

INTERREG IIIC OPERATIONS: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION AT WORK: 2000 - 2006



North

West

East

South





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December 2005

Project descriptions are based on information compiled in August 2005



INTERREG IIIC NORTH



INTERREG IIIC WEST



INTERREG IIIC EAST



INTERREG IIIC SOUTH



Konstantinos Hatzidakis

MEP, Rapporteur on the General Regulation on the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund

Preface

“Cooperation”, “networking”, “exchange”, “knowledge and technology transfer”, these have been the driving concepts in European policies for regional development for more than 10 years. To further exploit advantages resulting out of the abolition of borders, a specific financial instrument, has been developed, the Community Initiative Programme INTERREG, in order to complete the classical regional development strategy and to support, first and foremost *cross-border cooperation*; this refers to exchanges structured around a border (strand A of the INTERREG Initiative). *Transnational cooperation* is also set up by regrouping not two countries around a border, but a certain number of neighbourhood countries (strand B of the INTERREG Initiative). Exchanges may then grow without hindrance, within a continuous geographical area.

The European scene of cooperation opportunities has been completed recently with the introduction of the interregional *cooperation* (strand C of the INTERREG Initiative), a young instrument offering the perfect opening



up of exchanges: as cooperation no longer relates to the partners' geographical location; therefore non-contiguous regions may enter into contact and establish their own relationships. Osmosis is being established between public services and other institutions all over the European territory, resulting in a surprising architecture of partnerships: over 2,600 partners from 49 countries are participating in the 264 cooperation projects approved by INTERREG IIC programme. A novel interregional dialogue has been launched, focusing on intelligence, knowledge and resources sharing. More specifically 97% of the European regions are involved in a process of acquiring experience within which skills' availability give the opportunity to learn about multiple environments and where project managers' pedagogy is twofold: in addition to the field of cooperation chosen to establish their exchanges, they also learn to act collectively and to open up more.

Early allocation of all available funds is not only worth noting but also proves the accuracy of these assisted interactions (by the structures of the programme). It also says a lot about the changes currently taking place on the European stage. Territorial actors have once again demonstrated that they can seize cooperation opportunities offered, break free of their surroundings and enrich the classical procedures of regional development. If we acknowledge that, we must look for original solutions and adapt to the conditions brought about by globalisation, it is important to launch and maintain a dialogue with all parties of the European territory. Because Europe, much more than an area, is a political project, which must from now on be brought closer to its citizens.

This *compendium* gives just a glimpse of the effort undertaken by the 264 lead partners to bring together teams from very different cultures and address local skills. A much more important effort, though often not identified by traditional means, is implemented on the field. All the more reason then to take the time to look closely into these fruitful ways of interregional cooperation.

Fostas Hatzidakis



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WHAT IS THE INTERREG III C PROGRAMME?

The challenge for the enlarged European Union (EU) is to make the most of the potential for growth available in its regions. There is a strong link between the EU's competitiveness and the regions' capacities to design and implement clear growth strategies. Therefore, regions have to learn how to best exploit the opportunities of their territories and make efficient, effective use of the Structural Funds.

INTERREG III C is an EU programme that helps regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. It enables regions to share knowledge and experience to help them develop new solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges.

This book provides an overview of the 264 interregional partnerships, called "operations", funded under INTERREG III C. It delivers insight into the activities carried out by the partnerships and gives information on outputs and results. The first INTERREG III C operations were approved in 2003. At the end of 2005, some of them are already in the final phase of their work. The last operations were approved in early 2005 and will run until 2007 or 2008.

Basic programme features

INTERREG III C is part of the EU Community Initiative INTERREG III (2000-2006). This initiative is designed to strengthen Europe's economic and social cohesion by funding operations that will boost cooperation and balanced development across the continent. By supporting operations that share knowledge and experience, INTERREG aims to reduce the development gap between rich and poor areas of Europe and help regions become more competitive.

INTERREG III C is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as part of the Structural Funds, and co-financed by the project partners. All the projects described in this book were selected for co-financing – via Member States' representatives, and according to specific criteria – in a series of application rounds open to all EU regions. Partners are now putting their planned operations into practice using the best means possible to share their knowledge and experience – including training, seminars, conferences, databases and staff exchanges.

The programme area

The INTERREG III C cooperation area covers the entire EU territory and any third country. The running operations involve over 2600 regional and municipal public authorities and public-equivalent institutions from 49 different countries. The majority of project partners come from the 25 EU Member States, nearly one fifth of them from the new Member States. Furthermore, operations involve partners from third countries like the EU candidate countries, Norway, Switzerland and the Mediterranean countries.



The programme management

For programme management purposes, the territory of the EU has been divided into four programme zones – North, East, South and West. Each programme zone has its own management and support structures. A harmonised implementation of the INTERREG III C programme with common standards and equal treatment of applicants and project partners is ensured across the four programme zones.

Topics for cooperation

The operations funded under INTERREG III C cooperate on a number of topics closely related to implementation of EU regional policy. Exchange of experience and networking focuses on:

- Objective 1 and 2 regions
- INTERREG programmes
- URBAN
- Innovative Actions
- Other appropriate subjects

In addition, the North, East and South programmes include a special priority for border region operations. This priority, with a special budget, was made available to support a smooth enlargement process in regions at the external border of the EU before the Union was enlarged to include ten new Member States in 2004.

Themes for cooperation

The operations address all important areas of public responsibility in regional development. They cluster around the following areas of cooperation:

- Research, Technology and Innovation (9%)
- SME Development and Entrepreneurship (15%)
- Information Society and e-Government (8%)
- Employment, Social Inclusion, Human Resources and Education (6%)
- Environment, Risk Prevention, Energy and Natural Resources (22%)
- Regional Planning, Territorial Regeneration and Urban Development (21%)
- Heritage, Culture and Tourism (15%)
- Accessibility, Mobility and Transport (4%)



Types of operation

There are three different types of operations:

REGIONAL FRAMEWORK OPERATION:

A Regional Framework Operation (RFO) is an innovative and very intense cooperation type, a kind of "mini-programme", that allows regions to work together on developing new strategic approaches and solutions to the challenges they are facing and test them on the ground through the implementation of a number of sub-projects involving actors relevant for their regions' development. An RFO involves partners from at least three different countries. The maximum ERDF contribution is 5 million EUR.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT:

An Individual Project is a cooperation project involving partners from at least three different countries. The maximum ERDF contribution is 1 million EUR.

NETWORK:

A Network is a less intense form of cooperation, designed especially for the exchange of experience or dissemination of information within a larger group of public actors. Networks involve partners from at least five different countries. The maximum ERDF contribution is 1 million EUR.

Most INTERREG III C operations are Individual Projects (52%), followed by Networks (33%) and then by RFOs (15%).

Budget

For the EU Member States, the total ERDF budget available for co-financing operations for all four INTERREG III C programme zones amounts to EUR 315.4 million plus EUR 15 million for the special priority for border region operations. All funds have now been allocated, and there will be no more open calls for proposals in this funding period.

For partners from Norway, the Norwegian government provided a separate budget of EUR 2.7 million. Other non-EU partners contribute with their own money or funds from other sources.

Further information

If you wish to know more about the INTERREG III C programme and the future of interregional cooperation, please contact the Joint Technical Secretariats or visit our website at www.interreg3c.net.



The INTERACT Point IIC Coordination: Cooperation among the four INTERREG IIC programme zones

In order to ensure the harmonised implementation of the INTERREG IIC programme across the four programme zones (North, East, South and West), and to share the joint experience with other INTERREG actors across Europe, the four zones have joined forces to implement a common project – the INTERACT Point (IP) IIC Coordination. Led by INTERREG IIC North, the IP consists of a consortium of the four Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS) and Managing Authorities (MA) based in Rostock/Kiel (Germany), Vienna (Austria), Valencia (Spain) and Lille (France). The IP started in early 2004 and is the continuation of the successful cooperation initiated between the four zones during the establishment of the INTERREG IIC programme in 2002 and 2003 (pre-INTERACT).

The objective of the IP is to contribute to INTERACT with the joint experience and knowledge gained during the set up and the implementation of INTERREG IIC, and to promote cooperation across the four programme zones. Common standards and fair and equal treatment of applicants and project partners from all zones is guaranteed by harmonised programme documents, harmonised tools and procedures and the implementation of joint information and communication activities.

Particular joint outcomes of the IP are, among others, application and monitoring procedures, the system of quantified indicators, the harmonised legal framework, the unified financial control and audit system, the administration database, the INTERREG IIC website as well as joint printed publications.

The IP is part of the INTERACT programme, which seeks to build on the experience of previous and ongoing INTERREG programmes in order to increase the effectiveness of INTERREG III during the current programming period. The core of the INTERACT programme is to set up information and communication networks, to define information frameworks and flows, to proactively disseminate information and to stimulate exchange of experiences. Besides the IP IIC Coordination, there exist four other IPs: Information and Animation, Tool Box, Qualification and Transfer, and Managing Transition.

More information on the IP IIC Coordination: ip.3c@interact-eu.net

More information on the INTERACT programme: www.interact-eu.net



a Application form

Part of the Application Pack. To be filled in and returned to the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme zone where the Lead Partner is situated.

Application pack

Documents needed for the development and submission of an application. Comprised of the Community Initiative Programme and the Programme Complement of the respective INTERREG III C programme zone, the Application Form, the Programme Manual and the Co-financing Statements.

Audit trail

Audit trail is a sequence of information about expenditure actually incurred, the organisation of responsibilities, and in particular the controls applied on different levels to guarantee valid certifications, in compliance with Regulation 438/2001. The accounting records show the date they were created, the amount of each item of expenditure, the nature of the supporting documents and the date of and method of payment. The audit trail validates the expenditure claimed and enables tracing the financial data to its source.

Audit guidelines

Guidelines for the auditors on the requirements in the context of audit certification and on the scope of the auditor's work. The guidelines also provide information concerning the rules that apply to INTERREG III C.

b Border region operations

Operations linking European Union border regions with the accession and candidate countries. Border regions are:

Finland: Uusimaa, Etelä-Suomi

Germany: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niederbayern, Oberpfalz, Oberfranken, Brandenburg, Berlin, Chemnitz, Dresden

Austria: Burgenland, Niederösterreich, Wien, Kärnten, Steiermark, Oberösterreich

Italy: Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia

Greece: Anatoliki Makedonia-Thraki, Kentriki Makedonia, Voreio Aigaio, Notio Aigaio, Kriti

c Call for proposals

Period of time in which applications can be submitted to the Joint Technical Secretariats.

Closure expenditure

The final payments amounting to 5% of the operation's ERDF funds will be transferred to the Lead Partner only after the funds are received by the Paying Authority from the European Commission, i.e. as late as end 2010.

Co-financing statement

Written confirmation of each partner's financial contribution to the operation.

Cooperation area

The entire territory of the European Union, including insular and outermost areas as well as third countries, especially the EU accession and candidate countries, Norway, Switzerland and the MEDA countries.

Community Initiative Programme (CIP)

Programme document describing the background of the programme, as well as the programme's objectives, priorities and measures, financing and implementation. The document is approved by the European Commission.

e Eligibility check

First step of a two-step evaluation procedure. Operations applying for ERDF funds have to pass the eligibility check successfully in order to be considered for funding.

Eligibility criteria

Mainly technical requirements operations applying for ERDF funds have to fulfil in order to pass the eligibility check.

ERDF co-financing rate

The ERDF co-financing rate for the operations is up to 75% of the eligible costs for partners in Objective 1 areas and up to 50% of the eligible costs for partners in other areas. Partners coming from outermost regions and being involved in operations financed from the South and West Programmes can receive up to 85% ERDF co-financing.

f Financial report

Part of the progress report. Lead partners of operations have to submit a progress report to the respective Joint Technical Secretariat at the end of each reporting period. It contains a retrospective accounting of the total costs incurred during the reporting period.

i Impact

The long-term consequences of the operation beyond its immediate interaction with direct beneficiaries. The impact provides information about the achievement of the operations' global objectives and is the principal basis for assessing the operations' success or failure. (See also output and result)

INTERACT

Part of the Community Initiative Programme INTERREG. It is designed to capitalise on the vast pool of experience accumulated through INTERREG in the areas of regional development, cross border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation. The Managing Authority for the INTERACT Programme on behalf of the Member States of the EU is the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria. (www.interact-online.net)



O Output

Outputs directly result from activities of the operation. They are typically measured in physical or monetary units such as: number of meetings/seminars/training sessions, number of collaborative projects, number and type of reports/policy tools/written concepts, and many others.

P Preparation costs

Costs incurred for the development of the operation. Are only eligible for approved operations and only if they were incurred on or after the date of eligibility of the specific INTERREG IIIC Programme to which the Application Form has been submitted (for North – 5 October 2001, East – 5 November 2001, South – 6 December 2001, West – 12 October 2001), and before the date on which the Application Form has been submitted.

Programme Complement (PC)

Document specifying the content Programme in more detail than the Community Initiative Programme (CIP).

Programme languages

Official languages to be used in all communications between the applicants and the programme management; English for North, East and West, French for South.

Programme Manual

Part of the Application Pack. Intended to assist applicants in drafting applications, as well as in implementing and finalising the approved operations.

Programme zones

Division of the INTERREG IIIC Programme into four programme zones: North, East, South and West. To which programme zone an operation belongs depends on the location of the Lead Partner.

Progress report

Comprised of the Activity Report and the Financial Report. It documents the progress of the operation and serves as payment request. Lead partners of operations have to submit a progress report every six months to their Joint Technical Secretariat.

Public equivalent body

Public equivalent body means any legal body governed by public or private law

- established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character; and
- having legal personality; and
- either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

Q Quality assessment

Second step of a two-step evaluation procedure operations applying for ERDF funds have to pass successfully in order to be considered for ERDF funding.

R Results

Results are direct and immediate effects brought about by the operations. They provide, for example, information on improvement in capacity/efficiency of partners or enhancement of performance.

S Selection criteria

Criteria used to assess the quality of the proposed operation.

Steering Committee (SC)

The Steering Committee is responsible for selecting operations and deciding on the spending of funds. Each programme zone (North, East, South, West) has its own Steering Committee.

Subsidy contract

Contract between the Managing Authority of the respective Zone and the operation's Lead Partner. It determines the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the Managing Authority, the scope of activities to be carried out, terms of funding, requirements for reporting and financial controls, etc.

Sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development refers to a form of economic growth, which satisfies society's needs in terms of well-being in the short, medium and - above all - long terms. It is founded on the assumption that development must meet today's needs without jeopardising the prospects of future generations. In practical terms, it means creating the conditions for long-term economic development with due respect for the environment. The Copenhagen world summit for sustainable development (March 1995) stressed the need to combat social exclusion and protect public health. The Treaty of Amsterdam wrote an explicit reference to sustainable development into the recitals of the EU Treaty.

U URBACT

The URBACT programme is part of the URBAN Community Initiative. The programme aims to develop transnational exchange of experience between actors, whether cities or other partners, URBAN programmes or Urban Pilot Projects, and to capitalise on these projects, drawing lessons from the results, successes and weaknesses noted. (www.urbact.org)



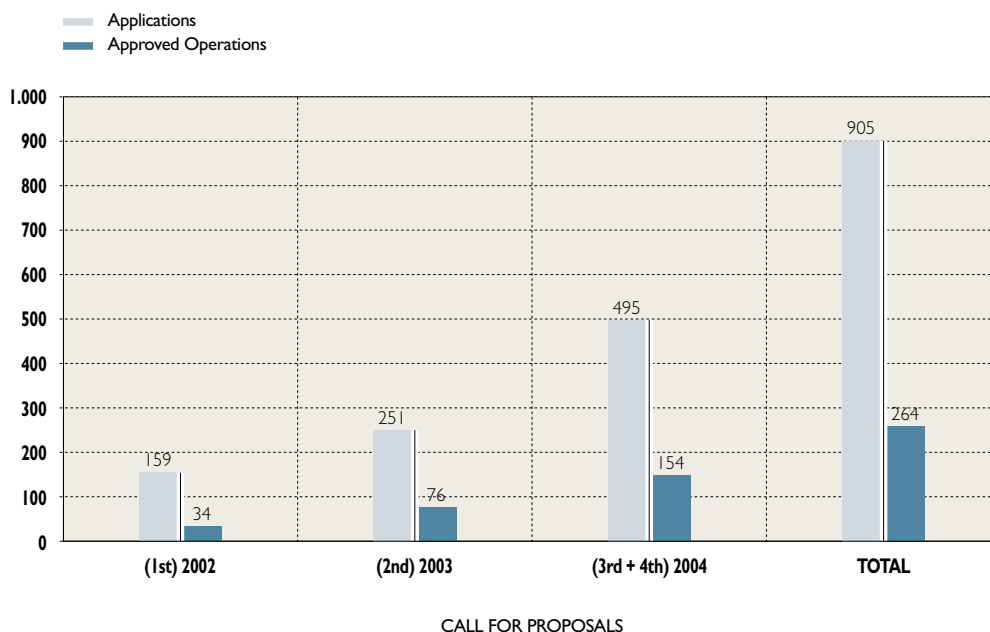
Country abbreviations

AL	Albania
AM	Armenia
AT	Austria
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
BJ	Benin
BY	Belarus
CN	China
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
CH	Switzerland
CS	Serbia and Montenegro
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
DZ	Algeria
EE	Estonia
GR	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
GE	Georgia
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary

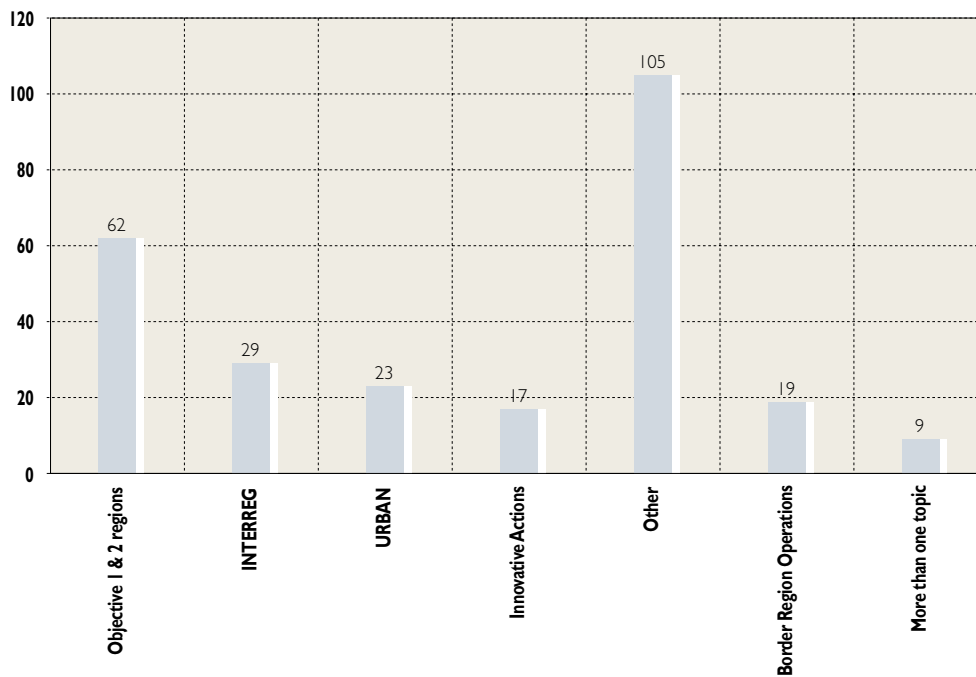
IE	Ireland
IL	Israel
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LB	Lebanon
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MA	Morocco
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PS	Palestine
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RU	Russia
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovak Republic
TN	Tunisia
TR	Turkey
UA	Ukraine
UK	United Kingdom



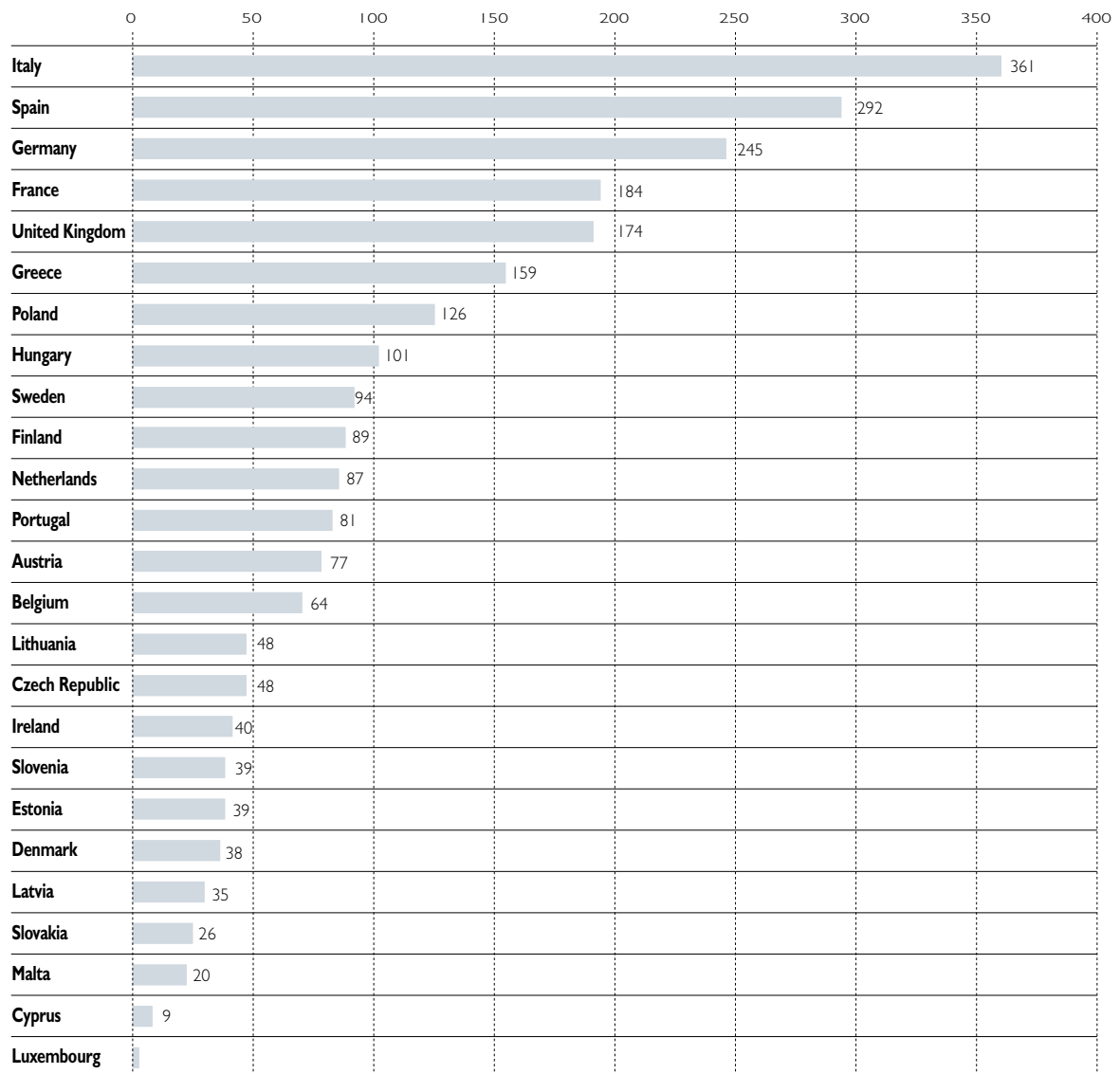
SUBMITTED/APPROVED APPLICATIONS



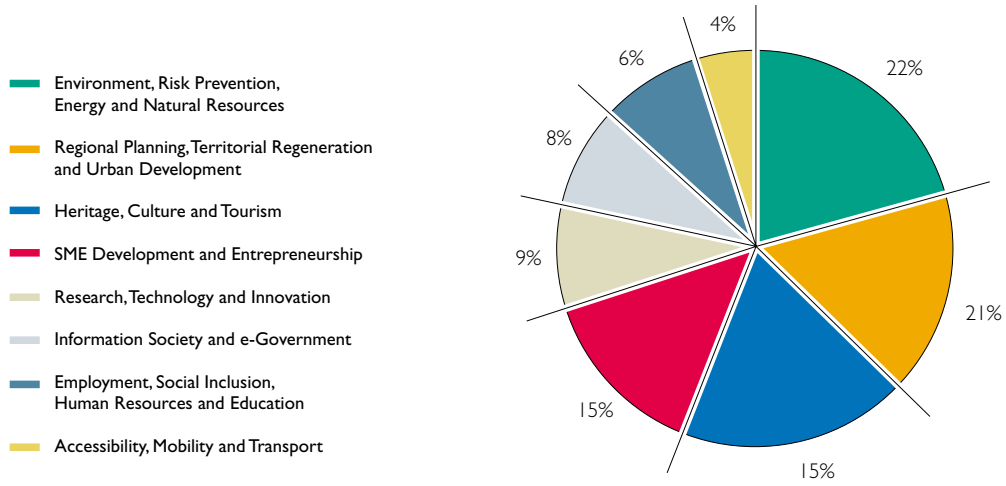
TOPICS OF COOPERATION



NUMBER OF PARTNERS PER MEMBER STATE



THEMES OF COOPERATION



NUMBER OF APPROVED PROJECTS PER TYPE OF OPERATION

