



# Solidarity works!

## How Regions improve thanks to cooperation

November 2011



**INTERREG IVC**

INNOVATION & ENVIRONMENT  
REGIONS OF EUROPE SHARING SOLUTIONS



European Union  
European Regional Development Fund



**“A Europe of solidarity and growth,  
a Europe open and secure”**

*Polish European Union Presidency Motto*



# Solidarity works!

## How Regions improve thanks to cooperation

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From the EU perspective, geographical, economic and cultural diversity of the European territory is a challenge, but at the same time it brings about a huge development and cooperation potential. Bringing people from across the EU together and helping them to understand that certain problems of local or regional communities can be solved more efficiently in cooperation with partners from other parts of Europe are important ideas of INTERREG IVC.

Focusing on innovation and environment, the INTERREG IVC projects contribute to the smart and sustainable growth of Europe. Furthermore, by the way the partners cooperate they also address another important dimension of the EU 2020 strategy – inclusive growth.

Exchange of experience and knowledge-sharing among more developed regions and those below the EU average result in better common understanding and solidarity.

For the Polish Presidency, solidarity is one of the key words describing our vision of Europe. I am convinced that among the projects co-funded within INTERREG IVC there are many examples of actions that may inspire future cooperation based on solidarity, common challenges and aims.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Elżbieta Bieńkowska' in a cursive script.

**Elżbieta Bieńkowska**  
*Minister of Regional Development*  
*Republic of Poland*



## Solidarity in European Territorial Cooperation

The INTERREG IVC programme was the first of the European Territorial Cooperation objective programmes to be approved by both Member States and the European Commission in September 2007.

Since then, four years have passed, which have seen almost 14,000 local and regional authorities, from all countries and regions, set up partnerships and propose cooperation projects in the fields of innovation and the knowledge economy, or environment and risk prevention.

By the end of 2011, two years before its end, all of the programme's EUR 321 m funds should have been allocated.

This brochure bears witness to what INTERREG IVC projects have contributed not only to a smart and sustainable growth in Europe, but also to how sharing knowledge between European regions benefits as much the 'advanced' regions as those considered as less-developed.

Why does this work? Due to the economy of means that the programme mobilises – after all, why reinvent what other regions have already created? – European territorial cooperation is by nature innovative and environmentally conscious. More than anything, through exchanges at a distance, it contributes to consolidate European cohesion and solidarity.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Michel Lamblin'.

**Michel Lamblin**  
*Programme Director, INTERREG IVC*

# INTERREG IVC – A Tool of Solidarity

INTERREG IVC programme, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective, is designed to support **interregional cooperation** that increases effectiveness of regional development policies through exchange of experience and transfer of good practices. Representatives of public bodies from local, regional and sometimes national levels meet and work together on solving common problems in a region-specific way, having in mind that 'one size does not fit all'. They build on policy approaches and methods tested and proven in other regions and adapt them to specific conditions in their regions. Instead of looking for the most appropriate and effective solution alone, regions learn from others and help one another improve regional development policies in the most efficient way. Cooperation among partners in INTERREG IVC projects is also of a truly European nature as it brings together public bodies, with the capacity to influence policy-making process in a certain field (e.g. transport, support for SMEs), from all over the EU plus Norway and Switzerland.

The INTERREG IVC programme has two **thematic priorities**, Innovation and the Knowledge Economy, and Environment and Risk Prevention, with ten sub-themes, stemming from Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, that are highly relevant for achieving the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of Europe 2020 Strategy as well.

Public bodies participating in INTERREG IVC projects under the first priority share experience and knowledge on policies with smart and inclusive growth potential: for example, those supporting research, technological development, and innovation, particularly in SMEs; building up entrepreneurial spirit among people, including young as well as older population; extending broadband services and e-government applications to all communities in the regions, including the distant and marginal; increasing skills of employees at various stages and levels of employment; or, encouraging active ageing and other approaches dealing with demographic changes.

Projects in the second priority then tackle various issues of environmental importance, with sustainability of growth in mind: for example, project partners exchange experience in developing policies promoting clean and sustainable transport; encouraging energy efficiency; protecting and promoting biodiversity as our natural heritage, as well as sites and landscape, part of our cultural heritage; improving management of water resources and waste; or raising awareness of vari-

ous natural and technological risks, often connected to climate change, and providing tools to mitigate such risks. Participating in INTERREG IVC projects provides representatives of public bodies with a wealth of knowledge from various parts of Europe, offering them a chance to select the most appropriate tool for their region-specific problem and, by discussing it with others, adjust it or improve it to suit the region even better.

The programme supports two **types of projects**: Regional Initiative Projects and Capitalisation Projects. Regional Initiative Project partners identify, analyse and then disseminate good practices. Some Regional Initiative Projects, so-called Mini-Programmes, develop a more intensive form of cooperation, in which sub-projects are called for and a more extensive regional involvement and effect on policy-making is expected. A cherished result of Regional Initiative Projects is a transfer of good practices, selected by partners and tailored to specific regional conditions, into respective partnering regions.

Capitalisation Project partners, however, are required to prepare transfer of good practices that they identify before the project starts. The Capitalisation Project partners' ambition is to mainstream their favourite good practices through EU Structural Funds programmes in their respective regions. They develop action plans with a detailed account on how it will be accomplished. Some Capitalisation Projects are awarded a label 'Fast Track', which provides them

with a support and expertise of the European Commission.

INTERREG IVC projects can bring many **benefits** to public institutions involved and the regions they represent. Cooperation among regions increases capacity and skills of people involved in projects, as they analyse, debate and exchange on good practices of one another. All projects engage in focused discussions about application of various good and tested techniques, approaches, methodologies, or procedures relevant to project's theme and coming mainly from partnering regions.

Such identified good practices then represent a pool of know-how to choose from when looking for solutions to specific regions' needs.

Many partners are interested in building on good experience of others and transfer good practices to their own regions. They study the selected good practice with the partner that brought it in or within the whole partnership, adjust it to local conditions, and introduce the practice into their region either already during the project or after its end. Intensive cooperation among partners sometimes has an impact on regional development policies, for example, when the actual implementation of a good practice requires adjustments in relevant policy documents, or when partners prepare region-specific reports on development in a project's field that are later adopted to a various extent in new regional development strategies.

The core of all projects is the exchange of experience and knowledge among regions at **various levels of development**, enabling the less advanced to catch up and the more advanced to learn from experience of others. Building on the spirit of solidarity, regions that are more advanced in a specific field share information on tested and proven good practices with the others in the partnership.

That exchange often helps the less advanced improve their policies faster, avoiding 're-inventing the wheel' or adopting a policy approach with proven negative consequences. The more advanced also benefit: first, a focused analysis of their good practice by all project partners or a comparison with similar practices elsewhere generates ideas for improvement; and, second, tapping growth potential in a less advanced region spills over to the rest of Europe and contributes to well-being of more advanced regions as well.

INTERREG IVC programme, facilitating such 'win-win' cooperation, addresses the Cohesion Policy aim to reduce regional disparities among **convergence and competitiveness** regions. That dual distinction stems from specific objectives of European regional policy towards regions at various levels of development, measured by GDP per capita.

Convergence regions fall short of EU average and focus predominantly on improving conditions for growth and employment by modernising and diversifying their economic structures.

Competitiveness regions then aim to strengthen their regional capacities further and boost growth and development. INTERREG IVC projects connect competitiveness and convergence regions. This is the distinction we have used in this brochure when describing good practice exchanges.

However, the exchange is not a one-way street: a more advanced partner in a specific field does not always come from a competitiveness region, i.e. a region economically more developed. In INTERREG IVC projects, good practices emanate also from convergence regions that are well advanced in a specific field.

The following pages offer you a more detailed account of some benefits and results of interregional cooperation. Projects, and mainly good practices identified and transferred in their course, shall provide you with **insight and inspiration** for your regional development work. They all come from the first round of project proposals, implemented between autumn 2008 and winter 2011.

And though some of the projects have not finished all their planned activities yet, they can already offer a number of good practices for wider public to learn about and hopefully also learn from. May the small sample of good practices illustrate the great potential that sharing of experience offers to regional development in Europe. Let these practices inspire you!

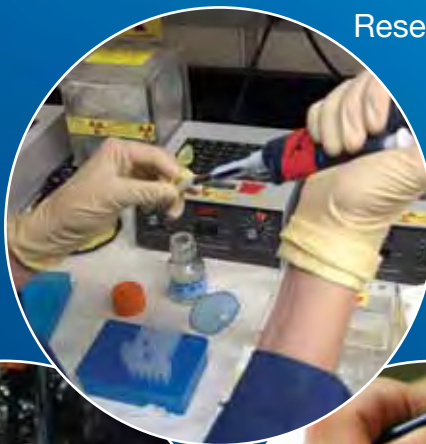
# Projects for Smart Growth

INTERREG IVC projects carry the potential to increase efficiency of regional development policies facilitating smart

growth, that is growth based on innovation and specialization providing regions with competitive advantage. The first priority of INTERREG IVC programme focuses on innovation and the knowledge economy. Projects falling into that category address wide variety of policies targeting research and technological development, employment, human capital and education, forming of the information society, encouraging

entrepreneurship and supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – all crucial for smart specialisation of regions and their growth. Achievements of partners from seven projects selected here represent a small sample of successful approaches adopted in various regions to address challenges of smart growth.

## Research & Innovation



## Employment



## Entrepreneurship

## Cooperation for Innovation

Innovation is essential for future European development in order to keep EU Member States prosperous and competitive vis-à-vis other global players. Tapping into the knowledge resources and innovation potential of numerous European regions promises to provide policy tools for tackling future challenges connected with ageing, climate change, or energy production, as well as encouraging economic growth.

Many regions are well aware of that potential and channel their investments into the area of innovation, be it innovation in products, services or organisation. It is no surprise then that “Innovation, Research & Technological Development” represents one of the most popular sub-themes of the INTERREG IVC programme with 22 projects (18%) to date.

Public authorities participating in those projects exchange experience and share good practices, for example, on cluster development, nanotechnologies, or financing innovation, with colleagues from other more or less advanced regions of the EU. In a joint effort they try to identify good practices worth emulating in their specific regions in order to focus their investments in a smart specialised way. The emphasis is not on being the ‘most innovative’ in absolute terms, but on being more innovative within a particular regional context.

For example, the Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency, representing the North Great Plain region in Hungary, joined the **MINI Europe** (Mainstreaming INnovative Instruments for SME development in Europe) project to share its good practices and learn from the experience of the other partners from Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom on policies and approaches supporting cluster development, getting people more involved in entrepreneurship, and encouraging cooperation between SMEs and knowledge institutes.

Having a clear stake in regional innovation development as well as a wealth of experience in coordinating various innovation stakeholders (ranging from innovation service providers, through university knowledge centres, to innovation companies), the North Great Plain region brought valuable know-how into the partnership but also had something to learn from others.

Hungarian experience in cluster development proved attractive to the project lead partner, the Province of Flevoland in the Netherlands. The Hungarian Pole Programme, presented to the MINI Europe partners, is a structured and comprehensive approach to economic development, focused on improving the business environment in general and on eight so-called ‘pole cities’ in Hungary in particular. It provides support to developing clusters in export-oriented, high-value-added innovative industrial fields. The programme defines four phases of cluster development and adopts a tailored approach in each, acknowledging

differing needs of start-ups or pole innovation clusters. Rigorous assessment by innovation experts ensures that only the most promising initiatives receive assistance. In the Province of Flevoland, the regional development agency and Syntens, an innovation agency, used to work on clustering separately. Benchmarking of the Hungarian and Flevoland models resulted in new agreements between the two institutions in Flevoland on working in a more structured way, reshuffling the tasks and adoption of the different phases in cluster development, as used by the Hungarian partner.

The Észak-Alföld region also learned from others in the course of the MINI Europe project. Veneto region, a partner from Italy, shared a good practice on their financial engineering programme, a set of integrated tools fostering investment in innovation. They provide accessible funds to SMEs working on innovative ideas in high-tech sectors. A system of funds with public contribution matched by private capital and with a guaranteed reinvestment was put in place to assist research and innovation.





The system inspired the Hungarian partner, who eventually sought funding from the Észak-Alföld Regional Operational Programme to implement that good practice in Hungary, mainstreaming the practice.

Maramureş region in Romania, represented by Maramureş County Council, joined the MINI Europe project with a clear aim to encourage competitiveness in the region by supporting SMEs, particularly in developing innovative ideas and transferring knowledge from research institutes. The Romanian partner was eager to share its experience in transferring knowledge, but even more it wanted to learn from the others and catch up in cluster development. Study visits and focused discussions with partners from Veneto region, North West of England and Észak-Alföld about various clustering models led to creation of a TransMechaWorld (Mechanical Engineering and Manufacturing Development) association, the core of a future cluster in the mechanical field in the region.

Five founding members of the association from Maramureş, Satu Mare and Bihor regions in the North West of Romania already work together on developing products for a beneficiary from France. The North West of England partner also assisted Maramureş County Council in taking the initial steps in setting up a cluster on energy and environment. Moreover, the innovation action plan, prepared by the Maramureş region during the project, was integrated to the County Development Strategy, having a direct impact on regional development

policy. The MINI Europe project succeeded in transferring ten good practices and bringing effective solutions to partner regions. The cooperation also helped two partners improve their regional policies.

### *Financing Innovation*

One of the most pressing issues regarding support to innovation concerns financing the development of new ideas and technologies and managing risks involved in such an enterprise. Twelve regions joined the **RAPIDE** (Regional Action Plans for Innovation Development and Enterprise) capitalisation project to exchange good practices within that field, for example, innovation vouchers, business angel networks, an assessment tool for start-ups, a digital pitching tool bringing together innovators and investors, and pre-commercial public procurement procedures.

As one of the designated 'Fast Track' projects, the European Commission even provided support to ensure success.

Innovative ideas from two convergence regions in the Czech Republic, South Moravia and South Bohemia, the latter being a RAPIDE partner, proved to be a source of inspiration within the project partnership. BLUES (Brain Logistics Start-Up Evaluation) software, developed and tested in the South Moravian Innovation Centre and Brain Logistics s.r.o., as well as a pitching tool for innovators and investors from the South Bohemian Agency for Support to Innovative Enterprising were tested and analysed intensively by

RAPIDE partners. The South Bohemian RAPIDE partner, building on its experience in supporting innovation in various ways, brought the special pitching methodology into the partnership and cooperated closely with the South West of England Regional Development Agency on its further improvement. The pitching software for communication with various investors in innovation (angels, funds or incubators) through brief creative presentations of innovator's ideas and patents persuaded the South West of England partner to transfer that good practice into the region as a new means of communication between innovators and investors.

Apart from the new financing tool, the South West of England partner benefited also from the risk management tool from the Czech Republic, the BLUES methodology for evaluation of early stage companies, ensuring that scarce and costly resources go only to companies with a strong prospect of growth.





The most attractive good practice on financing among the RAPIDE partners was the Innovation Voucher. Generally, it is a system of financing services that promote innovation activities within companies. The vouchers are usually issued and covered by public authorities and serve as a 'pass' with which enterprises can get research-related services from a list of knowledge providers such as scientific institutes.

Public funding of innovation through such innovation vouchers was quite novel for two convergence regions: Saxony-Anhalt in Germany and Prešov Self-Governing Region in Slovakia. Prešov region, remote from most R&D institutions, joined the partnership to face the challenge of developing an innovation-based regional economy by adopting appropriate pro-innovation tools.

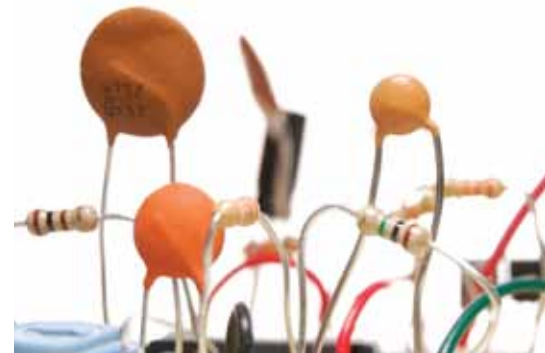
The RAPIDE partnership assisted the Prešov region to develop a financing tool encouraging cooperation between SMEs and public knowledge institutes, testing and trying their new technology ideas, establishing new partnerships and increasing competitiveness. The Ministry of Economy and Labour of Saxony-Anhalt came to the project

with a wealth of experience in SME – research-institute knowledge exchange. Yet, it looked for inspiration regarding appropriate financing of innovation in SMEs. The Innovation Voucher adopted by Saxony-Anhalt in the course of RAPIDE project allows SMEs to purchase a knowledge provider's expertise to develop innovative ideas and enhance business. Policies on ERDF funding in both regions had to be adjusted to the new funding tools and both partners succeeded in changing the relevant policy guidelines. Further variations on the Innovation Voucher good practice were adopted in Finland, Greece, and Poland.

The expertise and assistance of the European Commission on the issue of pre-commercial procurement was useful for several other partners that looked for alternative public financing tools for risky yet innovative activities of SMEs. Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, a convergence region partner from Poland, joined RAPIDE hoping to modify their innovation strategy and make it more efficient in encouraging and implementing innovative ideas in the region. The idea of a public authority ordering a service still at its research stage, sharing risks as well as benefits with its developers, and later awarding a contract on it, when fully developed for the market, attracted the Polish partner that planned to adopt it for development of an internet platform of innovation. The RAPIDE project also helped the South West of England and the Hungarian North Great Plain regions adopt that financing tool and adapt it to their region-specific needs.

All RAPIDE partners developed one or two action plans for making selected good practices effective in their region.

The action plans are to be financed through various EU Structural Funds programmes and gathered support for implementation of selected good practices to the amount of approximately €21,210,460. With ERDF contributing €1,430,474 through the INTERREG IVC programme, the project partners' cooperation managed to gather almost 15 times more resources for implementing good practices capable of bringing innovation more rapidly to the market and thus making the participating regions more innovative and smart with their investments.



## Cooperation to Assist Entrepreneurs

Innovative ideas, developed in various regions, need entrepreneurial spirit to reap the benefits of commercialisation and lead to increased competitiveness of regions. Entrepreneurs, mainly in small- and medium-sized enterprises, carry the growth potential of Europe.

However, SMEs have to deal with various burdens stifling their potential for innovation, job-creation and growth. Improving the business environment for SMEs, at regional, national or international level, and encouraging entrepreneurial spirit are some of the targets of the most popular of INTERREG IVC themes, that of “Entrepreneurship and SMEs” with 26 approved projects (21%).

Good practices they identify and transfer suggest solutions, for example, for opening public procurement opportunities across countries, networking or designing innovative public services for SMEs.

### *SMEs In Public Areas*

The public procurement market in Europe represents an opportunity for SMEs involvement that is largely left untapped due to various reasons: be it lack of experience or knowledge of various procurement rules, lengthy administrative procedures, often insufficiently transparent, or delayed payments for goods and services provided. Many entrepreneurs avoid public arenas and try to develop their innovative potential in the private sphere instead, denying public authorities often more innovative and cost-effective goods and services. Public authorities searching for tools to assist and encourage SMEs to take part in public procurement, especially in the international arena (e.g. EU procurement tenders), can find some solutions in a good practice guide compiled by ten regions working on that issue in **EuroPROC** (EU Regional Cooperation for SMEs’ access to Public Procurement) project. The partner regions looked, for example, for tools for SMEs to navigate the wealth of information available on open public tenders and find those attractive and relevant to them. Catalonia Competitiveness Agency (ACC1Ó), the Spanish lead partner of the EuroPROC project, shared information on “Anella CPI” virtual networking platform for companies, institutions and consultants, where they can exchange information on business opportunities, trainings, latest tenders, expert opinions, international organisations’ strategies, or simply experience on international public procurement. Moreover, all subscribers get a monthly newsletter.

A tender supporting system, provided by Hungarian Investment and Trade Development Agency, working in the area of SME support in the public procurement field, filters the vast amount of information on public tenders published daily according to a set of client-specific criteria and the outcomes are sent back to the client on a weekly basis. SMEs thus gain up-to-date information on tenders they might be interested in without investing too much of their capital in the actual search. Apart from sharing information on the supporting tool the Hungarian partner, as others, prepared a region-specific policy brief. That document influenced the national government and regional administration of Budapest as it approved new rules improving SMEs access to public procurement through electronic platforms. The Hungarian partner thus succeeded in affecting its regional policy on public procurement.

Extensive experience in international public markets of the French partner, Rhône-Alpes International, provided useful insights for the Bulgarian partners from Vratsa region, represented by the Vratsa Regional Administration and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa. They joined EuroPROC project to share their experience in various





forms of business support in North West Bulgaria and mainly they wanted to learn more about good practices for SMEs engagement in international public tenders. They decided to transfer a good practice on trade missions, shared by the French partner. It is a tool for organising collective or individual meetings abroad for companies to understand better business environment and opportunities there, meet local actors in public procurement and lobby foreign decision makers. Before going on such a mission, an expert evaluation or validation of company's capability to handle international public procurement project is also necessary.

## *SMEs In Remote Areas*

European Cohesion Policy aims to alleviate disparities among all regions of the EU. Regions at the EU periphery, particularly along the eastern border of the EU, decided to create a support network to deal with such disparities, raise awareness of their marginalisation and look for solutions for their specific needs.

The INTERREG IVC project **NEEBOR** (Networking for Enterprises in the Eastern External Border Regions) gathered twelve partners from eight such countries, ten of them from convergence regions, resolved to share experience and good practices encouraging entrepreneurship in remote border areas and look for efficient tools and approaches to creation of opportunities for employment, innovation and growth, often through cooperation with their neigh-

bours, non-EU countries. A number of good practices were identified by the NEEBOR partners and many led to transferability studies of interested partner regions.

The East Macedonia-Thrace region of Greece seeks approaches supporting and encouraging innovative entrepreneurship in remote areas. The partner was particularly interested in the Technology Transfer Office from Burgas, established to improve competitiveness of SMEs from the South East region of Bulgaria, also a convergence region. The office provides interface for know-how transfers among universities, research institutes, private businesses, and public authorities. It also ensures coordinated and strategic support of high-tech innovative enterprises, encourages development of new innovative products related to regional resources and needs, and assists in their commercialisation through networks outside the region and country. The Latvian partner from Vidzeme region was inspired by the Innovation Centre and Incubator House, presented at a study visit in Észak-Alföld region in Hungary. The Centre was developed by PRIMOM Enterprise Promoting Foundation in Nyíregyháza City and it is based in former Soviet barracks. It offers various services and support to innovative enterprises that at present do not have their own office or workshop with necessary equipment, practice in business life, or resources to hire external experts and specialists. The Centre also assists foreign enterprises that want to invest in the region and learn

more about the local opportunities. The Finnish partner in NEEBOR learned from the Regional Innovation Support System good practice from Warmia-Mazury region in Poland. The system attempts to create positive attitudes to innovation among SMEs and a good climate for competitive business development by supporting those entrepreneurs founding their development on innovative solutions, linking business performance to its innovativeness, and eliminating mental barriers to introducing new technologies, assisting SMEs by knowledge transfers.

Other partners looked for good practice on cross-border cooperation encouraging and assisting entrepreneurship in general or SMEs in tourism in particular. For example, the Finnish International Project Management programme from Lapland region offered valuable insights to the Romanian partner from the North West region and the Hungarian partner from South Transdanubia on enhancing SMEs expertise on project management cycle. In Finland, it is done through training on management and evaluation of territorial projects, and on creating a regional development link with North-West Russia, particularly Murmansk region.



The programme promotes regional know-how and skills, helps internationalise regional actors and link them to international financiers. The University of Pécs from South Transdanubia and the University of Osijek from the neighbouring region in Croatia now have a project based on the Finnish good practice approved within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Hungary-Croatia cross-border cooperation programme.

The 'Safely in Russia' good practice from Lapland region inspired Warmia-Mazury region in Poland. It aims to minimise corporate risks connected with conducting business in more challenging regions in terms of safety and security. All relevant information is gathered in close cooperation between the two regions and published on websites, in booklets, and handbooks. PR campaigns and trainings offer SMEs further support. Moreover, public and private security operators are identified forming a support network across the border at the disposal of SMEs. The modules take place both in Russia and Finland. The Polish region hopes it will help business relations with the Kaliningrad region in Russia.

Some NEEBOR good practices deal more directly with promotion of entrepreneurship linked to tourism in border areas. The International Exhibition Centre in East Macedonia-Thrace region in Greece organises various exhibition activities, for example the National Commercial Exhibition "THRACE", coordinates business meeting and fora, and represents the region at Greek and international tourism exhibitions, offering



local SMEs a platform for promotion of their goods and services.

The Bulgarian NEEBOR partner, the Agency for Regional Development and Innovation in Burgas, found that good practice relevant to their regional needs. Prešov Self-governing Region, the Slovak partner, found inspiration in another Bulgarian good practice on development of sustainable cross-border tourism.

Burgas region, in close cooperation with the Turkish Edirne region, developed a strategy for tourism development for "Strandzha" Natural Park (Strandzha being a massif in the Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border area). In close cooperation, the two regions created joint tourist packages and promoted them on a website, a Contact Tourism Fair Burgas – Edirne, and through various promotional material. Their cooperation helped improve local capacities and quality of services according to standards and requirements of modern tourist industry.

## *SMEs In Creative Areas*

INTERREG IVC supports projects in one of the most dynamic growth sectors at present, the creative industries sector. Creativity and new thinking can help companies design their goods, services or processes in an innovative way, increasing their competitiveness in the market. Preparing proper conditions for entrepreneurs able to imagine and create new services and experiences for customers can help the European Union increase competitiveness.

Creativity and innovation met in the **SEE** (Sharing Experience Europe – Policy Innovation Design) project, in which design-promoting organisations from eight regions joined capacities to raise awareness about the innovative potential of design among policy makers and assist them in integrating design in innovation policies.

Close cooperation among the project partners at thematic workshops and study visits led to a set of publications about design as a tool of innovation: for example, one on 'Realising Sustainability and Innovation through Design' or the latest on 'Bringing Innovative Ideas to Market Using Design'. The publications then served as a persuasive tool for lobbying policy makers to support design as a source of innovation and include it as a priority axis into regional development policies. All partners succeeded in bringing the issue of design into the political discussion and many managed to affect strategic policy documents.



For example in France and Finland, the SEE project reawakened political interest in design that had lain dormant for several years. In Slovenia, policymakers learned more about the importance of creative industries and incorporated SEE project good practices on design policies into their new Research and Development Innovation Strategy 2011-2015. Similarly, in Spain, the Catalan innovation and research plan for 2010-2013 dedicated one chapter to design thanks to SEE awareness raising efforts.

Recommendations from the Manifesto for Design and Innovation, developed by the SEE lead partner, Design Wales, were also incorporated into the Welsh Assembly Government's Economic Renewal strategy, especially including design as a tool for support of SMEs. In Denmark and Ireland, the SEE project gained visibility and access to policy-making groups like the Design 2020 Vision Committee, developing new Danish design policy, and the Irish Innovation Task Force.

In other SEE partner regions, raising awareness of design took a more practical form. For example in Belgium, Design Flanders accelerated development of a Design Platform for more efficient coordination of the six design organisations in the region to allow design to play the key role in future regional development it deserves.

Design Flanders also received, thanks to the SEE project, a mandate from the Flemish Government to deliver a Service Design Project, which helped the City of Antwerp transform a number of services they deliver to the citizens.

Also Design Wales delivers a 'Service Design Programme' on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It enables 90 Welsh advanced manufacturing companies to use service design to link their products to new services, increase their competitiveness, and create new employment opportunities in the region.

In Italy, an Innovation Pole has been launched, in which design plays a key role in realising innovation in Tuscany region. In Estonia, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication and Enterprise learnt about the innovative role of design at one of the SEE workshops and now it is considering a

national business support programme to help companies get innovative ideas to market through design.

The forward-looking and policy-building nature of the SEE project was acknowledged by the European Commission through the Regions for Economic Change RegioStars 2011 Award nomination.



## Cooperation for Active Ageing and Employment

European population is growing in number and age every year. To deal with the numerous challenges connected with the societal and demographic changes, the INTERREG IVC programme supports projects addressing themes of “Employment, Human Capital and Education”. There are eleven projects approved to tackle issues like employment of older population, active ageing, inclusion of marginalised population, or encouragement of female entrepreneurs.

One of the most comprehensive projects approved to focus on such issues is **PEOPLE – Innovation For Societal Change**. As ageing population, new family structures, legal and illegal immigration, and new vulnerable groups affect relations among people, generations and countries, the PEOPLE mini-programme partners look for opportunities for new employment and tools reinforcing cohesion and well-being in European regions under six sub-objectives: Reconciliation of work and private life; E-health and independence;

Silver economy; Social and e-inclusion; Social entrepreneurship; and Civil society empowerment. Being a specific type of project – a mini-programme – the partners launched themselves a call for proposals addressing public bodies from the partner regions. In this way, exchange of experience “on the ground” allowed for the involvement of even more stakeholders to jointly address the impact of demographic change.

Seven sub-projects were supported through the main partnership group to work more intensively on each of the project sub-objectives, sometimes taking a different perspective: DIVERSIA (Family diversity and reconciliation strategies), TCares (Technology Cares), SILVER ACADEMY, HOME04 (Networking for Integrated Care Homeless), SHARE IT, CIBUS5 (Promotion of the social and labour integration companies), and PEPA (People Participating).

The Malopolska region in Poland and Timiș County in Romania, are two convergence regions in need of advancement in health services and who share the foresight to look for solutions to demographic problems before they get out of control. Within the PEOPLE project, they were able to learn from the Andalucía Region of Spain. The Andalusian Telecare Service helps people that need assistance due to their health conditions. Using technology, each client is monitored in their home environment, which provides them with company, security and fast attention in case of an emergency. The service, based largely



on voluntary social work, also assists families or those that provide care to the client, favouring reconciliation of professional and family life. The John Paul II Hospital in Kraków, Poland, got a chance to try the so-called Tele-EKG tool on tens of patients at home in the course of TCares sub-project.

The Małopolska region also shared several good practices with the others, for example, a Digital Aided Guide for Fathers-to-Be (DAD) under the “Reconciliation of work and private life” sub-objective, or a Korba Project under the “Social and e-inclusion” sub-objective, providing non-formal education for young people with a leadership potential.



The University of Surrey from the UK implemented a pilot application of the South East England Development Agency good practice called 'Shape your future' within the sub-objective of "Silver Academy". Within the pilot, free expert advice and support to the unemployed over 50 was offered, encouraging them to start their own business. The 'Silver Academy' participants were supported by expert coaching while developing a business plan.

They were given professional advice on other business related issues, and found invaluable support in their peers in the programme. The pilot assisted about a hundred entrepreneurs from the South East of the UK and succeeded in creating at least twenty new businesses. The British partner benefited from the experience, as it allowed them to develop a mentoring toolkit and new approaches generating expertise, confidence and perseverance in new 'older' entrepreneurs.



Management of the PEOPLE project itself turned out to be inspiring for the lead partner, the Government of Andalusia. The online monitoring system of the seven sub-projects was adapted for monitoring the activities and certification of social programmes of the General Directorate for Social Services and Attention to Drugs Addiction in Andalusia. Intensive cooperation among the main project and sub-project partners benefited two regions at the level of policy improvement.

Exchange of experience among PEOPLE partners on aging population and a peer review of Małopolska regional policy on ageing provided the Polish partner with many valuable recommendations, for example, on dynamic ageing and other innovative alternative approaches to demographic changes, which were incorporated into the final document "Strategy for ageing population".

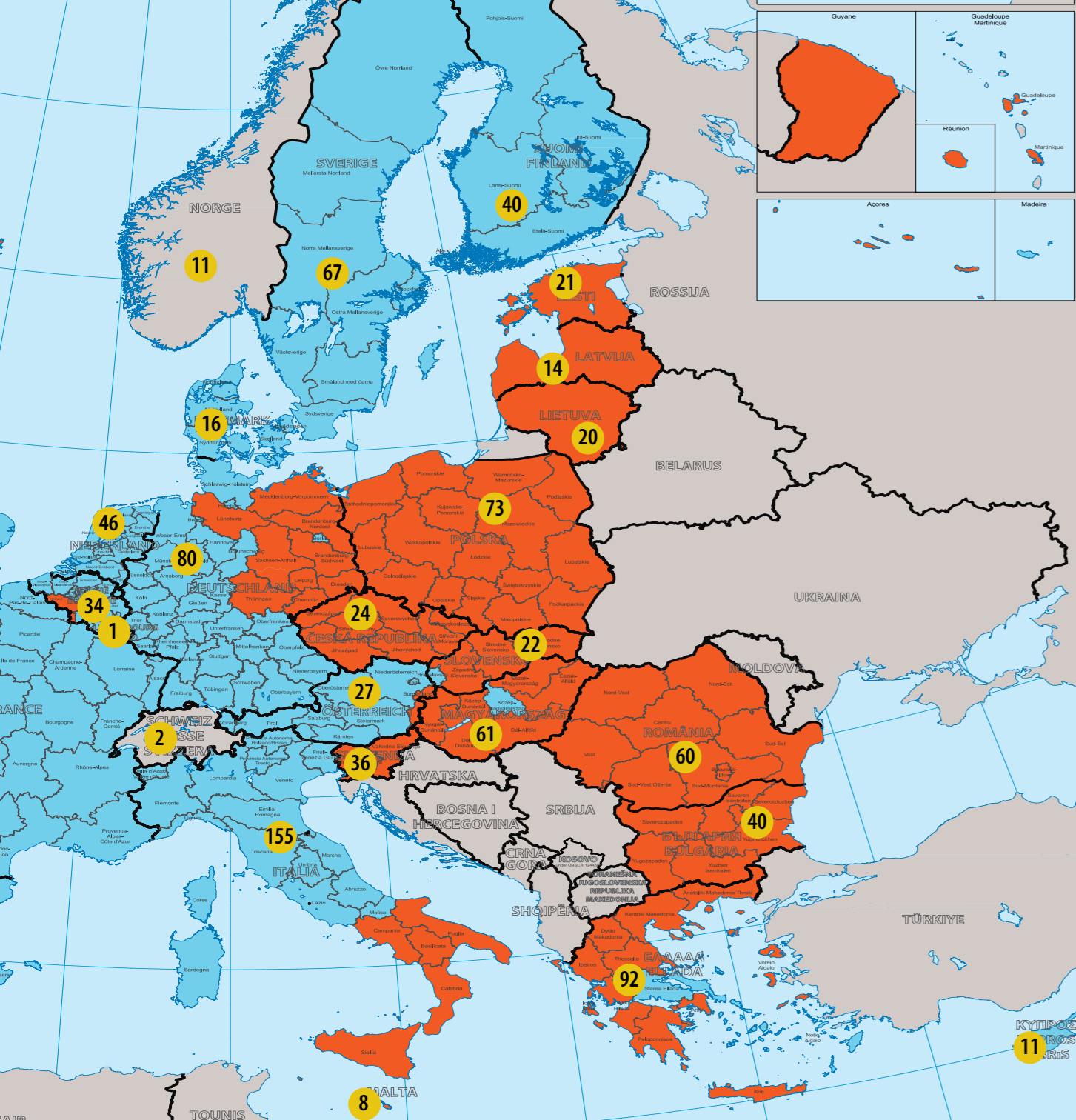
Regional policy dealing with demographic changes was also influenced in the Province of Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands, who also brought a number of good practices on policy tools addressing demographic change into the partnership: for example, Neighbourhood Care (Web) on small-scale home nursing and care, or Nuenen Network on a bottom-up approach to development of a broadband network owned by the community.

The exchange of knowledge and experience, facilitated by the PEOPLE project, encouraged the project team from the region to write a strategic report on international cooperation and

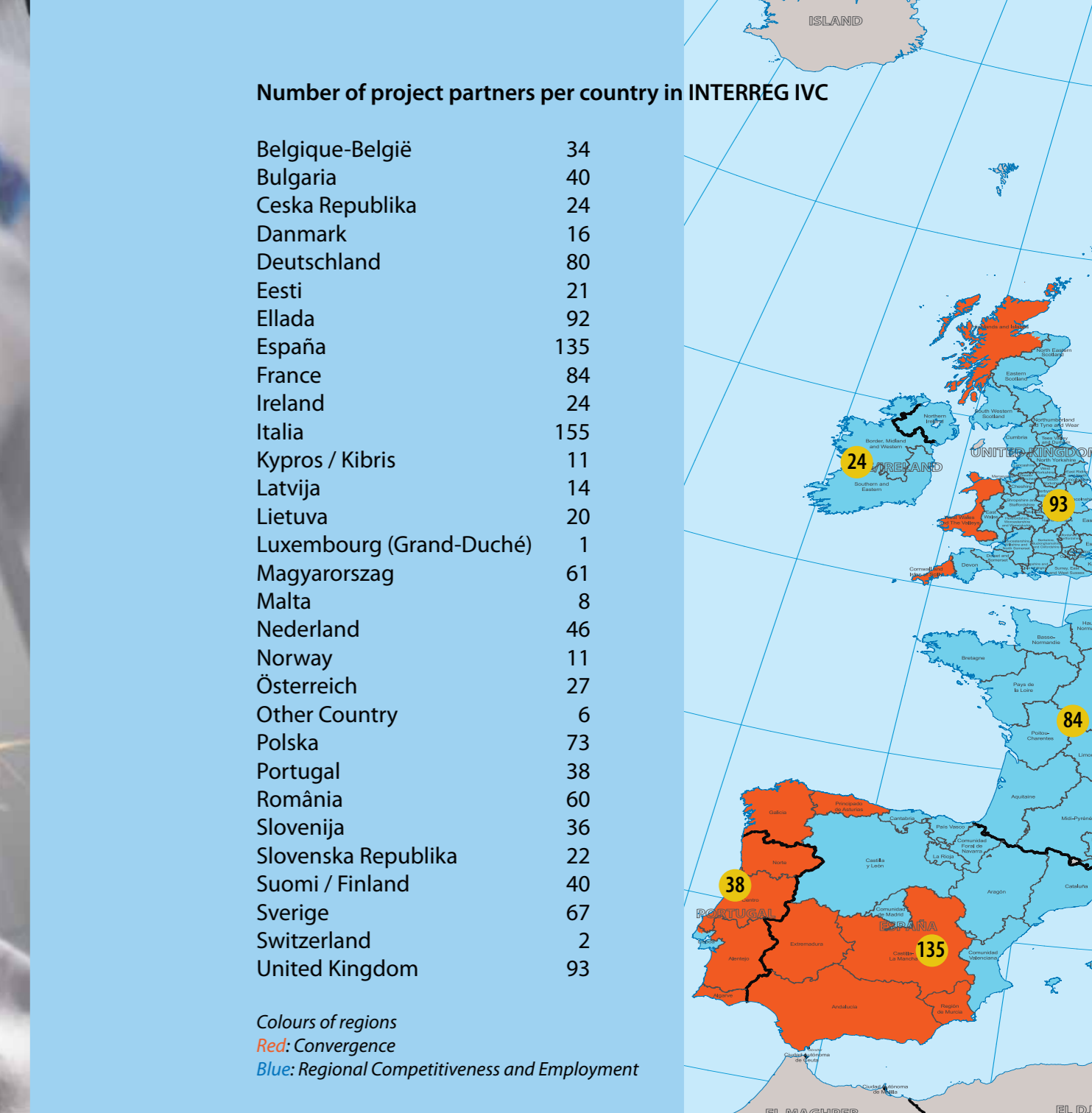
innovation in the context of demographic change. That document persuaded the provincial management to continue working in partnerships across Europe searching for solutions to demographic change and implement the recommendations of the report. Moreover, the PEOPLE project ideas and good practices served as an input to new policy in Noord-Brabant to be implemented after 2011.





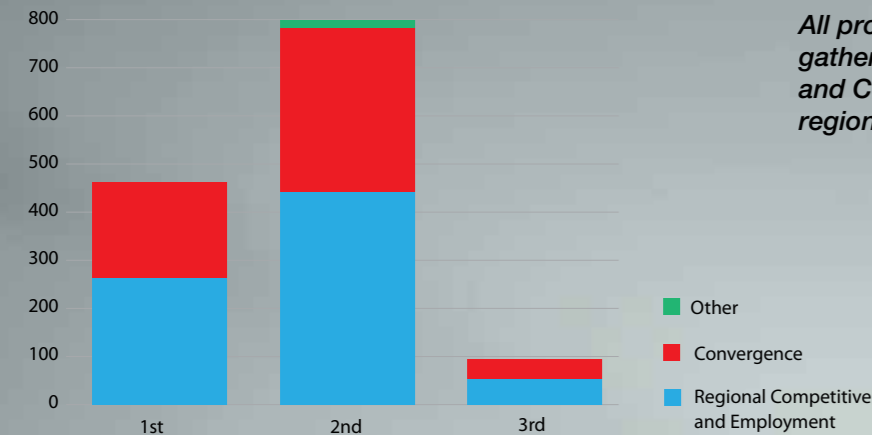


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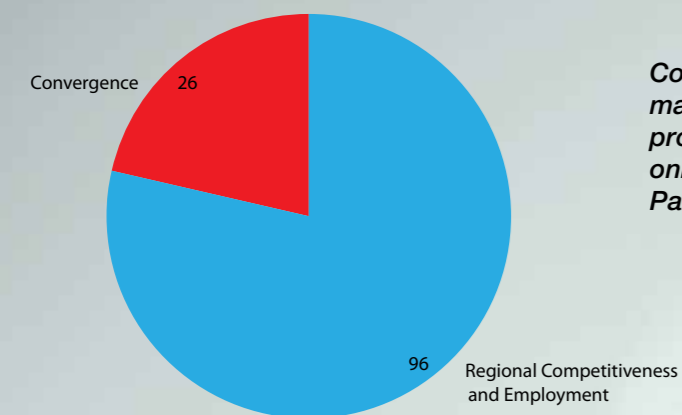


Number of project partners according to regional status, per sub-theme  
(by Calls for proposals)



All projects except one gather both Convergence and Competitiveness regions

Number of Lead Partners according to regional status, all calls combined  
(1st, 2nd and 3rd calls)



Convergence regions make up 43% of project partners but only 21% of Lead Partners

### Lead Partners' Perspective



Mercedes García Sáez, PEOPLE project lead partner, Government of Andalusia, Ministry for the Equality and Social Welfare, Spain

#### 1. What was the most challenging aspect of leading an INTERREG IVC project for your organisation?

Working with different regional public administrations, whose diversity in terms of competences and background posed a challenge to the project from its very outset. This has turned into an enriching element however, since it required us to bring together and compare views, policies and procedures of seven regions and thirty-five public entities participating in PEOPLE.

#### 2. How did your participation in an INTERREG IVC project benefit your organisation and your region? Which of the benefits do you appreciate the most?

The major benefit was being able to count on a specific budget devoted to innovation in a European framework. The project was an opportunity to approach different entities, partners and social contexts, which will have a great long-term impact, as we intend to apply and replicate everything we have learnt: on-line registration tool to identify and follow vulnerable groups; computer programmes that may improve project management in our region; training methods now transferred to the public administrations, and so on.

#### 3. What advice would you give to future interregional cooperation project lead partners?

To act according to the rules of the INTERREG IVC programme, taking into account that their unavoidable and necessary inflexibility is compensated by a personalised attention from the Joint Technical Secretariat, which makes dialogue and collaboration much easier.



Matthieu Havard, RAPIDE project lead partner, South West of England Regional Development Agency, United Kingdom

#### 1. What have you appreciated the most about participating in an INTERREG IVC project?

RAPIDE was a Fast Track network, so the European Commission was involved in the project, providing input where needed. This focused the work of the partnership and encouraged partners to actively participate in the project. The level of engagement from all partners was much higher than expected. Through intelligent workshops and other methods (e.g. peer to peer Action Plan development), the partnership genuinely learnt from good practices in all regions concerned in the project.

#### 2. What challenges did you face in the course of the project?

While all the partners welcomed the active involvement of the European Commission, they would have liked to see more concretely how lessons learnt and recommendations for European Policy, developed by the project, were going to be translated into reality.

The other challenging area is the heavy administrative and financial burden on the Lead Partner. Whilst there is an acceptance from the Lead Partner to take responsibility in this area, a disproportionate amount of time has been spent in dealing with this area of work which could usefully have been used in improving the quality of the project delivery.

#### 3. If you were to participate in future interregional cooperation projects, what improvements or changes would you like to see?

We would like to see the Fast Track networks of the interregional cooperation programme improved and enhanced in any future programme.

### Project Partners' Perspective



Aleksandr Popel, POWER project partner, Tallinn City Government, Estonia

#### 1. What was the most challenging aspect of cooperating with regions from all over Europe?

Geographic areas in Europe have different climate conditions and different levels of economic development. The south of Europe, for example, is mainly concerned with cooling while northern Europe is more concerned with heating. Common activities are difficult to implement. It was nevertheless very useful to learn about these differences and about the wider European context of the same issue.

#### 2. How did your participation in the INTERREG IVC project benefit your organisation and your region?

Our organisation's human capacity grew enormously through this project. Our specialists learnt about a wide range of European experiences in this field, and know what kind of solutions have been used in different parts of Europe. This helps them find better answers to our own burning questions. Our region benefited because we have seen how the same questions, which are important for the region, were solved in different European countries. The cooperation widened our own views and provided many good examples of how to deal with the climate issue.

#### 3. Would you encourage other public bodies to participate in interregional cooperation projects?

Yes, of course. I am sure that they can also learn many useful things through such cooperation. They can learn about a wide range of possible solutions in their field of activity. On the basis of others' solutions and experience they can find their own solutions which fit their condition. This can help them think "out of the box".



Veleslava Abadzhiyeva, MORE4NRG project partner, Euro Perspectives Foundation, Bulgaria

#### 1. What have you appreciated the most about participating in your INTERREG IVC project?

The fact that Bulgaria had the chance to hear about and see numerous actions and practices that are not available in local context. This INTERREG IVC project provided the opportunity to meet with experts and people from other administrations to understand how the good practice was designed and implemented. Peer review was also very important as it gave direct input to the Bulgarian situation and provided Gabrovo Regional Administration with practical feedback for its updated regional development strategy.

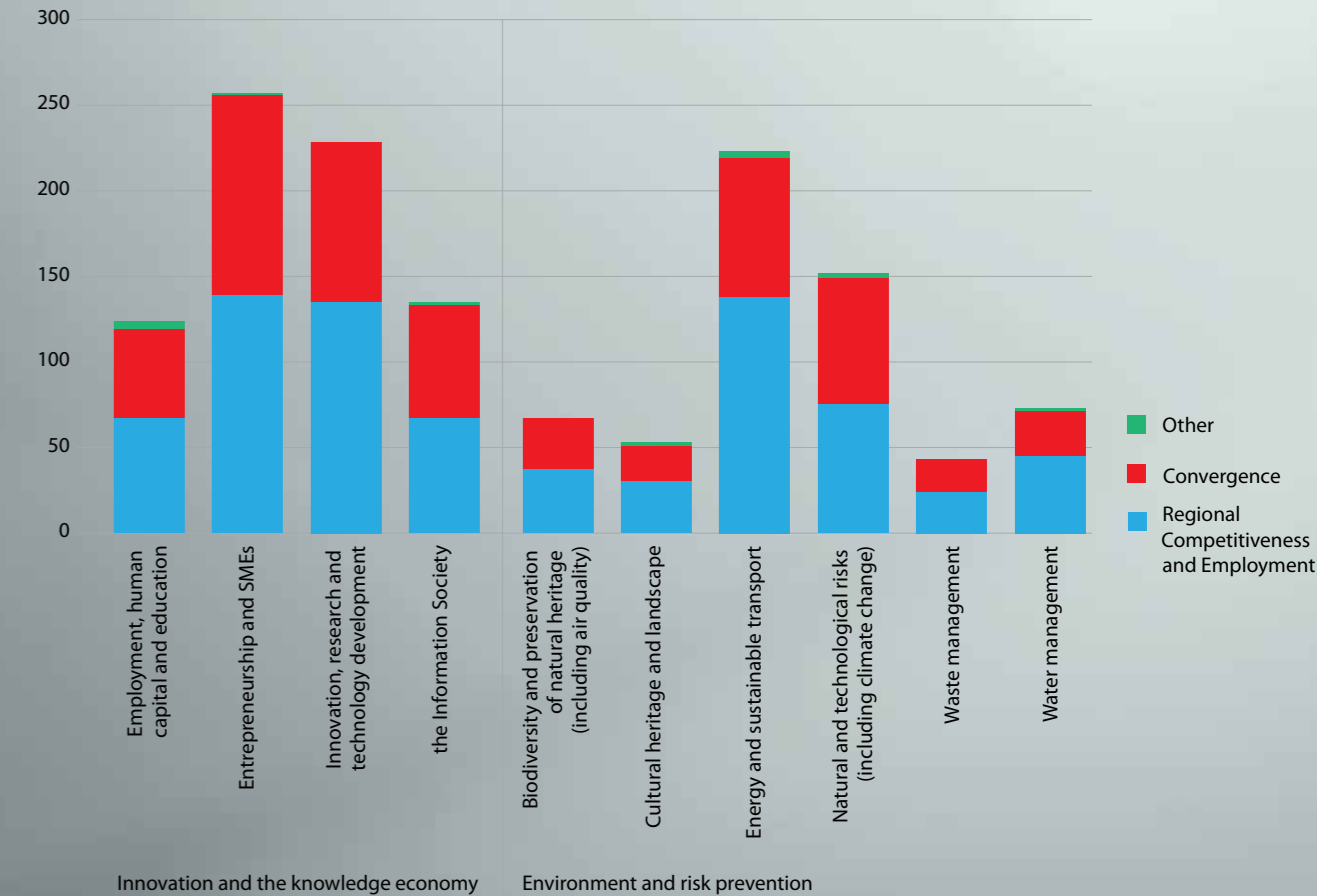
#### 2. What challenges did you face in the course of the project?

We did not face substantial challenges as the entire environment was highly favourable for achieving the project results. Luckily, the update of the Regional Development Strategy happened during the project implementation and we were able to find an appropriate place for the project inputs. Similarly, the Gabrovo energy efficiency plan was entirely developed during the project, absorbing the project inputs again. The main challenge is the need to pre-finance all expenses before reimbursement. For countries like Bulgaria, an advance payment would greatly help with the smooth project implementation.

#### 3. If you were to participate in future interregional cooperation projects, what improvements or changes would you like to see?

We do not have suggestions for improvement apart from possible advance payment for countries that are not so advanced.

Number of project partners according to regional status, per sub-theme



Entrepreneurship & SMEs is the most popular theme with both Convergence and Competitiveness regions



# Projects for Sustainable Growth

There is a general agreement that for growth to be smart it has to be sustainable. Projects in the INTERREG

IVC programme, falling into the second priority, look for smart solutions to problems in the field of environment and various environmental risks. Regional policies focusing on issues such as energy, sustainable transport, water and waste management, effects of climate change and other natural and technological risks, air quality, preservation of biodiversity, natural and cultural heritage, and landscape

are tackled by an increasing number of projects, holding a promise of more good practices facilitating sustainable growth in Europe. Five projects presented in the following pages provide a small overview of successful policy work and good practices already available for European regions to help them face the challenges of sustainable growth.



Energy Efficiency



Climate Change



Urban Transport

## Cooperation to Ensure Energy Efficiency

Improving energy efficiency is one of the strategic goals of the European Union, committed to a 20% reduction of primary energy consumption by 2020. Finding smart approaches to cutting energy consumption and eliminating energy waste can play an important role not only in direct environmental terms but also in keeping or boosting competitiveness of European goods and services in an increasingly environmentally-conscious market.

Many European regions take part in the promotion of renewable sources of energy and development of energy efficiency strategies. The Province of Flevoland, a competitiveness region in the Netherlands, took the lead in the **MORE4NRG** project to share experience on policies supporting sustainable sources of energy with other European partners. In collaboration with the Assembly of European Regions, that initiated a joint approach to renewable energy of more than 80 European regions who signed the “European Regions for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources” declaration, the project focused not only on good practices and experience in policies on sustainable energy, but also on tools for measuring the effect of such policies.

As a lead partner, the Province of Flevoland shared experience with others on transferring from first to second

generation wind energy in Flevoland. Clear formulation of a policy for placing turbines in the province in the District Plan encouraged local entrepreneurs to invest in wind energy. Explicit information served as a guideline for them and translated itself into a rapid growth of wind energy development at an early stage.

Providing clear information and understandable explanation of energy efficiency strategies plays an important role when debating with the public adoption of energy consumption reduction and energy saving approaches in their regions. The Greek partner from a convergence region, Patras Science Park, and the Italian partner from competitiveness region of Abruzzo, the Regional Energy Agency, shared their good practices on increasing public awareness about renewable energy sources and savings, changing the mindset of people towards energy consumption.

The Park of Energy Awareness (PENA) created in Greece provides everyone with a hands-on experience of various technologies harnessing energy and also demonstrates their benefits to the environment. The Italian partner presented a programme aimed at a young public. Called *Energiochi*, the initiative educates young people about the importance and potential of renewable energy sources. It is a contest for school-children with various assignments that promotes energy-saving behaviour and informs children how our everyday habits affect environment.

The awareness-raising practices from Greece and Italy inspired MORE4NRG partners from two Romanian

convergence regions. Maramureş County Council developed a proposal under the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme, to set up an interactive educational centre, similar to PENA, in Baia Mare. They also prepared an initiative called ‘Energy Games – Energy Takes Shape’, a school contest encouraging the active role of students and teachers in the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Similarly, Prahova County Council, the other Romanian partner, decided to transfer the Greek awareness-raising good practice and incorporate it into the Integrated Development Plan for the Growth Pole Ploieşti (capital city of the county). People’s mindset and behaviour changes are key for turning energy consumption patterns into a more efficient form, but such changes take time.



MORE4NRG partners also discussed approaches promising more instant improvements in energy efficiency. For example, the Swedish partner from Västernorrland County in a competitiveness region shared their 'Energy Factor 2' good practice that helped the administration cut consumption of heat and electricity by 30%. Inviting experts on energy and environment to assess the council's consumption and identify potential for savings provided helpful suggestions. Though difficult to put in effect at first, due to people's reluctance to adjust their behaviour according to the expert advice, governmental support encouraged the council to invest in the energy-saving project prepared by the experts.

One specific practical example of energy-saving measures adopted in Sweden is a snow storage system cooling the local hospital during summer that helped cut down energy consumption by more than 90%. The Swedish model, with a specific unit within the regional authority responsible for energy efficiency issues, served as an inspiration for Gabrovo convergence region in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian regional governor then designated an employee to be responsible for energy efficiency in the region, whose job description was later further clarified thanks to improved policy on that issue.

MORE4NRG partners also conducted a peer review of the region's strengths and weaknesses, following a unique methodology provided by the Assembly of European Regions, and recommended Gabrovo to develop a strategic energy

plan in line with their national objectives and incorporate specific objectives for energy efficiency into their regional development strategy. In spring 2010, the Bulgarian region put the experts' recommendation in practice by inserting a new chapter on energy in their regional development strategy.

Fruitful discussions and cooperation among the MORE4NRG project partners assisted three regions in improving their regional policies on renewable energy already during the project's lifetime. For example, as explained above, Gabrovo region in Bulgaria incorporated a new section on renewable energy and energy efficiency into their Regional Development Strategy. The Swedish partner was influenced by high level seminars and exchange on good practices regarding solar energy and put in writing their own plans in that field afterwards. The plans later became a part of the County Council Energy and Environmental Strategy. For the Noord-Brabant region, participating in the MORE4NRG project emphasised the international context of many energy issues. Before adopting the new 'Energy Agenda 2010-2020' for the region, a new section with an international profile was added.

An ambitious and comprehensive approach to identifying good practices capable of moving regions towards a low carbon economy was adopted by partners in the POWER mini-programme. Partners involved in the project decided to look for smart and sustainable regional development strategies and policy instruments in five areas: Energy

Efficiency; Renewable Energy; Sustainable Transport; Behaviour Change; and Eco-Innovation and Environmental Technologies.

Partners from four regions cooperating in **POWER**, Andalusia in Spain, South-East England in the United Kingdom, Emilia-Romagna in Italy, and Małopolska in Poland, developed the GENERATION (Green ENERGY AuditIng for a LOW CarboN Economy) sub-project to exchange experience on approaches and tools improving energy efficiency. They focused on energy audits of public buildings that allow for better identification of energy-saving potential. While tackling methods of energy consumption and demand assessment, they developed simplified software for that purpose. Emilia-Romagna region made it available for free on its regional web portal (at <http://www.provincia.modena.it> under Temi Ambiente · Energia).







The Małopolska convergence region shared experience in using geothermal energy from hot springs in Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains National Park to heat public buildings and raise awareness of that renewable resource among professionals and the general public by holding conferences and seminars in the newly built geothermal plant. The other Energy Efficiency sub-project, SEECA (Strategy for Energy Efficiency through Climate Agreements), let the County Administration Board of Uppsala in Sweden share the Climate Agreement good practice with the Environment Department of Tallinn City Government in Estonia and Niepołomice Municipality in the Małopolska region of Poland.

A brochure on the voluntary agreement of public and private actors to introduce energy-efficient measures was distributed in Tallinn. That practice, however, did not seem applicable in Niepołomice yet, where businesses were reluctant to sign up to energy saving measures because of their low confidence in actual savings.

To raise awareness and confidence in energy efficiency and savings, a website on such agreements was set up ([www.porozumieniaklimatyczne.pl](http://www.porozumieniaklimatyczne.pl)) and an eco-calendar with tips on energy efficiency published. The partners cooperated on research on energy efficient use of industrial machinery. Uppsala gathered knowledge from a research institute; Niepołomice tested eco-driving techniques in heavy trucks (MAN) and buses; and Tallinn ran seminars on eco-driving in heavy vehicles and use of gaseous fuels. Tallinn Environment Department aims to incorporate eco-driving courses into organised waste management procurement rules by the end of 2011. The project also influenced the respective partner's climate and energy strategies.

The Municipality of Boxtel in the Netherlands initiated a Renewable Energy sub-project called TIMBER (Tools for Integrated Management of Biomass Energy Resources), joined by partners from Spain, Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, with the aim to look into various efficient uses of biomass. For example, the Province of Cádiz from a convergence region presented a good practice on using domestic biomass boilers. A large-scale use of biomass in combined heat and power system was described to the partners during a study visit in Stockholm. That was very inspiring for the Polish representatives from Małopolska region, who analysed potential biomass resources in their area available from timber or agricultural crops and assessed various biomass installation issues.

Similar assessments and studies were conducted by all TIMBER partners. The Małopolska region suggested using the method of Life Cycle Assessment to compare different processes, technologies and feasibility tests of biomass energy and heat generation. Ngage, the British partner, provided others with some insights on current biomass policies and potential barriers inhibiting the market from performing effectively and efficiently. Fruitful cooperation and expertise gathered in the course of the project helped the Swedish partner influence the Regional Action Programme for Energy and Climate of Stockholm City Council. The TIMBER project also had an impact on the formulation of the UK Forestry Commission Woodland Improvement Grant that can help provide a local source of biomass fuel.



## Cooperation to Promote Clean and Sustainable Public Transport

European cities and regions stand before a mixed bag of challenges regarding public transport. On the one hand, improved urban mobility can strengthen the local economy and positively influence the quality of life of all citizens. On the other hand, there are issues like pollution, congestion and accidents that must be tackled as urban transport is responsible for a large portion of such negative consequences. A number of INTERREG IVC projects look for suggestions on how to enhance mobility and at the same time reduce its negative effects.

Some regions adopt hard measures to deal with mobility by building new roads, tram lines, or bicycle tracks. Others focus more on the soft approaches like improving the flow of information or coordination of existing services.

Partners from the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom in the POWER sub-project E-Mob (E-Mobility accelerator), described in the previous section, looked at strategies for the successful market implementation of electric vehicles. The project helped the Polish partner launch the debate on electric vehicles in the Małopolska region and attract more attention to this issue.

In TraCit (Transport Carbon IntenCities), partners from the United Kingdom, Poland and Estonia focused on policies reducing carbon intensive travel while at the same time supporting the development, economic growth and sustainability of new and existing urban environments. As a result they developed a common approach to measuring travel intensity and carbon audits with respect to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to assess the impact of various policies. Estonia, a convergence region, benefited greatly from the TraCit sub-project. First, web-based cartoons for children promoting eco-behaviour were created in Tallinn and attracted thousands of viewers. Moreover, findings of a transport carbon audit were submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and consequently the governmental action plan included points on labelling cars, alternative transport planning, and electric vehicles.

Fifteen regions shared solutions within **PIMMS Transfer** (TRansferring Actions iN Sustainable mobility For European Regions) project regarding soft measures on transport planning, ticketing, parking, procurement, safety training, or cycling. For example, the Cypriot partner from a competitiveness region, Larnaca Municipality, built



on two good practices offering more information to transport users. A Road Safety and Awareness Park, inspired by a similar park in Serres Municipality in a Greek convergence region, will soon provide traffic education to schoolchildren. They will ride their bicycles on model roads with traffic lights, signs and crossings, and learn the traffic regulations in practice.

Larnaca administration also wants to build a Mobility Information Point, modelled after a good practice provided by the German partner, traffiQ – Frankfurt Public Transport Authority, that will offer as comprehensive information on local transport and mobility as possible.

Public transport planning improved in Klaipeda, a convergence region in Lithuania, after a study visit in Frankfurt and exchange of experience with the German partner. A new improved public transport scheme focusing on Klaipeda's suburban areas with an adjusted bus route system covering problematic areas went into effect in February 2010. The Lithuanian partner also learned about useful tendering services from the Portuguese experience in managing the public transport system,





defining responsibilities of operators, governing bodies, the city and other regional governments. The passenger information system has also improved thanks to clear definition of responsibilities of all relevant actors.

Plans of the Slovak partner, the Bratislava Self-Governing Region, for an integrated public transport system with efficiently designed interchanges have come closer to realisation thanks to experience exchange with the PIMMS Transfer lead partner, the London Councils. Bratislava – a competitiveness region – learned from London the design and management of public transport interchanges and Bratislava Integrated Transport Company adopted some of the elements into their documents on interchange standards. The British partner also benefited from the project as it ran a pilot application on carbon emission reduction that was eventually adopted by one of the London boroughs, Haringey.

One of the issues tackled by PIMMS Transfer partners was a reduction in pollution by alternative means of transport, for example, use of bicycles. In Poland, the City of Gdańsk in a convergence region adopted several new regulations regarding cycling thanks to the PIMMS Transfer project. Based on a pilot application providing schoolchildren with a real traffic practical training on bicycles, a new regulation was adopted in Gdańsk making such training an obligatory element of cycling courses for children. General cycling conditions in the city also improved thanks to an exchange of experience with the Austrian partner from a competi-

tiveness region, the City of Graz. That helped Gdańsk put in place new traffic regulations turning the city centre into a 30 km/ph zone, providing cyclists with more and safer opportunities for travelling in streets closed for cars or one-way streets.

The City of Graz tested some good practices from partners from Germany and the Netherlands in a pilot on shared space under the topic 'Room for Everyone'. The pilot helped the Austrian partner identify further good practices on designing public space in a specific way that allows for traffic regulation without traffic signs, road markings and extra pavements. Apart from reducing pollution in city centres, the PIMMS Transfer partners also dealt with traffic congestion problems, in particular through specific regulations of parking. The City of Sofia found inspiration in zoning practices from London and congestion charging practices from Stockholm.

The Bulgarian partner from a convergence region developed a parking strategy dividing Sofia into three zones with different charges aimed at improving efficiency of public transport operators and road safety by decreasing traffic congestion in the city. Similarly, the Municipality of Maribor, a convergence region in Slovenia, found inspiration for its own parking system in good practices from Graz. The Slovenian partner developed the new parking policies around a system of parking permits for city centre inhabitants and payable parking zones for short-term parking. Maribor succeeded in a more comprehensive transport

policymaking. Apart from the new parking system, the public transport system was improved after an inspiring study visit in Frankfurt, the bus fleet in the Slovenian town was partially renewed and adapted to disabled people,





and a new ticketing system modelled after the Frankfurt one was introduced. The examples just presented clearly illustrate that cooperation within the PIMMS Transfer project on soft measures improving the efficiency of public transport policies brought benefits to both convergence and competitiveness regions involved in the exchange of experience.

### *Inclusive Transport*

Public transport and mobility are important not only for urban communities. Many rural or remote areas are often left without public transport services. That is why regions interested in smart approaches to overcoming the problem of a lack of transport connections looked for inspiration within the FLIPPER (Flexible Transport Services and ICT platform for Eco-Mobility in urban and rural European areas) project. Interest in increasing the inclusiveness of public transport for vulnerable citizen groups or remote areas while keeping or increasing its environmental-friendliness are what connected partners in this project.

The key inclusive tool discussed by **FLIPPER** partners was a system of flexible transport services. Such a system is complementary to conventional public transport and serves mobility needs that are not scheduled in terms of time or location.

Usually small-size buses operate on flexible routes at flexible times according to customers' needs and requests. There are various models of such a flexible transport service system with distinct aspects regarding financing, coordinating, surveying customers, providing information, or connecting the system to conventional networks, tailored to local needs.

Feasibility studies of eleven localities in partner regions assessed the introduction or improvement of a flexible transport service in terms of sustainability, environmental effects and social impact, and seven of them were developed fully into pilot applications.

Different flexible transport service models tested in convergence or competitiveness regions of Italy, Austria, Greece, Spain, Ireland, and Portugal allowed FLIPPER partners investigate flexible transport good practices and their applicability in diverse environments under varying conditions.

Apart from the feasibility studies and pilot applications, the project partners shared their experience and knowledge with each other. The project lead partner from a competitiveness region in Italy, SRM – Networks and Mobility, the Public Transport Authority Bologna, turned out to be a valuable source of

information and good practices for others. For example, ATL – Livorno Transport Operator, also an Italian partner, adopted a good practice from Bologna on how to improve financial balance of demand responsive transport service operation for Rosignano urban area. The new service scheme is a combination of scheduled school trips in the morning and early afternoon and a flexible demand-responsive transport service coverage in-between.

The partner from Livorno also benefited from Bologna's survey methodology used for gathering information on citizens' needs and requirements for transport. The Livorno Transport Operator asked for the same information and used the same form of phone survey when collecting data for their feasibility study, carried out as part of the FLIPPER project.

The European Territorial Cooperation programme, INTERREG IVC, thus facilitated fruitful cooperation between two Italian regions that may not have happened within the national context.





The lead partner from Bologna also benefited from the European experience exchange. Expertise and knowledge of the British partner, the University of Aberdeen, guided all the partners through the preparation of feasibility studies with a structured methodology for the design and implementation of a flexible transport service.

Indicators suggested by the British partner in the methodology served as significant criteria for the partners to follow during implementation of a demand-responsive transport service.

Bologna built on the British input when preparing a pilot application of a flexible transport service system in Borgo Panigale, a low density area with scarce public transport.

The pilot connected the remote area with the conventional transport network and

local administrative offices, using existing private hire taxi services and its dispatch centre for booking.

Two pilot applications took place in two Greek convergence regions: in Kastoria, a flexible transport service called KALOSTOUS was set up for locals and tourists, using the extra capacity of existing taxi operators; and in Volos, a flexible transport service specially designed for people with disabilities and the elderly, in addition to three regular buses operated by the Municipal Organization for Health and Social Affairs, was tested as a cost-efficient improvement of the system.

The Spanish partner tested a flexible transport service system on the Island of Formentera in a competitiveness region. A fixed-route service used sufficiently by tourists and locals during summer turns into a demand-responsive service during winter, when the circular route of the bus is adjusted according to demand, communicated to drivers by an intercom system. The flexible transport service system was also tested in a competitiveness region in Ireland, in South Tipperary – a low density area with poor public transport connections.

The Irish partner developed the pilot application to provide connections to health care and day care centres, using the services of a non-profit transport provider and volunteers.

The FLIPPER project identified, tested and transferred many good practices dealing with mobility challenges in a flexible and innovative way. Originality

and innovativeness of ideas shared among the project partners was acknowledged by the Regions for Economic Change RegioStars 2011 Award nomination.





## Cooperation to Mitigate Climate Change

Slowly changing climate brings along a higher number of extreme weather conditions causing, for example, droughts or floods. Extreme weather phenomena thus pose yet another challenge to European regions. For example many urban areas are not well-equipped to deal with severe consequences of extreme weather. Thirteen approved INTERREG IVC projects look for tools and policies mitigating various natural and technological risks, including those connected to climate change. Regions take part in those projects to exchange experience, for example, on spatial planning and urban design limiting vulnerability of communities to such risks, and identify good practices making regional development more resilient to climate change.

There are many tools with such climate resilience potential. Partners in the **GRaBS** (Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns) project identified a number of them: green infrastructure with gardens, parks, productive landscapes, green roofs and walls, or green corridors, and blue infrastructure with rivers, streams, floodplains, water bodies, or sustainable drainage systems.

The problem is that their protective potential is not sufficiently recognised and they are not integrated in the mainstream urban planning. GRaBS partners, therefore, decided to develop

specific adaptation action plans to raise awareness and extend knowledge about such climate resilience potential among decision-makers at regional and local levels and within communities, to encourage use of that potential in urban development planning, and to engage communities in spatial development.

The University of Manchester, one of the GRaBS partners, shared the results of their research and technology with others. That served as a basis for the development of a Climate Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment Tool, one of the outputs of the partnership cooperation. The tool visualises the expected impacts of climate (for example, heat or storms) at the local level of each partner. A map, outlining areas at risk, should help decision makers and urban planners adopt appropriate adaptation measures. Such a visual aid can also make participation of communities easier, as it makes relevant information more accessible to lay people.

The City of Malmö provided valuable know-how on green planning instruments. The other partners gained many insights by studying the approaches of the Swedish partner to a former industrial neighbourhood redevelopment, making it an attractive, healthy environment for people, promoting biodiversity and tackling problems with storm water. The application of the so-called Green Space Factor and Green Points System by the Malmö City Council required from developers in every building lot a certain amount of green cover, for example, climbing plants on walls, large trees, green roofs or vegetation

on water surface, with a different value (factor) assigned based on its kind. Green Points then added value to the cover according to its functionality in terms of biodiversity or storm water absorption. The Green Space Factor good practice was taken up by several British partners: Northwest Regional Development Agency incorporated that practice in their Sustainability for the Built Environment policy; Southampton City Council developed a Green Space Factor Tool in MapInfo to improve green infrastructure within their development sites; and London Borough of Sutton also plans to use that methodology in existing and new developments to ensure a minimum amount of appropriate green space there.





The Austrian GRaBS partner, the Department of Spatial Planning of the Provincial Government of Styria, shared experience on several good practices, among them the Open Space Standards. It is a set of standards for open spaces like front gardens, inner courtyards, streets, roofs, walls, or parking areas, aimed at improving the quality of life in the City of Graz. For instance, the parking areas standard requires one broad-leaved tree planted and maintained for every four new parking spaces, or the greening of roofs standard would like all flat roofs to have a vegetation layer to increase the amount of green space in the city which otherwise lacks greenery. Partners also had a chance to learn about the 'Green Net'

concept, a network of green and open spaces connected by green routes, creating a net extending over the entire urban area. The key function of the Net, apart from aesthetic and recreational quality, is cooling the climate.

The Slovak partner, the Regional Environment Centre (REC) for Eastern Europe, published land use planning standards in December 2010, building on several good practices exchanged within the GRaBS partnership. The Green Space Factor from Malmö contributed to the evidence base, as well as the Open Space Standards, shared by the Austrian partner. The REC also took the opportunity to conduct a practical exercise in Bratislava, using a remote sensor with thermal imaging. Data gathered during this exercise confirmed great differences in temperatures at different places in Bratislava with floodplain forests reaching 29.87°C while people around a shopping mall with a large concrete parking lot suffered from 42.06°C. It demonstrated how green spaces affect the microclimate, for example, cooling specific areas such as the concrete parking lot during extreme heat. The visual data allowed REC to conduct a vulnerability assessment of the city and lobby decision-makers to support green infrastructure. Cooperation with the GRaBS partners and expertise gained from the GRaBS project helped the Slovak partner improve Bratislava's Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020, addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation issues in the priority entitled 'Quality of the Environment and of Urban Spaces'.



# Interregional Cooperation towards Europe 2020

This brochure has provided a non-exhaustive series of examples on how interregional cooperation not only helps regions achieve their goals in terms of improved growth and sustainable development, but also contributes to increasing solidarity across Europe through the creation of strong and durable partnerships at a distance. Many of the examples show that advancement does not always coincide with economic level of development and the 'competitiveness' category assigned to a region. Some 'convergence' regions enriched project partnerships with their good practices and advised their more economically advanced partners on

implementing them. Virtually all INTERREG IVC projects connect regions with various levels of economic development from different parts of Europe, bridging competitiveness and convergence objectives of the Cohesion Policy. Linking different regions generates a working environment full of diverse perspectives and differing experience within a given policy field. That helps regional authorities and policy-makers see their problems from a new perspective and think 'out of the box' when devising a suitable regional solution.

Partners from the projects in this brochure reflect positively on the diversity of perspectives available in their partnerships. Many built on the valuable insights provided during debates and study visits with their distinct counterparts when updating their specific regional development strategies. Learning from others in such an environment, rich in experience and ideas, allows regions not only to find a suitable solution to their specific problems, but also look at their own policies from a different angle and see room for

improvement. Such an exchange of experience thus truly benefits all partners and regions involved in interregional cooperation, both those offering and explaining their good practice and those adapting it to their regional needs.

## *What comes next in this programme period?*

While all programme funds for the 2007-2013 period will have been allocated by the end of 2011, it does not mean that cooperation stops. The results achieved within interregional partnerships are not exclusively for the INTERREG IVC project partners. They are available for all public authorities interested in a cost-effective method of improving their own policies and practices. The programme can assist interested public bodies to take up results of the cooperation through an online Good Practice Database that collects the good practices identified and shared among project partners within the ten programme themes.

## *What do the beneficiaries say?*

*"The projects allow for learning at a European level and provide an opportunity for insight into how different bodies, in different countries, operate in their given field."*  
[Ring-a-Link, Ireland]

*"The projects really provide great opportunity to understand good practices from advanced countries and to consider what and how it could be implemented in our country."*  
[Gabrovo Region, Bulgaria]

*"Public authorities can learn many useful things through interregional cooperation. They can become aware of a wide range of possible solutions in their field of activity. On the basis of others' solutions and experience, they can find their own solutions which fit to their conditions. This helps them to think 'out of the box'."*  
[Tallinn City, Estonia]

Each practice details why it is successful and what conditions should be in place for it to succeed elsewhere. Most importantly for sharing the knowledge, it provides the contact details of the person and the organisation who implemented the good practice, for further contact and more in-depth exchange. This knowledge base is available on [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu).

### *What is next for interregional cooperation?*

Interregional cooperation will help exchange experience and good practices across Europe also in the future. The European Commission proposal for the next programming period 2014-2020 foresees total of 700 million EUR to be allocated for that specific strand of cooperation to further reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy. A successor programme of INTERREG IVC, with simplified rules and even greater focus on results, will continue

to support public authorities in sharing experience on efficient solutions to various regional issues on the European Union agenda. The European Union entered this decade with a vision for better future economic development, formulated in the Europe 2020 Strategy as smart, sustainable and inclusive. This strategy sets five specific targets in employment, poverty, tertiary education and school drop-out rates, in energy consumption and in research and development investments, to be reached by the EU member states by the end of the decade. Seven initiatives, developed to meet the targets, synthesise elements of the Lisbon and the Gothenburg agendas – innovation, research and competitiveness, green and sustainable – and add emphasis on social cohesion issues, with a crisis exit strategy through budgetary consolidation and financial system reform at the foreground. European regions and cities are expected to play an important role in turning the vision into reality. This publication demonstrates that many regional

and local authorities involved in interregional cooperation are already able to develop policies and approaches that go in the right direction, be it fostering knowledge, innovation or digital society, encouraging more resource efficient production, or raising participation in the labour market. Results of their work have the potential to make a valuable contribution to the adopted initiatives leading to the envisaged smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The INTERREG IVC programme supports projects in ten themes matching most of the Europe 2020 Strategy initiatives. The projects demonstrate that interregional cooperation helps them grow their human capacity and improve their policy making in many strategic areas. Continued exchange of experience and good practices among various European regions can prove to be one of the key instruments for developing policies and strategies to meet the Europe 2020 targets.

### *Suggestions for improvement*

*“a mid-term review to evaluate what was done and what still needs to be done in order to obtain the results and expected benefits”*

*[ERAI, France]*

*“advance payment for countries that are not so advanced”*

*[Gabrovo Region, Bulgaria]*

*“more time for project starting phase to work out common understanding of project related issues”*

*[Tallinn City, Estonia]*

*“flexibility - to have means to adapt to changes and allow for some justifiable modifications”*

*[North Karelia, Finland]*

*“to involve additional partners, e.g. active municipality or region, during the project implementation”*

*[REC Slovakia]*

*“make the administration and justification process simpler and less time consuming”*

*[Province Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands]*

*“capacity building or training to increase the skills and competences of regions to make their work more efficient”*

*[Province Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands]*

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## Credits

This brochure was produced and published by the Joint Technical Secretariat of the INTERREG IVC programme 2007-2013, with the particular assistance of Information Point East.

We thank all the project partners who helped produce this brochure and provided their logos.

Photocredits: Centrefold map © EC

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Printed in November 2011



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