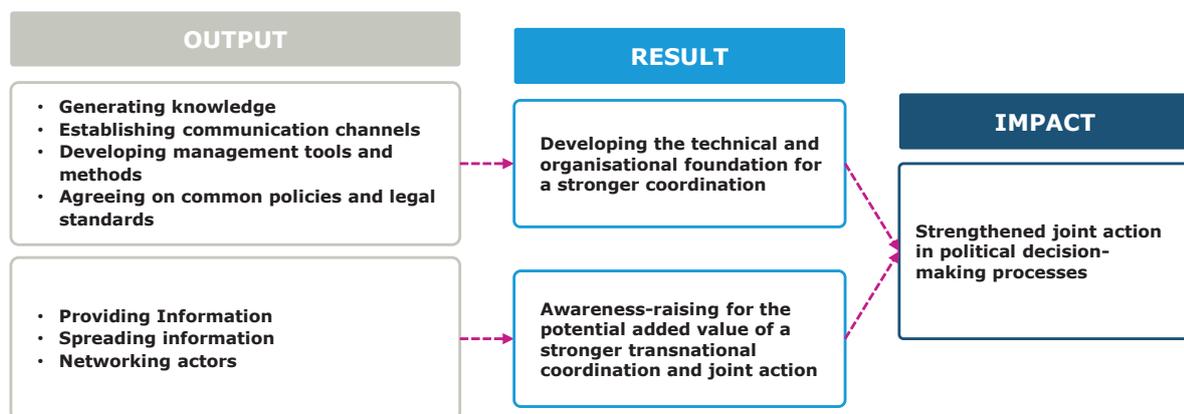
4.3 STEP 3: OBJECTIVE DEFINITION - Development of funding objectives specific to Interreg B

On the basis of the project analysis and supplemented by the assessment of the experts, objectives for the cooperation programme can be defined in a third step, explicitly taking account of the specific impacts of Interreg B. In order to define appropriate objectives on the basis of the analysed situation, it is advisable, apart from the development of sectoral intervention logics which is customary in many programmes, to also deve-

lop intervention logics reflecting cross-sectoral impacts. **Intervention logics which have been successfully tried and tested for many years already in connection with classical sectoral objectives can also be a suitable tool for cross-sectoral objectives.**

In the course of the identification of the specific impacts of Interreg B, six possible intervention logics were outlined. The following example shows the intervention logic for the impact “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes” which is decisively influenced by cross-sectoral issues.

Figure 5: Intervention logic for the cross-thematic dimension of the impact “stronger joint action in political decision-making processes”



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

Based on **sectoral and cross-sectoral intervention logics**, the stakeholders in the programme can outline their **approaches to achieve the specific impacts of Interreg B** and **define objectives**. The scales used for stock-taking can also be used as reference points for the definition of the objectives: they verbalise the steps towards the achievement of individual impacts.

In a next step, the intervention logics can **facilitate the development of suitable indicators** and can also be a useful tool for the selection of projects. The careful and early analysis of the envisaged outputs and results supports the targeted selection of projects which make a contribution in this connection.

4.4 STEP 4: DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS - Definition of result indicators to present the achievement of objectives

In order to measure the **achievement of cross-sectoral objectives** and the impacts achieved, it is necessary to develop suitable indicators in the course of programme planning. Some cooperation programmes have already developed **result indicators to capture the specific impacts of Interreg B**. It would be conceivable that other cooperation programmes also use the current funding period as a pilot phase for the trialling of approaches to find out how their result indicators can take cross-sectoral impacts better into consideration than has been the case up to now. Here, it might be particularly useful to collect the experiences from cooperation programmes which are already underway and take them as a basis.

The rules and regulations provide that the result indicators reflect the impacts of the funding scheme in very different sectoral fields and frequently in very **heterogeneous programme areas**. Thus, in order to develop suitable indicators it is, apart from a profound technical understanding, also necessary to have adequate knowledge of the situation in the individual sub-regions of the programme area.

It has to be noted that the specific impacts of Interreg B are in many cases of a **qualitative nature**. Statistical data are, as a rule, not suitable to represent these developments. The specific objectives of Interreg B and the developed **intervention logics for the cross-sectoral dimension** can be used as a **starting point** for the elabo-

ration of suitable result indicators. Besides the intervention logics, the precise analysis of the situation in the programme area can be very useful. It should clearly highlight the focus of the funding and also ensure the short and concise definition of a result indicator. An example for such an indicator is contained in the cooperation programme for the Alpine Space 2014-2020: „Level of maturity of framework conditions for innovation for generating innovation processes among business, academia and administration“.

With a view to the further **verification** of the elaborated indicators and designations it may, for instance, be appropriate to involve institutions and/or stakeholders from the programme area. It is possible that **experienced project partners of Interreg B** estimate to what extent the result indicators accurately represent the changes which Interreg B can actually bring about in the given regional and sectoral context.

A methodology similar to the one used to analyse the situation in the programme area might be used to show the developments in connection with the result indicators. This means, that the situation in each sectoral field (here, according to the current programme logic, the level of the specific objectives would be most suitable) is regularly analysed by regional stakeholders on the basis of a scale. The **rating on the scale** can, if necessary, be supplemented by short explanatory notes and provides the required **numerical value for the result indicator**. It has to be taken into account that the assessment is to be made by stakeholders with the necessary technical experience in the respective sectoral field who can accurately appraise the situation in the programme area.

5. Conclusion

The special added value of the Interreg B funding consists of the **specific combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts**. The cross-sectoral impacts are currently not sufficiently represented. It is imperative to better recognize and take account of these specific impacts of Interreg B in order to adequately illustrate the **added value of the funding scheme**. This concerns the legislative as well as the administrative level and would make it possible to represent Interreg B more adequately including all its aspects. An “**impact catalogue**” could be developed to illustrate the cross-sectoral as well as the sectoral impacts of the the funding scheme and to transparently explain the interrelations of the impacts.

Measuring the specific impacts of Interreg B is an extremely challenging task. This is, on the one hand, attributable to the comparatively low sums of the funding scheme and, on the other, to the large and in some cases very heterogeneous programme areas. Although numerous other factors affect the regional development and the transnational cooperation in a programme area (e.g. economic developments or legislative changes), Interreg B contributes to the developments in a programme area. The approaches outlined contain **information on the extent of the support provided by Interreg B to the developments in a programme area**. It is, however, as a rule not possible to furnish proof of a causation between the developments and the Interreg B funding.

In principle, irrespective of the precise procedure applied, the five following aspects will have to be taken into account if the specific impacts of Interreg B are to be analysed:

- ⇒ **Combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies:** Quantitative as well as qualitative approaches should be taken into consideration for the presentation of cross-sectoral impacts. Complex issues, such as measuring the empowerment of stakeholders, necessitates first of all the in-depth analysis of the initial situation, but also of the objectives to be pursued. Here, especially qualitative approaches are likely to achieve results. To further develop and illustrate the contribution of the funding scheme it is advisable to use quantitative approaches. Only thus will it be possible to transparently and clearly communicate cross-sectoral impacts achieved to the interested general public.
- ⇒ **Link programme and project levels (even more closely):** The effective measuring of cross-sectoral impacts must focus on the projects, ideally already before or during the submission of applications. It is necessary for the project stakeholders to carefully analyse the intended cross-sectoral impacts at an early stage already in order to capture and aggregate their achievement in the course of the project, and to use this analysis for statements regarding the achievement of the objectives of the cooperation programme. In this context, the sectoral variety of the projects but also the heterogeneity of the stakeholders present special challenges for the parties involved in the programme. Both aspects have to be implicitly taken into consideration for the aggregation of project data at programme level to make appropriate statements.
- ⇒ **Develop a standardised procedure:** A uniform methodological approach is required in order to achieve conclusive evidence at programme level. This approach should be developed at the level of the cooperation programme. Only information collected in a (sufficiently) standardized survey - in terms of quality as well as quantity - provides comparable findings and can serve as a reliable basis for aggregated evidence at programme level.
- ⇒ **Ensure the practicability of the methodological approach:** The methodological approaches must be practicable for the stakeholders and also provide reliable results. In this context, the personnel capacities and the financial resources which are available for a cooperation programme are of special significance. In terms of efficiency, it can perhaps be advisable to develop fundamental methodological approaches involving several programme areas and to only lay down the precise specification with a view to the relevant regional conditions of the individual programme area.
- ⇒ **Consciously deal with limitations:** A general and universally valid approach to completely illustrate the cross-sectoral impacts which fully meets all requirements, while taking the applicable outline conditions into account, is hardly possible. In view of the presented challenges and opportunities for the bodies implementing the programme, it seems realistic to better objectivise and systemise the impacts achieved and, thus, to move closer towards an actual impact measuring.

Publication data

Published by

Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI)
Invalidenstraße 44, 10115 Berlin
<http://bmvi.de>

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As at

Februar 2017

Layout

Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI)
Division Z 32, prepress | in house printing

Print and copying

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A project of the research programme "General departmental research" of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI), supervised by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) at the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR).

