

The Involvement of Non-EU Member States in European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

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Non-EU Member States play an important role a number of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes and initiatives. This article focuses on the role of non-EU Member States in ETC, specifically INTERREG, examining the basis of their involvement, what participating countries 'get out of it,' and how this may change in the future.

I. Introduction

Non-EU Member States play an important role in a number of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes and initiatives. In the context of forthcoming Cohesion policy reform and Brexit, this article focuses on the role of non-EU Member States in ETC, specifically INTERREG, examining the basis of their involvement, what participating countries 'get out of it,' and how this may change in the future.

The article draws on a recent project which was grounded in desk-based research on key regulations and delegated acts, programme documentation, guidance and, where necessary, qualitative research interviews. The article identifies both common approaches and areas where systems and structures have been adapted to the specific needs of Programmes and Programme areas. It concludes that:

- non-EU Member States are more active and 'visible' partners in ETC in the 2014-2020 period;
- much of the focus in terms of the location of Programme institutions is on the EU Member States, however a range of activities is delegated; and
- looking to the post-2020 period, non-EU Member States remain committed to involvement in INTERREG. However, in the context of future Cohesion policy reform, questions are being asked about the role and approach of INTERREG, which

could influence the way in which non-EU Member States engage in future ETC activities.

II. Policy Instruments

Non-EU Member States play an important role a number of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes and initiatives. Over time the precise nature of the involvement of non-EU Member States in ETC has changed and evolved, with countries engaging (and disengaging) from EU accession processes, policies undergoing substantial reforms in terms of budgets and governance, new initiatives being launched, and the relationships between the EU and non-EU Member States evolving.

For the current 2014-2020 programming period, for non-EU Member States, the key programmes and instruments are:

- INTERREG – INTERREG is built around three strands of cooperation: cross-border (INTERREG A), transnational (INTERREG B) and interregional (INTERREG C).
 - European Cross-border cooperation, INTERREG A, supports cooperation between NUTS III regions on or adjacent to the borders of at least two Member States. A number of the 2014-2020 INTERREG A programmes incorporate non-EU Member States, most notably Switzerland and Norway.
 - Transnational Cooperation, INTERREG B, involves several countries forming bigger cooperation areas. Non-EU Member States are widely represented in the majority of INTERREG B programmes. They include Norway, Iceland and Switzerland, overseas territories such as Greenland, EU Candidate Countries, and neighbour-

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ing countries including Russia and Belarus, and further afield as far as cooperation between French outermost regions and Madagascar and territories in the Indian Ocean and South America.

- INTERREG Europe (formerly INTERREG C) has non-EU Member State involvement, e.g. with Norwegian and Swiss partners.
- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) CBC Programmes support cross-border cooperation between Candidate Countries, potential Candidate Countries and EU Member States. For CBC programmes the budget can come from two different sources: IPA and contributions from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which allows for cooperation along EU borders.
- European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) CBC Programmes support sustainable development mainly along the EU's Eastern and Southern external borders, helps reduce differences in living standards and addresses common challenges across these borders. The CBC budget comes from two different sources: ENI and contributions from the ERDF.
- Macro-regional Strategies are integrated frameworks endorsed by the European Council, which may be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds among other sources of funding and in particular INTERREG programmes in the macro-regional area. The strategies aim to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area. The currently adopted macro-regional strategies include a number of non-EU Member States:
 - Adriatic-Ionian region: includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia;
 - Alpine Strategy: includes Liechtenstein and Switzerland;
 - Danube Region Strategy: includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine; and
 - Baltic Sea Region: involves cooperation with Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus.

The non-EU Member States participating in INTERREG programme cover an extremely wide range of countries, ranging from Russia to Andorra. Related, non-EU Member States have differing types and paths of engagement with INTERREG. Non-EU Mem-

ber States that are candidate countries engage with INTERREG through their IPA resources. On a similar basis, non-EU Member States eligible for ENI can participate in INTERREG programmes.

III. Regulations

The participation of non-EU Member States, or 'third' countries as they are referred to in EU regulations, in territorial cooperation programmes is well established. However, the adoption of the Cohesion policy regulations for the 2014-2020 period marks a significant change in the profile and competencies of non-EU Member States in INTERREG.

The adoption of a dedicated regulation for European Territorial Cooperation, (Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013), allowed the role and status of non-EU Member States participating in programmes to be more explicitly recognised and for specific provisions to be made, such as the scope for non-EU Member State bodies to act as lead partners. Box 1 sets out the key regulations that form the basis of INTERREG programmes.

The particular provisions and points on non-EU Member State involvement are as follows:

1. Participation of 'Third' Countries (Non-EU Member States) and Territories in INTERREG

Regulation No. 1299/2013 on ETC states that 'cooperation is an important regional policy tool and should benefit the regions of the Member States which border third countries'.¹

Third countries (non-EU Member States) or territories are covered in cross-border and transnational INTERREG programme areas, with the condition that support from the ERDF for operations implemented in the territory of third countries should be primarily for the benefit of the regions of the Union.²

Thus, under the European territorial cooperation goal, the ERDF supports:

- cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions to promote integrated regional development

1 Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Para 12.

2 Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Para 13.

Box 1: Key Regulations.

- Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006
- ERDF Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal

between neighbouring land and maritime border regions in two or more Member States or between neighbouring border regions in at least one Member State and one third country on external borders of the Union other than those covered by programmes under the external financial instruments of the Union³; and

- transnational cooperation⁴ over larger transnational territories, involving national, regional and local partners and also covering maritime cross-border cooperation in cases not covered by cross-border cooperation, with a view to achieving a higher degree of territorial integration of those territories.⁵

2. Programming

Where they have accepted involvement in programmes, third countries are involved in the development and approval of programmes, with their agreement to the content of programmes and to their involvement expressed and formally recorded in the minutes of consultations or meetings. The European Commission approves core elements of the Programme, while detailed elements such as the types and the extent of third country participation are agreed by participating States.⁶

3. Funding

The general rule for programmes covered by the ERDF regulations is that the eligible area for ERDF expenditure is limited to the EU territory. Funding allocated to project activities taking place in the territories of third countries comes from ERDF-equivalent funds committed by the relevant non-EU Member State. However, INTERREG programmes can apply geographic flexibility rules. For the 2014-2020 period, the regulations on geographic flexibility of expenditure were simplified. On an exceptional basis, and subject to a number of conditions, support from ERDF can be used for operations outside the Union part of the Programme area and on the territory of third countries.⁷

Several conditions must be met in order to ensure that expenditure incurred outside the Union part of the Programme area is eligible.⁸ In addition, individ-

3 INTERREG Cross-border cooperation programmes may cover regions in Norway and Switzerland and also cover Liechtenstein, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino and third countries or territories neighbouring outermost regions, all of which shall be equivalent to NUTS level 3 regions.

4 Transnational cooperation programmes may cover regions in both of the following third countries or territories: (a) the third countries or territories listed or referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article; (b) the Faroe Islands and Greenland; transnational cooperation programmes may also cover regions in third countries covered by the external financial instruments of the Union, such as the ENI pursuant to the ENI legislative act, including the relevant regions of the Russian Federation, and the IPA II.

5 Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Article 2 para 1 & 2.

6 Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Para 21.

7 Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, para 31; Technical assistance expenditure, covering e.g. promotional and capacity building activities, may also apply outside the Union part of the programme area, but must also be demonstrated to be of added-value and subject to appropriate controls and verifications.

8 Interact, (2015) Expenditure outside the eligible area, view online at <<http://www.interact-eu.net/library#622>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

ual programme rules may also reflect some of the programme specificities and include additional requirements concerning the programme spending outside the eligible area.

4. Lead Partner Status

Member States and third countries or territories participating in a cooperation programme may agree to the lead beneficiary being located in a third country or territory participating in that cooperation programme, provided that the Managing Authority is satisfied that the lead beneficiary is capable of fulfilling requirements set out in the implementing regulations.

5. Management and Implementation

Article 21, paragraph 1 on the designation of authorities states that programme Managing Authorities and Audit Authorities are set up in the same Member State, no mention is made of the potential to set up these structures in third countries.⁹ The activities of the Managing Authority may be delegated to other institutions.

The Managing Authority in consultation with the participating Member States sets up a joint secretariat (JS). Joint secretariats are generally located within a Member State in the Programme area. However, elements of the JS task may be allocated to different organisations in different parts of the programme area.

6. Control and Audit

Management verifications are a responsibility of the MA. Each Member State or third country or territory must also set up a control system making it possible to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared for operations or parts of operations implemented on its territory, and the compliance of such expenditure and of related operations, or parts of those operations, with Union rules and its national rules. The MA must satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been validated by a designated controller referred to in Article 23(4) ETC.¹⁰

IV. Programme Cases: What Are the Non-EU Member States 'Allowed' to Do?

As has been described, the current EU regulations set out specific requirements and conditions on the participation and involvement of non-EU Member States and territories. However, close examination of the regulations also reveals there to be numerous areas where Programme authorities and participating States can agree their own arrangements and develop solutions adapted to their specific needs. With this in mind it is useful to examine the specific management and implementation arrangements of individual programmes. For the purposes of this article, six programmes with non-EU Member State participation were examined in detail, see table 1.

1. Programme Authorities

All INTERREG programmes are required to have certain basic programme bodies – Monitoring Committee, Managing Authority (MA), Joint Secretariat (JS), Certifying Authority and Audit Authority. For INTERREG programmes, the most common arrangement is for these bodies to be placed within a Member State government body (at national or regional level). The role of non-EU Member State institutions is limited in terms of the main administrative bodies. However at the strategic level and operational levels, they have a notable role to play.

All participating territories in cooperation programmes are expected to take on an active role in the management of the Programme, including non-Member States. This involves participation during programming, e.g. on programming committees and through consultations. Participating non-EU Member States have representatives on Programme Monitoring Committees. However, non EU-Member States are not necessarily able to chair the Monitoring Committee, although MC meetings may take

9 Where there is scope to establish institutions in third countries this is generally referred to in the regulations. No examples were found during the study of Managing Authorities or Audit Authorities established outside of EU Member States.

10 CEC, (2015) Guidance for Member States on Management Verifications, (Programme Period, 2014-2020) <http://www.interact-eu.net/library?field_fields_of_expertise_tid=7#651> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

Table 1: Programme Cases.

	Programme type	EU Member State and Non-EU Member States
Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein 2014-2020	INTERREG VA	EU: Austria, Germany
		Non-EU Switzerland, Principality of Liechtenstein
Oberrhein	INTERREG VA	EU: France, Germany
		Non-EU: Switzerland
Sweden-Norway	INTERREG VA	EU: Sweden
		Non-EU: Norway
Botnia Atlantica	INTERREG VA	EU: Sweden, Finland
		Non-EU: Norway
North Sea	INTERREG VB	EU: UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden
		Non-EU: Norway
Northern Periphery and Arctic	INTERREG VB	EU: Sweden, Finland, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland
		Non-EU: Norway, Iceland, Greenland Faroe Islands

Source: Author calculations based on DG Regio.

place in non-EU Member States if appropriate. It is also possible for Monitoring Committees to involve representatives from areas neighbouring the programme area or from relevant stakeholders as observers. For example, the Monitoring Committee of the Northern Periphery and Arctic programme includes representatives covering North West Russia and North East Canada.

For a number of programmes, steering committees, which meet more regularly, take decisions on project selections and the routine operation of the programme, e.g. the Norway-Sweden cross border cooperation programme. A number of programmes specify that these committees can be chaired by a representative of a non-EU Member State, e.g. the North Sea Programme states that Norway can chair the Programme Steering Committee.

As has been noted, Programme Managing Authorities are located in EU Member States. However, at the more operational levels, in some cases, JS tasks are delegated to regional offices. For example, the Botnia Atlantica Programme has a JS at the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten (SE), and local offices at the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia in Sweden and Nordland County Council in Norway, which handles Norwegian elements of projects.¹¹ The Norway-Sweden cross-border programme has established a network of regionally based sub-secretariats and committees for sub-programme areas in both the participating Member State and non-EU Member States.

In order to support MA and JS functions, programmes commonly establish regional or national contact points. These are organised across the programme territories, in both EU and non-EU Member States. Contact points can be appointed and organised in a way that best fits each country's administrative arrangements. They contribute to promoting the programme, act as an additional contact for informa-

11 INTERREG VA Sverige – Finland – Norge, Botnia Atlantica, 2014-2020, Programme Document, view online at <<http://www.botnia-atlantica.eu/assets/7/Dokument/Programdokument/Programdokument.pdf>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

tion and guidance, and may also assist with spreading information on project achievements, which is an increasingly important element of their role.

2. Project Engagement, Development and Selection

Through involvement in Monitoring Committees and, where relevant, Steering Committees, non-EU Member States have a balanced role in agreeing the strategic direction of Programmes, project engagement, development and selection decisions. Leading up to these final decisions are a range of delegated activities. Common among INTERREG programmes is the delegation of programme implementation tasks, often through a network of regional or local offices supporting JS functions such as, receiving project applications and undertaking an initial check on acceptability, monitoring and publicity.

a. Project Generation, Application and Selection

Project application and selection procedures vary with open calls, strategic projects and seed funding involved at various point in various programmes. The precise systems and structures for each differ, but are generally applied in the same way or similar way in EU and non EU-Member States. In order to facilitate the project selection process, programmes can establish regionally/nationally based groups to advise on project selection, which can be established in all the participating States, including non-EU Member States. For example, for the Northern Periphery and Arctic programme, Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, along with Member State participants, have a Regional Advisory Group to advise on project selection decisions. Cross-regional or cross-national working groups are also used to identify and prepare joint projects, as is being discussed in the context of Arctic regional cooperation.

The Norway-Sweden crossborder programme has programme sub-regional committees to process applications before they are approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee.¹² For the Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein programme, Switzerland has a regional advisory group, representing the nine cantons ('steering committee Eastern Switzerland'), which decides on issues relevant to projects implemented on the Swiss side.¹³

Also common among INTERREG programmes are decentralised arrangements for information and animation through regional offices or networks of local offices undertaking publicity, providing information and advice on project ideas, and encouraging projects from target groups. Increasingly important is not only their role in project generation, but also supporting dissemination activities and promoting programme outputs and results. This work is generally undertaken by regional or national contact points. For example for the programme Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein the Swiss contact point is hosted by the government of St. Gallen, one of the nine cantonal governments involved in the programme. All nine Swiss cantons also have nominated a contact person in charge of the programme.

b. Lead Partners

In some programmes, the decision has been taken to allow non-EU Member States to be lead project partners. However, a Managing Authority has to agree to this status and programmes may choose to limit lead partner status. For the Oberrhein programme lead partners *must* be based in an EU Member State. i.e. in France or Germany (Baden-Württemberg or Rhineland-Palatinate). In the Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein programme, Swiss partners can 'in justified cases' be lead partners, but partners from Lichtenstein cannot.¹⁴

3. Financial Flows and Audit and Control

a. Financial Commitments to the Programme

Non-EU Member States are limited to drawing down ERDF-equivalent funding committed to the Pro-

12 INTERREG VA Sverige – Finland – Norge, Botnia Atlantica, 2014-2020, Project Handbook, view online at <<http://www.interreg-sverige-norge.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Projekthandbok.pdf>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

13 Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein, Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein kurz erklärt, view online at <<http://www.interreg.org/dokumente/interreg-kurz-erklart-fuer-schweizer-projektinteressierte.pdf>> (only available in German) (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

14 Alpenrhein, Bodensee, Hochrhein Programme (2015) Interreg V-Programm "Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein", view online at <<http://www.interreg.org/dokumente/15-07-09-leitfaden-1-version-1.pdf>>, p. 7 (only available in German) (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

gramme by their respective governments. The ERDF-equivalent funds commonly come from State regional development budgets, e.g. in Switzerland and Norway, which earmark specific funds for INTERREG. Projects must also secure co-financing from with the non-EU Member State, this can come for example from the region's 'own' resources (although these may also have come from State funding for the regions involved).

During the programme development process, letters of agreement committing to the programme are provided by the relevant non-EU Member State Governments. In some cases this is detailed commitment, e.g. Norwegian budgets are set on an annual basis. In others, a detailed budget, is not set and can be varied during the life of the programme, e.g. Liechtenstein where commitments are made on an ad-hoc basis.

b. Intervention Rates

Non-EU Member States can chose to apply different intervention rates from the Member State participants.¹⁵ For example, in the Botnia Atlantica programme for regions in Sweden and Finland the intervention rate is 60 percent; for Norwegian beneficiaries, a co-financing rate of 50 percent is in place.

c. Management of ERDF-equivalent Funds

In terms of the funding streams, the systems in place for managing ERDF and ERDF-equivalent funds from non-EU Member States are linked, but set up in a way which keeps the ERDF and ERDF-equivalent funds completely separate. For example for the North Sea and Northern Periphery programmes, a joint/parallel system is in place. ERDF-equivalent

funds are forwarded to the Programme Managing Authority to be managed alongside ERDF funds, but through separate budget lines. The funds are managed according to the same rules as ERDF funds, but are reported on and audited separately. Also, the ERDF equivalent is not part of the programme closure process and cannot be appropriated by the Commission.

In addition to the responsibilities for overall financial management, monitoring and control allocated to the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority, separate systems are set up at national levels in each of the participating programme national territories, including non-EU Member States. These systems feed into and inform overall Programme level systems and structures.

In order to ensure coherence among controllers from all countries participating in the Programmes, standard documents, such as guidelines and templates for control certificates and checklists, are often established by the MA and used as minimum requirements across all participating countries. Also to ensure consistency, each country can have a detailed description of the first-level control system setup with regard to qualifications, training, quality assurance and separation of functions. The individual States are responsible for the first level control on its territory. For example, Norway applies a decentralised system for designation of first level control in line with the relevant national rules.

V. Value of Participation: What Do the Non-EU Member States Get out of It All?

Non EU-Member State participation in INTERREG is strong and forms a key part of many established programmes. As figure 1 illustrates, over an extended period non-Member States have participated in a large number of projects covering a wide range of themes. Also for the non-EU Member States, INTERREG has been a valued part of their regional policy approaches and engagement with the EU.¹⁶ Speaking at the European Commission's Open Days in October 2016 the Norwegian EEA and EU Minister stated that "INTERREG is and still shall be an important tool for Norwegian regional development".¹⁷ Similarly, the Director of the Swiss Centre for Mountain Regions observed "ETC is an important instrument of

15 The levels set for intervention rates are discussed at programme-level, with, for example, the impact of funding levels on the numbers and quality of project applications considered. In addition, during the course of the programme period intervention rates can be modified, e.g. linked to project application and commitment rates. However, the final decision on intervention rates is one that is taken by the non-EU Member State.

16 Vik Aspake, E., *European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation* (Presentation to the European Open Days Session European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation, European Commission, 10/9/2016), available online at <<http://osloregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Presentasjon-Eisabeth-Vik-Aspaker.pdf>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

17 Ibid.

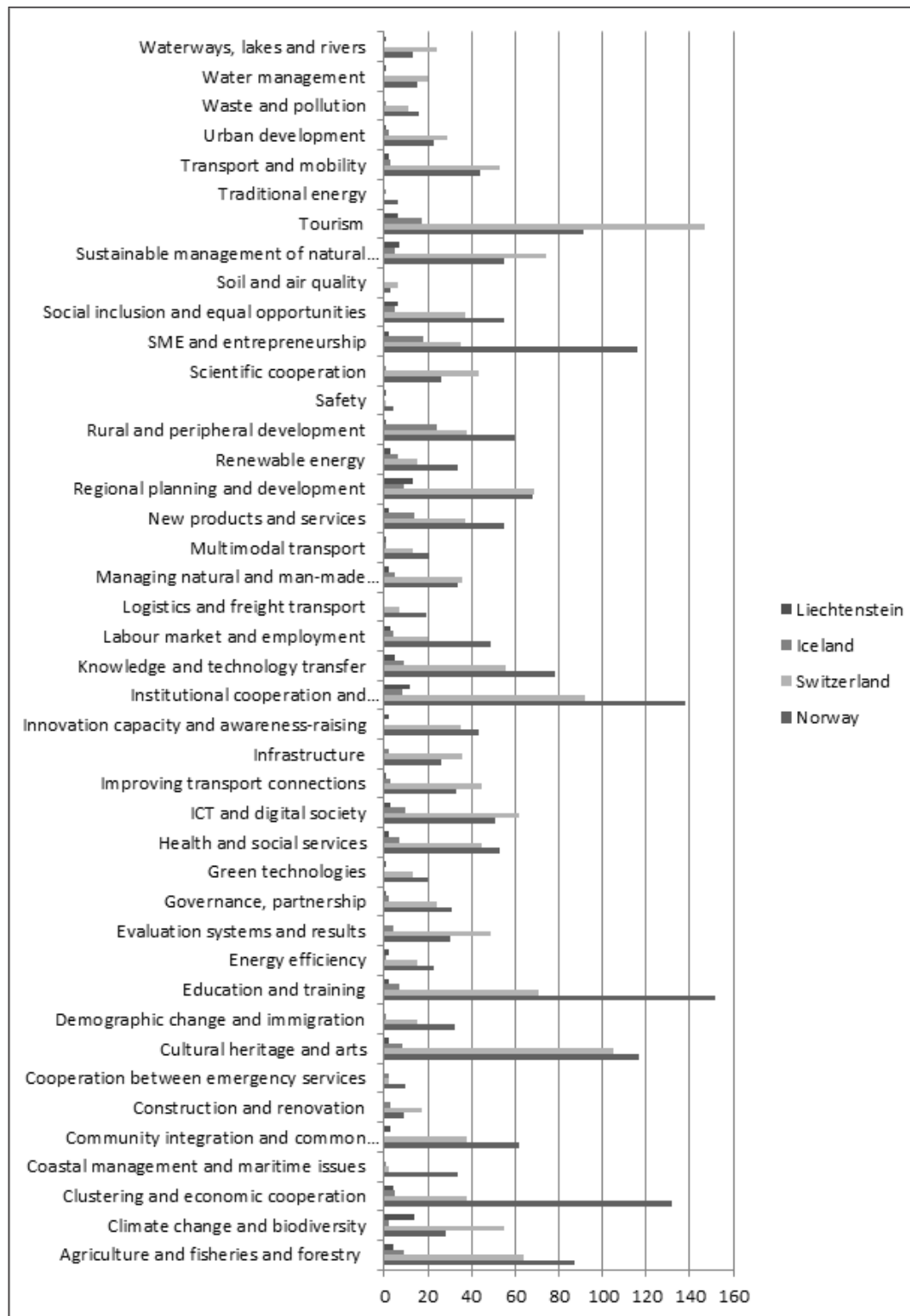


Figure 1: INTERREG Projects Involving Selected non-EU Member States (as listed in the KEEP Data Base, Covering 2000-06, 2007-23 and 2014-2020 Periods).

Source: KEEP, view online at <<https://www.keep.eu/keep/>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

Swiss regional policy and international cooperation and Switzerland wishes to continue to be actively present in the ETC programmes [...]. More and more Swiss partners are becoming aware of the opportunities that various ETC offer and decide to get involved.”¹⁸

Reinforcing this point, a recent study of the participation of Norwegian municipalities and counties in INTERREG¹⁹ found that all Norwegian counties and 259 individual municipalities (60 percent of municipalities) participated in an EU project in the 2007-2014 period. Almost 40 percent participated in INTERREG projects. Participation was found to often involve clusters of Norwegian municipalities working together within projects, thus promoting internal Norwegian collaboration as well as external links. In terms of what was gained from their involvement key factors are:

- projects can help change how municipalities and counties organise their activities;
- skills, inspiration, new ideas, knowledge and international contacts and networks; which are durable beyond an individual project;
- increased awareness of common European challenges and culture;
- input into policy development and policy instruments; and
- addresses regional development challenges.

For 2007-13 Switzerland was involved in 469 projects, see table 2. For the 2014-2020 period it is anticipated that both Switzerland and Norway will be involved in around 100 projects each across the ETC programmes.

VI. Future Directions and Conclusions

Based on this review of the regulations and programme practice, the first overall conclusions are that:

- non-EU Member States are active and ‘visible’ partners in ETC in the 2014-2020 period;
- much of the focus in terms of the location of Programme institutions is on the Member States, however a range of activities are delegated to non-EU Member States;
- non-EU Member States are engaged in a wide range of projects and derive noted benefits from their participation in INTERREG.

However, particularly in the context of future Cohesion policy reform, questions are being asked about the role and approach of INTERREG. The performance of INTERREG has come under increased scrutiny in the context of on-going criticism about its effectiveness, difficulties in measuring and demonstrating achievements, and demands for greater value-for-money and added value. Looking to the future, these criticisms have to be taken into account. Many of these challenges are well documented such as the on-going need for simplification. However, others are more fundamental and could influence the way in which and how non-EU Member States engage in future ETC activities.

- *New types of external borders* – the EU currently has borders with long-established EFTA/EEA Members, candidate countries (where it is in the EU’s interests to engage in development support) and neighbourhood countries (commonly lagging in terms of economic development and where EU funds have a role in enhancing political cooperation and economic integration). In the context of Brexit, the EU’s external borders will change. An external border with the UK does not necessarily fit easily within any of these categories, or the associated cooperation programmes. Is there a case for new types of cross border cooperation programme and non-EU Member State engagement along external borders?
- *A clearer and more visible role for territorial cooperation* – on the one hand, some of the most notable contributions of territorial cooperation fit with the overarching themes and ambitions of Cohesion policy, such as promoting integration, building solidarity and tolerance. On the other, the distinct contributions of INTERREG are also felt at community and local levels. However, to date it has been at the regional-programme level that the result indicators have to be based. At this level, the tangible effects are commonly both too ‘soft’ and

¹⁸ Egger, T., *European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation* (Presentation to the European Open Days Session European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation, European Commission, 10/9/2016).

¹⁹ Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) (2016) EU-programmer: Deltagelse og nytte for kommunesektoren, NIBR; view online at <<http://interreg.no/2016/02/dokumenterer-omfang-og-nytteverdi-av-kommunenes-interreg-engasjement/>> (last accessed on 9 August 2017).

Table 2: Projects with Swiss Partners 2007-13.

Programme	Projects with Swiss partners
Interreg A France-Switzerland	142
Interreg A Italy-Switzerland	146
Interreg A Upper Rhine	48
Interreg A Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein	70
Interreg B Alpine Space	36
Interreg B North West Europe	10
Interreg C	3
ESPON	11
URBACT	3

Source: Egger, T., *European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation* (Presentation to the European Open Days Session European Territorial Cooperation and the Role of Third Country Participation, European Commission, 10/09/2016).

large-scale to be apparent, or too small scale to get picked up by ESIF monitoring systems. Additional problems are that INTERREG has struggled in the past to engage with the private sector. Is there a need for a new interpretation of the rationale for INTERREG-type cooperation and what/who it should be targeting?

- *Greater flexibility and synergies* – questions have been raised about the number of programmes and their geographic rationale. The relevance of functional areas is something that is being stressed in the academic literature, European Commission re-

ports and by some policy makers and implementers. In addition, there are calls to improve and increase synergies between INTERREG and other EU programmes, which has implications for non-Member States who may/may not be involved in 'other' programmes/policies.

Taken together these debates suggest that some substantial changes could be anticipated in the future, which will also impact on future approaches to participation in European Territorial Cooperation in both EU-Member States and non EU-Member States.