

Report

Interreg post 2027 stakeholders' consultation meeting

Subject of consultation

Shape of the post 2027 Interreg programme on the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian borderlands

Objectives of consultation

1. Identify and analyse the key spheres and problems in the region that need solutions and can be addressed by Interreg post 2027 programme;
2. Assess conditions and locate points for cooperation;
3. Collect opinions, propositions and define probable directions of Interreg post 2027 for the region.

Note: The required timing of the meeting is 2-3 hours

Administration

Region	Województwo Mazowieckie
Conducted by (entity)	Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Mazowieckiego w Warszawie
Place/venue/address	ul. Wiszniewskiego 4, 08-110 Siedlce
Date	22.10.2024 r.

Part 1.

Information about respondents

Number of participants	55 persons 38 entities represented
Categories of participants, structure and share of participation	<p>Note: Please register participants in the list that will be further attached to the report (List should obligatory contain name, surname, function, name of entity represented, type of entity, signature).</p> <p>The following groups of stakeholders shall be invited and represented in the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Regional, urban, local government authorities; 2.) Healthcare institutions; 3.) Education institutions (schools, universities, academies), training or research centres; 4.) Cultural institutions (such as museums, galleries etc.); 5.) Organizations responsible for nature/environment protection; 6.) Bodies in charge of disaster and emergency risk management; 7.) Economic/social partners, associations, SMEs;

	<p>8.) NGOs (indicating a sphere of activity); 9.) Other type (what exactly)</p> <p>Please provide the division of the audience into each of the type. Example: Healthcare institutions – 15% (5 entities) Local governments – 75% (31 entities) Other (State Fire Service, Water and Sewerage Company – 10% (2 entities)</p>
<p>The level of awareness of the audience about the Poland-(Belarus)-Ukraine / Interreg and EU/Donor funded projects</p>	<p>Please assess the audience according to the level of awareness/involvement of the organisation in the EU funded projects in the region and specify what is the quantity and % share of each group in the total quantity of participants (it is best to cover that in the registration):</p> <p>40% Low – heard of EU-funded projects without knowing details on the financing conditions, priorities, objectives etc.;</p> <p>37% Medium – aware of the EU-funded projects with basic knowledge on conditions, examples of projects in the region or indirectly involved in the implementation;</p> <p>23% High – directly involved in the Programme/projects implementation as a Monitoring Committee member or beneficiary of current or previous Poland-(Belarus)-Ukraine programme edition.</p>

Part 2.

What is Interreg

The audience should be informed about the basic data on the Programme (PL-UA/PBU) - financing structure, area, cross-border cooperation frame, successful projects in the region. The information should be adapted to the participants' awareness on the issue – if it is medium-high – please communicate rather the analysis of the previous programmes (challenges, resolutions, lessons learnt etc.).

Highly informed participants may assist in sharing the basic information for enriching the discussion.

The participants were informed about key aspects of the Interreg NEXT Program, including the financial structure, the area of cross-border cooperation, and future plans. Specific examples of completed projects were also presented, and participants shared their experiences with their implementation. The information presented was flexibly adapted to the knowledge level of all participants, which enabled an effective approach to both people with more experience and those less familiar with the topic. Thanks to this, each participant could fully understand the presented issues. This flexibility also allowed everyone to be included in the discussion.

Experience of the region

Please indicate which PBU/PL-UA projects (or other CBC projects) implemented in the region proved most successful in the stakeholders' opinion, brought strongest results, had highest impact etc.

Projects related to road infrastructure and health care turned out to be among the most effective in the region. Investments in roads not only improved local communication, but also strengthened cross-border trade and population mobility. Better road connections facilitated access to services, which had a direct impact on the quality of life of residents on both sides of the border. Health care projects aimed to ensure equal access to health care and improve diagnostics, which raised the standards of medical care. Joint workshops, training and exchange of experiences were an integral part of all projects, which allowed to improve the qualifications of participants and strengthen cross-border cooperation. This made the implementation of these projects more effective and allowed us to better solve common challenges.

Particular attention was paid to security, where joint exercises of rescue services from both sides of the border significantly improved the ability to respond to crisis situations. The purchase of modern fire trucks additionally strengthened the intervention capabilities of the rescue services, which translated into greater safety of residents and better coordination in emergency situations.

Part 3.

Analysis of feedback and input on key questions

Note: After introductory input and familiarization with the audience please initiate further joint discussion and exchange of opinions of the stakeholders on each of below key questions.

1. Is location next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?	As a summary of opinions of stakeholders please put the jointly outlined general answer whether the location next to a border is more opportunity or disadvantage and explain what key arguments state for the chosen answer.
	<p>Living near the border may both create opportunities and involve certain threats.</p> <p>Chances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It opens the door to projects that might otherwise be impossible to implement. 2. It creates excellent conditions for cultural exchange and social integration, building lasting relationships. 3. It promotes the creation of joint economic and educational initiatives. <p>Threats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geopolitical situation/war in Ukraine. 2. Security in border areas, increased controls, instability on the border with Belarus. 3. Mobility restrictions/difficulties in crossing the border. 4. Entrepreneurs' concerns related to the geopolitical situation may lead to a decline in investments in the region.
2. Where is the biggest potential for territorial cooperation in your area ?	Please work on the joint identification of the region's most actual fields to be addressed in frames of Interreg orientation.

	<p>Please list maximum 5 from below and arrange the list from the most to less actual. If other arise please add to the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint cultural heritage; - Health services and healthy lifestyle promotion; - Protection of environment; - Responding to natural and human related threats and hazards - Cooperation between research / science / academic centres - Promotion of entrepreneurship - Facilitations for SME cross-border operability - Easy employment in the neighbouring country - Tourism development - Networking research and enterprises to innovate - Joint sport events - Border security - Road infrastructure - Public transport crossing the border - Social integration - Strengthening local identity - New technologies / innovativeness development and promotion - Other – what exactly?
<p>3. What currently works well in this cooperation and should be either preserved or reinforced?</p>	<p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise maximum 5 positive points agreed in the audience.</p> <p>Examples: Creation of joint natural park areas; Shared health services; Jointly coordinated security/emergency services - fire-fighters operations across the border, etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shared health services; 2. Jointly coordinated fire-fighters operations across the border 3. Communication between partners via online tools. 4. Professionalism of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg NEXT Program. Thanks to our current activities, partners can count on comprehensive support (including training, individual consultations). The current model of

	<p>support for project implementation is satisfactory and does not require change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Financing activities for which it is difficult to find other sources of financing. The development of border areas in Ukraine through the implementation of Interreg projects has a positive impact on Polish border areas.
4. What currently does not work well in this cooperation and should be improved?	<p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise maximum 5 negative issues agreed in the audience.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Nature preservation practices in a shared river basin are not unified;</p> <p>Exchanges of practical experience between places facing the same issues are complicated.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult communication due to a language barrier, which may discourage cooperation and lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Differences in law and administration between Poland and Ukraine make it difficult to coordinate activities, which may lead to delays in project implementation. Problems with free travel and crossing the border. Long time for assessing applications for funding and receiving a decision on project funding.
5. What are major obstacles for a good cross-border cooperation in your area?	<p>On the issues summarized above please provide the major obstacles that interfere these issues to be duly solved.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Low and uneven economic development;</p> <p>Little knowledge of programme and/or partner country language;</p> <p>Uneven competence and salary level of local authorities personnel, etc.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Low level of knowledge of English/difficulty understanding and properly completing the documentation. Concerns about the partner's trustworthiness Uncertainty as to the result of cooperation/concerns related to the return of funding in the event of failure. Problems with administrative procedures in the partner's country, which are not consistent with Polish procedures and project guidelines.
6. Are there things you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why?	<p>Please collect probable measures/goals and reasons.</p> <p>Examples:</p>

	Involvement of SME as partners to strengthen financial and operational capability cannot be done to regulatory limitations of programme rules;
	Inability to implement large infrastructure projects due to program amounts.
7. What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future Interreg?	Please put the propositions that are new to the programme.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Education - exchange between schools and universities, participation in workshops, training, conferences, research projects, training for teachers, exchange of experiences, joint publications, thematic lessons. 2 Tourism - supporting local initiatives, development of tourist infrastructure, organization of joint events, campaigns, promotion of tourist attractions. 3 Renewable energy sources - no program to co-finance the energy transformation.
8. Is there a need for some infrastructure projects?	Please collect opinions/propositions of joint infrastructure projects may be established in the region in cooperation with adjacent region of the partner country.
	<p>Infrastructure projects are essential for the sustainable development of the region. They directly influence the quality of life and are the basis for socio-economic development.</p> <p>Investments in road infrastructure support economic development, contribute to increased mobility and accessibility, and are of strategic importance in terms of safety and efficient logistics.</p>
9. What should be done to facilitate the work with your counterparts in another country (governance)?	Please list measures on governance that would be applicable for improvement of the cooperation between bordering countries/regions.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of transparent rules respected by all partners. 2. Minimizing bureaucracy 3. Organizational support - special procedures for travelers, enabling partners to cross the border faster and more comfortably and move around the territory of the partner's country.

Part 4.

Conclusions, other topics of discussion

Please put here everything what was not covered above, but raised/expressed during discussion.

Overall assessment of the meeting by the organizer

Were the objectives of the consultation achieved?

Please refer to each objective and describe the level of engagement of the stakeholders into discussion.

1. Identify and analyse the key spheres and problems in the region that need solutions and can be addressed by Interreg post 2027 programme – objective achieved
2. Assess conditions and locate points for cooperation - objective achieved
3. Collect opinions, propositions and define probable directions of Interreg post 2027 for the region objective achieved

The goals of the consultation meeting were achieved. Participants demonstrated varying levels of knowledge and experience in project implementation. Thanks to the flexible approach, everyone had the opportunity to actively participate and express their opinions. Key areas that should be included in the post-2027 program were identified and analyzed. Opinions and conclusions were collected and presented in this report.

Interesting quotes

Please collect interesting, important quotes from the participants on the matter of future post 27 programme.

Please put Name of participant, Quote in "".

Mariusz Kucewicz, Mayor of the City and Commune of Łosice - "the location near the state border is an opportunity thanks to multiculturalism and willingness to cooperate on both sides of the border"

Questionnaires

As a final point of the consultation – 10-15 minutes – please ask participants to fill the questionnaire for stakeholders on-line e.g. on their smartphones/laptops using the link (QR-code) to questionnaire for stakeholders (3 language versions available).

Participants that had already filled the survey before the meeting may share the experience and discuss whether consultation allow to improve replies given earlier.

During the meeting, participants were asked to complete a stakeholder survey. QR codes have been made available in the conference room.

Attachments:

1. Agenda.
2. List of Participants.