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## Interreg and Urban: budgets and guidelines for 2000-06

The Commission recently announced the guidelines for the Community Initiatives Interreg (cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation) and Urban (social and economic regeneration of towns and neighbourhoods with serious structural problems) in the new programming period, along with the indicative allocations of ERDF funding for each Member State.

### Financial allocations per Member State (millions of €)

	Interreg	Urban
B	104	20
DK	31	5
D	737	140
EL	568	24
E	900	106
F	397	96
IRL	84	5
I	426	108
L	7	0
NL	349	28
A	183	8
P	394	18
FIN	129	5
S	154	5
UK	362	117
Networks	50	15
EU-15	4 875	700

The budgets proposed for the Interreg Initiative are essentially based on population figures for three types of area within the Community: internal border areas, the most remote regions and areas bordering central and eastern Europe. Between 50 and 80% of the national budgets are to be committed to cross-border cooperation programmes and 6% to interregional cooperation programmes.

Funding for Urban has been allocated on the basis of population levels and unemployment rates (including long-term joblessness) in urban areas.

At the same time as drawing up the funding allocations, the Commission also released the draft guidelines for the two Community Initiatives, which set out their goals and implementation methods.

### Interreg III: cooperation in every sphere

The Interreg Initiative for the 2000-06 programming period has a new element dedicated to interregional cooperation (Interreg III C). These cooperation measures will involve areas that are not geographically adjacent to each other but which have similarities at the socio-economic level and can therefore benefit from sharing knowledge and good practice. Similar measures have been supported in recent years by the "Recite" and "Ecos-Ouverture" projects.



The guidelines for the Interreg III Initiative were unveiled by the Commission at the information day it held in Brussels on 29 November.

Over half the Interreg budget should still be committed to cross-border cooperation schemes (Interreg III A), i.e. to promote the common development of the internal border regions of the Community, or common development in the border regions between Member States and non-Community countries. Furthermore, the transnational cooperation schemes launched in 1996 will be continued in the interests of boosting the role of national, regional and local authorities in efforts to achieve sustainable and balanced development in eleven wider areas of the Community (Interreg III B).

The Commission would like to see the different regions and areas involved coordinating their implementation of the measures more, by adopting joint strategies and administrative structures to develop, manage and monitor the programmes. The programmes implemented under these Initiatives should complement the measures carried out under Objectives 1,

2 and 3 of the Structural Funds, as well as being coordinated with the Commission's external policy instruments (PHARE, TACIS, MEDA).

### **Urban 2000-06: Innovation in urban problem areas**

The Urban Initiative basically has a twofold mission: to provide support for innovative socio-economic development strategies and to increase the adoption of methods that have had proven results in practice. To achieve these goals, the programmes will need to set up broad local partnerships and specific management and promotion structures.

The Initiative will be targeted on about fifty or so urban areas within the Community that are experiencing serious structural problems. These may be either large or small towns, or local communities within large conurbations. To qualify, areas must be geographically coherent, contain at least 10 000 people, and have common problems. They may be located either within or outside of areas eligible for Objective 1 or 2 assistance. In addition, they must conform to a specific socio-economic profile (as regards levels of unemployment, poverty and environmental degradation). A ceiling has been placed on the number of areas that may be designated in each Member State: a maximum of ten for Germany, nine for the United Kingdom, eight for Italy and Spain, seven for

France, two each for Portugal, Greece, the Netherlands and Belgium and one each for the other Member States.

### **Timetable**

The draft guidelines still have to pass scrutiny by the committees set up under the Structural Funds legislation and by the European Parliament; these bodies must all deliver their opinion before the guidelines can be definitively adopted. The opinions are expected in the first quarter of 2000. After the definitive texts have been published in the Official Journal, the competent national and regional authorities will have six months in which to present their programmes to the Commission.

### **For more information...**

The comprehensive texts of the guidelines proposed by the Commission can be viewed on the Inforegio site at the following addresses:

<<http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/interreg3>> and

<<http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/urban2>>.

They can also be obtained by faxing +32 2 296 60 03.

The Inforegio site also contains documents on the information day held in Brussels on 29 November, at which a progress report on Interreg II was presented, as well as the preparatory work being undertaken for Interreg III: go to <<http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/news>>.

## **Territorial Employment Pacts 2000-06**

The Commission has just published its guide to the Territorial Employment Pacts in the 2000-06 period. This document reaffirms the principles of the pilot scheme run by the Commission between 1997 and 1999 ("Territorial pacts for employment") and gives some indications of how this type of approach may be integrated into the new priority Objectives of the Structural Funds. More particularly, it re-emphasises the following:

- how the implementation of the Employment Title in the Treaty of Amsterdam will affect the dealings of the national authorities with regional and local operators;

- the new provisions in the 2000-06 Structural Funds legislation aimed at encouraging local development initiatives and employment promotion schemes, more particularly the Territorial Pacts.

This guide is currently available in English, French and German (and soon in all the official languages) on the Inforegio website, at this address:

<<http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/pacts/fr/biblio.html>>, or can be obtained by fax from +32 2 296 60 03.



**European Commission**  
Directorate-General for Regional Policy