

Adapting **INTERREG** **2014 – 2020** to Climate Change

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Investing in Opportunities



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INTERREG IWB

Recommendations for INTERREG V

CONTENTS

1. About the Cluster	3
2. Purpose of the document	4
3. Adaptation to climate change as programme priority	4
4. Selection criterion: Adaptation to climate change	5
5. Specific activities: assessment of climate impacts and adaptation options	5
6. Investments and adaptation projects	6
7. Publicity actions	6
8. Sector relevant content of the programme	6
9. Experiences with the Cluster approach	7

Credits

Page 3: (from left to right)
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Sharing lessons from INTERREG IV B – NWE

SIC adapt! Messages to the Programme 2014-2020 Drafting Group

1. About the Cluster

SIC *adapt!* is the Strategic Initiative Cluster (SIC) of the INTERREG IV B North-West Europe (NWE) Programme dealing with adaptation to the impacts of climate change in seven Member States. Eight current transnational projects with around 100 partner organisations are involved including representatives from all levels of public authorities, academic institutions, non-profit and private sector organisations. The Cluster is managed by the German Water Board Lippeverband, Essen.

In addition to the aims of each project, the Cluster:

- illustrates how existing management instruments can be tailored to facilitate adaptation across a range of sectors and locations,
- fosters implementation of adaptation measures by showcasing widely tested, effective good practice examples throughout NWE and beyond,
- encourages the development of policy frameworks that will support local, regional and national adaptation initiatives across NWE,

- strengthens the impact of each project, especially at higher policy levels.

The Cluster looks for sustainable, cost-efficient, adaptation strategies and solutions in four action fields:

- Built environment (urban and regional)
- Water environment (rivers, urban water management, coastal/marine)
- Natural environment (forest/nature/agriculture)
- Social environment (society/behaviour change).

Further reading: www.sic-adapt.eu



2. Purpose of the document

Based on the experiences made while implementing their local and regional projects the participating organisations formulated lessons learned and developed policy recommendations. In addition, in the evaluations and discussions some conclusions were drawn that could be interesting for the drafting groups of the new INTERREG Programmes 2014–2020.

The observations made in the implementation of measures and strategies were condensed and summarised to transferable conclusions regarding

- the general programme framework and
- the sector-related content of the programme.

They are documented in this paper. If required the Cluster partners would be happy to explain the conclusions in more detail or discuss with relevant groups.

The adaptation projects reflected the framework of the NWE Programme regarding incentives, support, but also obstacles for the intension to better adapt to climate change in all relevant activities of the programme. The goal of the following ideas and suggestions is to transfer knowledge and experiences of the Cluster projects towards the next funding period and – in this regard – to facilitate and improve future adaptation projects.

3. Adaptation to climate change as programme priority

Adaptation to climate change is no separate sector policy as many projects show. It is or has to become integral part of all relevant sector activities and sector policies. According to the importance of the issue and according to the priority of this topic on the European Agenda 2020, adaptation to climate change should be an integral issue of all selected priorities in the different programmes.

Consequently adaptation to climate change should be a separate priority in all programmes and also strong integral part of all relevant other priorities as a cross-cutting issue.



4. Selection criterion: Adaptation to climate change

Adaptation to climate change has to become a strong selection criterion. The applications or additional documents handed in by potential beneficiaries should give a picture on the relevance of a project regarding climate change issues and, if relevant, if the project takes adaptation strategies and measures in consideration adequately. In addition the applicant should be pointed out on which formerly funded adaptation projects or initiatives the application builds up (III B, IV B etc.).

Practical approaches and guidelines have to be developed to create practically usable scoring criteria to support the project development for applicants.

Criteria could be developed from examples of existing adaptation projects (e.g. in *SIC-adapt!*), like:

- the project's potential impact on climate change (no, low ... high)
- the project foresees activities aiming at reducing impacts on climate change ...
- the project foresees activities aiming at adaptation to negative impacts of climate change

- all possible measures are taken to reduce/adapt (no .../... completely).

The criteria could be further developed based on experiences from the development of adaptation tools in the Cluster projects. The projects aim at measures rather than on programme levels, but the experiences can be transferred anyhow.

If feasible criteria are delivered in the application phase, they will help to improve not only the selection of projects but also help with the development of the project design. If just one box with a question like "Explain the relevance of your project for climate change" has to be answered, there would not be sufficient information gathered to assess the project application regarding this important theme. If it is possible to score the project applications regarding aspects of "climate proofing" the programme would make a great step towards climate friendly funding.

A combination with innovation criteria should be taken into consideration.

5. Specific activities: assessment of climate impacts and adaptation options

From the experiences of the Cluster projects (see e.g. Findings and Conclusions on tools and measures) an exemplary list of adaptation measures and activities could be generated, that delivers recommendations for future project developments. The

programme could ask projects to take the adaptation measures into account when setting up a certain type of project. This could be set up e.g. like follows:

Type of project	Climate change relevant activities of projects	Recommended actions regarding adaptation to climate change
<i>Urban development</i>		
<i>Natural resources</i>		
<i>Water</i>		
<i>Risk management</i>		
<i>Transport, connectivity</i>		
<i>Agriculture</i>		
<i>Forestry</i>		
...		

On this basis projects could develop their project content with regard to climate proofed activities.

6. Investments and adaptation projects

Explicit investments for adaptation projects are difficult to develop in a funding project. In most cases adaptation to climate change is accompanying investment projects, urban developments or water projects. This should be taken into consideration when setting

up selection criteria. The criteria system should reflect more than in the past that some criteria have interferences and some not. Investments should not be expected as core issue of adaptation projects.

7. Publicity actions

Publicity is one of the important obligatory work packages not only for INTERREG projects in general. It has high relevance explicitly for climate change related activities. For the development of specified types of projects certain participation and publicity

related activities should be required for the approval of projects. The activities should aim at raising understanding and acceptance of adaptation measures and on the needs to adapt. Changing behaviour regarding climate change impacts should be supported.

8. Sector relevant content of the programme

From the policy recommendations for different sector policies the following conclusions can be drawn for the next INTERREG Programme. The programme should explicitly support projects which:

- trigger and strengthen the coordination between sectors including the water sector and spatial regional planning as well as urban planning; this is very important e.g. regarding the problems of heat islands in cities because this is a clear cross sector issue;

- contribute to the improvement of the coordination of EU-directives with practical exemplary solutions, especially water framework directive, floods directive and – if it will be decided – a future climate change adaptation directive. Important is the practical relevance since scientific and theoretical contributions exist in many different forms;
- improve international cooperation in water management and in risk management in international river basins. Here e.g. the assessment of actual improvements of the risk situation, actual reduction of risk potentials and methods for periodical assessments of flood and low-flow risks management measures are of high relevance. Partnerships that share a common river should be promoted. Though international river basin commissions exist for many years now, many challenges are limited to basic information sharing. Support from the programme would help to achieve a deeper cooperation, especially regarding practical implementation of the Directives across a border (common risk assessment, mutual assistance during a flood crisis) or on innovative topics that are not yet covered by a Directive: water scarcity and water savings, flood crisis emergency reaction, adaptation to climate change, natural habitats for water storage, etc.;
- support projects on agriculture practice and climate change; so far there are not enough projects involving the agriculture sector in the INTERREG Programmes. It has to be clarified if this shall become a priority in the programme objectives;
- give incentives for very practical communication tools and methods how to reach the public and stakeholders. Too often this is a very general issue of all projects and too often it is just a necessary “by-product”. Experiences with the Cluster-approach





9. Experiences with the Cluster approach

SIC adapt! was one of the first Strategic Initiative Clusters approved in the NWE Programme. Experiences related to the set-up, the organisation and the communication are very positive:

- The Cluster definitely strengthened the visibility of INTERREG projects on EU Directorate's level: The joint activities of the Cluster projects with 100 organisations allowed drawing the attention of DG Climate Action, DG Regio, DG Agriculture and DG Environment. Here, activities especially helpful were e.g.:
 - the Cluster Expert Board meetings: Delegates from the Cluster projects, external representatives from the national levels of the Member States involved and experts from the DGs discussed results and findings beyond project level.
 - Dissemination and lobbying of the Cluster results were intensified due to the networks especially in contact with the EU DGs.
 - Developing, coordinating and communicating the activities and the results via a Cluster Coordination Office were important to be visible and to speak with "one voice".
- The Cluster supported the individual projects in reflecting their transnational main messages in the framework of developing and discussing the Cluster's policy recommendations within the Cluster and with external experts.
- The Cluster facilitated the exchange of experiences between the projects e.g. with the knowledge platform which is now also part of DG Climate Action's "climate-adapt platform" as well as the thematic cross-project exchanges.
- The Cluster also eased the way for the eight individual INTERREG projects to address the EU level with their communication activities and to identify representatives for important publicity events. Thus, the communication between the EU level and the regional and local level on e.g. the project conferences were supported. The discussion of project's messages and messages of the EU level to the delegates was intensified.
- An additional value for the issues of climate change and for INTERREG was the participation of *SIC adapt!* in the RegioStars Awards competition of 2012. The Cluster was nominated as one of the 24 finalists among more than 100 applicants. The aim of this additional initiative was to show the commitment of nearly 100 partner organisations towards sustainable, cost-efficient, good practice solutions in the field of adaptation to the impacts of climate change. The RegioStars jury acknowledged especially the cooperation and information sharing work of the Cluster: "This project exemplifies effective cooperation and information sharing in the area of climate change adaptation. There are many examples of best practices, tools, and measures employed in order to achieve efficient adaptation in different locations and sectors."
- A challenge was the timing of the Cluster's activities: Since the end dates of the Cluster projects were quite different it was partly difficult to harmonise the Cluster's working steps. However, solutions were found in most cases.

Recommendations for INTERREG V

Adaptation to the Spatial
Impacts of Climate Change



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