

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.

Administration

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| Region | Ternopil Oblast, Ukraine |
| Conducted by (entity) | Lviv Branch Office of Joint Secretariat |
| Place/venue/address | Ternopil Oblast State Administration, 8 Hrushevskoho St., Ternopil |
| Date | 26 September 2024 |

Part 1.

Information about respondents

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| Number of participants | 20 persons 18 entities represented |
| Categories of participants, structure and share of participation | Regional, urban, local government authorities - 10(56%) Healthcare institutions - 2 (11%) Education institutions (schools, universities, academies), training or research centers - 3 (17%) Cultural institutions (such as museums, galleries etc.) – 2(11%) Organizations responsible for nature/environment protection - 0 (0%) Bodies in charge of disaster and emergency risk management - 0 (0%) Economic/social partners, associations, SMEs - 0(0%) NGOs (regional development) - 1 (6%) |

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| The level of awareness of the audience about the Poland-(Belarus)-Ukraine / Interreg and EU/Donor funded projects | <p>Low – heard of EU-funded projects without knowing details on the financing conditions, priorities, objectives etc.;</p> <p>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>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> |
| | <p>Low – 7</p> <p>Medium – 7</p> <p>High - 13</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.

As the majority of participants had high or medium level of awareness about the Programme, only general information about the Programme background was provided (programme periods, statistics of the supported projects, current Programme priorities, and future activities in the Programme).

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 in the field of culture - MediaLabs (2007-2013) and EACH, BEC project for children with disabilities

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.

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| <p>1. Is location next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?</p> | <p>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> <p>Advantages: common heritage, traditional tourist destination for Polish tourist, logistics, transport</p> |
| <p>2. Where is the biggest potential for territorial cooperation in your area ?</p> | <p>Please work on the joint identification of the region's most actual fields to be addressed in frames of Interreg orientation. 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? - |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism development 2. Health services and healthy lifestyle promotion; 3. Protection of environment; 4. Joint cultural heritage; 5. New technologies / innovativeness development and promotion |
| 3. What currently works well in this cooperation and should be either preserved or reinforced? | <p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise maximum 5 positive points agreed in the audience.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Creation of joint natural park areas;</p> <p>Shared health services;</p> <p>Jointly coordinated security/emergency services - fire-fighters operations across the border, etc.</p> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication within the Programme, Ukrainian Branch Office working for all the programme area in Ukraine, much information is available 2. Many open events 3. Additional events such as an Educational campaign for Schools within IC Day, which is good for establishing contacts 4. Representation of all regional authorities <p>The beneficiaries receive consultations and trainings at each stage</p> |
| 4. What currently does not work well in this cooperation and should be improved? | <p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise a 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"> 1. Partner search is extremely complicated 2. Low competencies of local authorities, lack of vision, which hampers creation of development projects 3. Sometimes, lack of interest on the Polish side 4. Bureaucracy |
| 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 the programme and/or partner country language;</p> |

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| | Uneven competence and salary level of local authorities personnel, etc. |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of partners (historically, less contacts, than in the regions with physical borders) 2. Lack of professionals able to design high quality projects 3. Political issues |
| 6. Are there things you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why? | <p>Please collect probable measures/goals and reasons. Examples:</p> <p>Involvement of SME as partners to strengthen financial and operational capability cannot be done to regulative limitations of programme rules;</p> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the Programme area on the Polish side 2. Be able to implement cross-border projects without a cross-border partner 3. Being able to participate in other cross-border programs as an additional partner |
| 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. Ongoing application of projects (no CfPs) 2. Expertise (assessment) of project concepts prior to submission of applications |
| 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. |
| | Yes. Cultural heritage/tourism, healthcare, environment, safety |
| 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. Increase financing 2. Facilitate the change of the partners in the selected/signed projects 3. More information to the local communities 4. More trainings on project design 5. More partner search events |

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| | 6. More clarity in the requirements to the applications (i.e. annexes) |
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Part 4.

Conclusions, other topics of discussion

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

Overall assessment of the meeting by the organizer

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| <p>Were the objectives of the consultation achieved?</p> <p>Please refer to each objective and describe the level of engagement of the stakeholders into discussion.</p> |
| <p>Due to the emergency (air raid alert before the planned meeting) less participants attended than expected. Not all target groups were represented.</p> <p>Ternopil Oblast had only 3 projects in the previous Programme perspective and 1 project in 2007-2013, therefore, the project experience is insignificant. At the same time there is willingness to cooperate and implement projects, in particular, in the areas of Tourism development, Health services and healthy lifestyle promotion; Protection of environment; Joint cultural heritage and New technologies / innovativeness development and promotion. The border is perceived as an advantage, in particular, in the context of tourism development, transport and logistics. However, many obstacles/challenges have been mentioned, in particular, difficulty in finding Polish partners, insufficient competencies of local institutions.</p> <p>The participants expressed the opinion, that the number of awarded projects/financing in their region is much lower than the demand. To improve this situation, several suggestions have been made, e.g. increase financing, introduce additional option of previous assessment of the projects, the option to submit the projects on the ongoing basis (without calls for proposals). Other suggestions concerned more training provided for potential applicants and some technical improvements in the application process.</p> <p>In future, tourism and heritage are seen as priorities (probably because the region is rich in historical landmarks such as castles and palaces, which are underfinanced. Better tourist infrastructure and improved tourist offer would make the region more competitive. Also, healthcare, environment and safety have been mentioned as priorities being the basic needs of people, especially in the country in the state of war.</p> |

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 "".

"Ternopil Oblast has good historical moments with the Poles. When we now talk to our Polish colleagues about projects and cooperation, they remember history. And this is something, that every community should take as a basis for cooperation - to look at these historical aspects that exist. Because every city and village have something related to a potential partner in Poland." – Ruslan Kulyk, Ternopil Oblast Council

"Organization of school competitions for children is a great tool. Representatives of the two countries of Poland and Ukraine have the opportunity to meet and get to know each other. It's an opportunity to start contacts, both for teachers and schoolchildren. The program is not only projects, but there are also other activities." – Olga Vasko, School No 3.

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.

QR code was distributed

Attachments:

1. Agenda.
2. List of Participants.