Editorial

Konstantinos HATZIDAKIS,
MEP, Rapporteur, General Rules on ERDF,
ESF and Cohesion Funds

The future generation of structural funds and the regional policy of an enlarged Europe.

One of the key reports on regional policy was approved last July by an overwhelming majority in the European Parliament. Prepared by the Commission on regional development, the report reflects the European Parliament’s position on the reform of structural funds (SF) for the next programming period 2007-2013. The recommended financial allocation amounts to +/- 336 thousand million euros or 0.41% of Community GNI. It is important to note that the report on financial perspectives (by R. Böge) takes the same position, and so strengthens the European Parliament’s stance, which highlights that the implementation of future cohesion policy necessitates a credible minimum budget. Therefore, the report rejects the idea that regional policy may be considered as a variable that can be simply adjusted during the process of adopting the 2007-2013 financial perspectives. This position sends a clear and optimistic signal to all our fellow citizens on Europe’s determination to overcome these difficulties, especially since European leaders failed to reach a decision during the European Council in June 2005.

The report integrates both the Commission’s proposal, which dismisses all attempts of “renationalisation” in regional policy, and the opinion of other institutional actors, resulting in a more comprehensive recommendation. The most important points of the report can be summarised as follows:

- The possibility of re-using unspent credits following the rigid application of the “N+2” rule;
- Creation of a compensation mechanism to overcome the loss of funds for the regions most affected by financial losses due to the proposed rules;
- Reallocation of the performance reserve at a European rather than a national level;
- Changes are being proposed with regard to the principle of “monofunds” (the financing of programmes by a single fund) as well as to the eligibility of regions affected by the statistical effect and those affected by the natural effect;
- Organisation of the new “European territorial cooperation” objective within a three-part structure: cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation;
- Furthermore, the report indicates its attachment to European Strategic Actions (the Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda), and management simplification (withdrawal of fishing and rural development from the SF “package”), as well as to the principles of non-discrimination and partnership, recommending the organisation of strategic monitoring of regional policy from this angle, through a biennial forum.

The Commission’s proposal for 2007-13 is to include a programme similar to INTERREG IIIC within the planned new Objective of Territorial Cooperation, according to DG Regio’s Elisabeth Helander.

The success of INTERREG IIIC was undisputed, but debates continued over future management structures. Ms Helander said the Commission proposals were already under scrutiny in the EU Council and final decisions could be expected soon.

INTERREG IIIC Forum and Lead Partner Day

Regional, national and EU decision makers will be invited to a pan-European INTERREG IIIC Forum on 28 November in Brussels to mark the allocation of the last of the programme’s available funding. Lead Partners of INTERREG IIIC’s 264 projects will also be welcome.

Participants will see how INTERREG IIIC is improving approaches to regional development, and debate future opportunities for interregional cooperation. Lead Partners are also invited to a day of practical workshops on 29 November. More information to follow at: www.interreg3c.net

Commission voices support for IIIC at Prague AZM

The Commission’s proposal for 2007-13 is to include a programme similar to INTERREG IIIC within the planned new Objective of Territorial Cooperation, according to DG Regio’s Elisabeth Helander.

She told the INTERREG IIIC All-Zones Meeting in Prague on 22 September that the Commission wanted to build on positive experiences from the present period while focusing more strongly on the Lisbon and Gothenburg themes.

At the meeting, members of Monitoring Committees, Managing Authorities and Secretariats from all four programme zones also discussed achievements and potential programme improvements.

Pursuit of better management structures. Ms Helander said the Commission proposals were already under scrutiny in the EU Council and final decisions could be expected soon.

OPEN DAYS 2005

European Week of Regions and Cities, Brussels, 10-13 October

INTERREG IIIC will be presented in the Open Days workshop “Challenges for Interregional Cooperation” on 11 October (14:00-16:00). Organised by the Committee of the Regions and the Commission’s DG Regio, in partnership with EU regions, the event focuses on “Working together for Regional Growth and Jobs” to help Member States and regions prepare for the 2007-2013 Structural Funds’ programmes and instruments. More details: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/opendays

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INTERREG IIIC at work in 194 EU regions. An overview...

With all INTERREG IIIC funds committed, and the last projects approved, the programme is now at a turning point where ideas are becoming reality.

The last of INTERREG IIIC’s 315 million EUR of funds were allocated in June 2005, bringing to 264 the final number of INTERREG IIIC operations approved across the European Union.

Today, just under three years after the programme was launched, all but five of the EU’s 199 regions are directly involved in one or more of the interregional partnerships INTERREG IIIC co-finances.

More than 2600 partners are involved in these new operations. But who are they, and what work are they now doing on the ground? This newsletter gives an overview. We show how INTERREG IIIC’s operations are enabling regions from 49 different countries to cooperate and learn from each others’ experiences in order to improve approaches to regional development across the EU.

When were the funds distributed?

Funding was allocated in four application rounds launched by the INTERREG IIIC programme. The first operations were approved after a first round in 2003, in which only about ten percent of funding was allocated. However, interest in the programme grew quickly, with the third round, in Spring 2004, attracting the most applications. The East and South zones allocated most funding in the second and third rounds, and the North and West allocated most of their funding in the fourth round. The last of the INTERREG IIIC financing was allocated in June this year, giving support to projects set to run until 2007 or 2008. Now, in late 2005, some of the first operations have already closed and others are reaching the final phase of their work.

What are the areas of work?

Although partners of all INTERREG IIIC operations share the goal of contributing their experience to improve approaches to regional development, their different projects carry out a wide array of activities. These range from analysing how SME clusters work best to finding innovative ways to clean beaches and recycle seaweed; and from improving public administrations’ use of information technology to helping cities plan for disasters such as terrorist attacks or flooding. The two fields of work most covered are Regional Planning, Territorial Regeneration and Urban Development; and Environment, Risk Prevention, Energy and Natural Resources. Heritage, Culture and Tourism; and SME Development and Entrepreneurship are also popular themes for interregional cooperation.

Projects tackle a range of development issues

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<tr>
<th>Theme for interregional cooperation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environment, Risk Prevention, Energy and Natural Resources</td>
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<td>Regional Planning, Territorial Regeneration and Urban Development</td>
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<td>Heritage, Culture and Tourism</td>
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<td>SME Development and Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>Research, Technology and Innovation</td>
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<td>Information Society and e-Government</td>
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<td>Employment, Social Inclusion, Human Resources and Education</td>
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<td>Accessibility, Mobility and Transport</td>
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*(some projects treat more than one theme)

Which regions are involved?

The map shows how widely INTERREG IIIC project partners are spread across the EU territory, with only five regions not participating. Of the more than 2600 partners, nearly half come from Objective 1 regions, and 26 are based in the outermost regions such as Canaries and Açores.

INTERREG IIIC partners can be found in 97% of the EU’s 199 regions.
Numbers of lead partners per country

Most EU regions are partners in more than one project, with the particularly active taking part in over forty different partnerships each. The Spanish regions of Andalucia and Cataluna, for example, are present in 62 and 51 projects respectively; and Emilia-Romagna in Italy, is involved in 59 different INTERREG IIIC operations. Lithuania has partners in 48 projects.

More than 120 EU regions are lead partners in INTERREG IIIC operations. Most head one or two projects, but some manage more, with Sachsen, Germany, leading nine of the programme’s interregional partnerships.

How does participation vary between EU Member States?

INTERREG IIIC partners can be found in all 25 EU Member States, and in 24 additional countries.

Although most partners are based in the 15 states that were members of the EU when the programme was launched, the ten new Member States were encouraged to participate from the outset. A sign of the programme’s success in stimulating cooperation across the enlarged EU is that two new Member States – Poland and Hungary – are among the ten EU countries with the highest numbers of INTERREG IIIC participants. Each of the two countries has more than 100 INTERREG IIIC partners. In fact, 491 – nearly twenty percent – of all organisations involved in INTERREG IIIC projects come from the ten new Member States.

Although many of the 264 INTERREG IIIC projects are led from Germany, Spain, Italy, the UK and France, each boasting more than 25 lead partners, the spread of countries with lead partners is wide, covering 19 EU Member States, and Norway.

Which non-EU countries are involved?

Ninety-four percent of the partners in INTERREG IIIC projects are from the enlarged EU, but in addition partners are also working from 24 “third countries”, as diverse as Morocco, the Ukraine, Turkey and even China. Romania and Norway are the most active non-EU countries in terms of the number of partners, with more than 20 each.

What type of organisations are taking part?

Just over half of the more than 2600 partners in INTERREG IIIC projects are local and regional public authorities, and some six percent are national public authorities. The remaining thirty-nine percent of partners – numbering just over a thousand – are “public equivalent bodies”, public, non-profit organisations such as Regional Development Agencies and certain Chambers of Commerce.

What type of operations?

About half of the approved operations are Individual Projects, in which partners are expected not only to share experience, but also to work together on building new approaches to regional development. A third are Networks – involving less intensive collaboration, and often more partners – and the rest are Regional Framework Operations. Only fifteen percent of INTERREG IIIC operations are RFOs, but because each of these complex mini-funding programmes has a relatively large budget, in total they have been allocated about forty percent of the programme’s funding.

RFOs

INTERREG IIIC supports 40 Regional Framework Operations. These mini-programmes have now started running their own calls for project applications, and by this summer they were already co-financing more than 150 sub-projects involving more than 450 organisations in interregional partnerships. Many more sub-projects have been launched since then. Lead partners of the RFOs are spread across 12 countries, but a quarter of them are based in Italy, eight in Germany and seven in Spain.

Lasting benefits

After three years of programme implementation, these INTERREG IIIC operations are now enabling regions across Europe to learn from each others’ experiences and work together on improving approaches to regional development.

The last INTERREG IIIC operations are due to close in 2008. But because one of the programme’s selection criteria was that operations should bring benefits that stretch beyond their own two-to-three year lifetime, the impacts of the INTERREG IIIC programme are lasting. The improvement of policies and instruments for regional development will bring about long-term benefits. In addition, interregional sharing of knowledge and experience will continue to spread, based on the pan-European links INTERREG IIIC is now forging between regions facing similar challenges. In the long-term, this will help lagging regions catch up with more developed areas, and contribute to better economic and social cohesion across Europe.

For more INTERREG IIIC statistics please see: www.interreg3c.net/sixcms/detail.php?id=1093.

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AquaReg: Coastal cooperation is paying dividends

AquaReg is a Regional Framework Operation (RFO) funded under INTERREG IIIC North. It involves cooperation between the regions of Galicia in Spain; Border, Midland and Western (BMW) in Ireland; and Trøndelag in Norway.

The AquaReg partners want to contribute to coherent and sustainable development in aquaculture and fisheries in the three regions involved, promote innovative actions and business development in relevant marine industries, and increase employment in the marine sector.

A prerequisite for success in interregional cooperation is the right blend of differences and similarities. Galicia, BMW and Trøndelag are all strong marine regions, situated at different latitudes along the Atlantic Coast. Most of their species of fish and shellfish are the same but there are regional variations.

The rationale behind AquaReg is to make more efficient use of the experience and knowledge of aquaculturists, fishermen and scientists across regional and national borders. The regional resource base and industrial traditions provide good opportunities for marine research in all three regions. The interregional partnership has outlined three strategies for achieving the objectives of AquaReg:

- **AquaLink**: Linking aquaculture/fisheries business and research
- **AquaEd**: Education and training
- **AquaPlan**: Coastal zone planning and management

AquaReg started its activities in June 2003, and since then has successfully funded 12 RFO sub-projects involving 36 organisations from the three participating regions. These include marine industries, marine researchers, marine schools and coastal zone planners. The 12 sub-projects have received funding to the value of 2,730,000 EUR.

The level of interest from both the aquaculture and fishing sectors can clearly be seen from the variety of AquaReg’s sub-projects. They include work on seaweed, cod, pollock, mussels, crabs and lobsters, coastal zone management, regional and student exchange, and even the development of by-products from waste materials.

The education element of AquaReg is important for regional authorities, adding new aspects to the roles of politicians and officials as enablers and moderators. The three regions of AquaReg have created valuable networks between SMEs, researchers, schools and coastal zone planners. At RFO level, AquaReg has created administration and political networks that are crucial to achieving the ambition of a long-term cooperation in different sectors between Trøndelag, Galicia and BMW. With this in mind AquaReg will organise events focusing on future cooperation, together with general sub-project networking and dissemination. The first of such events was the AquaReg Forum in Vigo, Galicia, on 14th and 15th September 2005, which not only gave all AquaReg sub-projects an opportunity to present their updated activities and results but also incorporated two panel discussions looking at interregional cooperation for:

- Planning, management and sustainable exploitation of Aquaculture and Natural Marine Resources;
- Innovation and Development of new production, processing and commercialisation systems for aquaculture products.

The panel sessions:

- Facilitated and fostered the analysis and exchange of experiences, knowledge and opinions founded on common interest subjects previously identified;
- Prioritised the areas of common interest and consequently looked for established suitable networking methods for further cooperation in these areas;
- Defined collaboration strategies between projects and worked on new proposals, either for new projects or by establishing links, networks or interregional collaboration agreements, during or after the AquaReg period. Several partnerships are already working on concrete projects and future cooperation.

AquaReg’s ambition is that the excellent cooperation and networks already established continue well into the future.

Further information can be obtained from the Programme manager Mr Geir Tevsvold, Sør-Trøndelag County Council, geir.tevsvold@stk.no or by visiting www.aquareg.com.

The AquaReg coordinators: Geir Tevsvold (Norway), Gabriel de Labra (Spain) and Alan Drumm (Ireland)

Overexploitation and depletion of traditional fisheries have resulted in reduction of traditional jobs and a re-structuring of the fleet in many coastal communities. As a consequence, aquaculture has been significantly diversified, focusing on the exploitation of new species and the use of innovative technologies, so that today it constitutes an important and flourishing industry with high expectations for the future.
E-TEAMS: Boosting entrepreneurship and internationalisation for competitive regions

Nearly a fifth of all INTERREG IIIC operations have chosen SME development and entrepreneurship as their main focus. And many other approved operations include this as one priority among others in their activities. This does not come as a surprise since the economic competitiveness of regions depends to a large extent on the ability of regional institutions to stimulate entrepreneurial culture, establish the necessary support infrastructure for successful business development and, more generally, build an environment conducive to growth.

How to produce more entrepreneurs and how to get more firms to grow has been very much on the minds of policymakers at the EU-level, resulting in extensive research, analysis and consultations about the roots of the problem, in policy recommendations such as the 2004 EU Action Plan on entrepreneurship and in specific European support programmes and activities.

While the EU and national governments provide the overall policy framework, it is, however, often the regional and local authorities and institutions that play a vital role in providing the know-how, infrastructure, networks and tailor-made support to make entrepreneurs and small businesses thrive in their regions.

E-TEAMS: Boosting entrepreneurship and internationalisation for competitive regions

To address the obstacles to growth identified in their regions, the partners of the INTERREG IIIC operation E-teams (Interregional Entrepreneurial Teams) are therefore aiming to improve their knowledge and capacity for successful entrepreneurship and SME policies, stimulate intra-regional dialogue among key actors in their regions and test new approaches to support small and emerging businesses.

“The specific method, combining both bottom-up and top-down approaches, we are using for this project is based on an earlier Swedish-Polish project, which we have further developed and are now testing in a wider number of regions,” says Marcin Baron, coordinator for the lead partner, the University of Katowice in the Polish Slaskie region. E-teams mobilizes 10 partners from regions in Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland, Finland, UK, Portugal, Lithuania and Sweden to exchange experiences, establishing joint benchmarks and experiment with so-called Multi-Actor Partnerships (MAPs) and Entrepreneurial Teams (E-teams).

MAPs are regional-level partnerships consisting of policy-makers, universities and business support organisations securing broad involvement and support for proactive policies in the partner regions. Together with the E-teams, informal groupings of companies in the regions they identify, among others, international best practices and opportunities for internationalisation of SMEs.

Through systematic cooperation and ‘benchlearning’ at regional and inter-regional level the participating regions hope to improve considerably the intervention skills of policy-makers and other stakeholders and act as a reference point and model for other interested regions.

For more information and contacts please visit: www.eteams.ae.katowice.pl

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INTERREG IIIC is strengthening cooperation between the Outermost Regions

INTERREG IIIC is strengthening cooperation between the Outermost Regions

The Azores, The Canaries, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Madeira, Martinique and Réunion: six islands and an isolated region located to the North East of the South American continent, thousands of kilometres from Europe; three different languages and three different nationalities throughout this collection of regions that make up a particular group defined within the EU as the Outermost Regions (les Régions Ultrapériphériques: (RUP)).

The representatives of the seven regions, aware of the opportunity offered by the INTERREG IIIC programme, one of whose aims refers explicitly to the strengthening of cooperation between the Outermost Regions, have developed the notion of preparing the “RUP-PLUS” Project during the periodic meetings of the Conference of the Presidents of the Outermost Regions. Thus, for the first time, the seven Outermost Regions are participating jointly in a European interregional cooperation project.

The objective of the “RUP-PLUS” scheme is to contribute to the definition and implementation of a global and coherent sustainable development strategy required for the EU Outermost Regions. In this way, by exchanging ideas and experience, the scheme will contribute on one hand to the improvement of the competitiveness of these regions and, on the other hand, to establishing common standpoints on sectors and themes considered as strategic. These objectives are at the heart of the devised action and programmes.

The selected cooperation themes concern the knowledge and visibility of the Outermost Regions, the reinforcing of a competitiveness strategy adapted to the existence of serious and permanent disabilities, and the study of the consequences of globalisation on regions with geographically distinct surroundings, such as the Outermost Regions.

Three meetings of the RUP-PLUS Steering Committee have already taken place in Brussels during this first quarter (February, March and June 2005). As soon as the Steering Committee validated the cooperation subjects considered as strategic and aimed at promoting real sustainable development in the Outermost Regions, each partner region announced a call for sub-project proposals. Under this framework 13 sub-projects were approved by the Steering Committee in the following areas: improvement of competitiveness of local businesses in the Outermost Regions, Research, Development and Demonstration, Improvement of natural resources and the Outermost Regions faced with globalisation.

Furthermore, the RUP-PLUS Project was selected by the European Commission and by the Committee of the Regions to participate in the “Open Days 2005” occurring from 10th to 13th October in Brussels. The joint activities of the RUP-PLUS consortium will take place in the new Canary Island Government Office, located in the European quarter of Brussels. These activities will be centred on the theme of “Outermost Regions, an example of European Territorial Cooperation”.

Under this scope, the RUP-PLUS programme will consist of a seminar that will focus on “The Outermost Regions of the EU: a reinforced partnership”, and a round table conference on “Territorial Cohesion of competitiveness and knowledge in Europe: united in diversity or dispersed in reality?”

In parallel to the holding of these seminars, the RUP-PLUS group is also working together on the “Open Days 2005” by organising various cultural activities, such as an exhibition centred on the Outermost Regions.

For more information please contact the RUP-PLUS coordinator Ms Beatriz Amigó at bamimel@gobiernodecanarias.org or visit the operation's website, www.regionesultraperifericas.org.

For the first time, all Outermost Regions are working together on one INTERREG IIIC operation. The RFO has approved 13 subprojects.
SusSET: Sustaining Expanding Small Towns

Representatives from 12 small towns in Scotland, Poland, Sweden and Greece gathered for the first meeting of their INTERREG IIIC West project SusSET in the Swedish towns of Strömstad, Åmål and Kungälv this September. Together they began to analyse a question core to their partnership: “What is the best form of strategy for small expanding towns?”

Results from the talks will now be disseminated to politicians, public authorities, businesses, community groups and young people in each of the four countries, contributing to improved development in their own towns.

SusSET – or Sustaining Expanding Small Towns – is an Individual Project launched this year to find the best ways to sustain the development of traditional towns whose populations, though growing, are still smaller than 50,000.

The 12 towns face common problems despite coming from four different parts of Europe. “There are towns in the partnership – and particularly old towns – that suffer from over-expansion around their edges, which can leave an empty core; and they have problems with affordable housing,” said SusSET’s lead partner Nick Brown, of Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland. Other shared problems include high car dependency and the weakening of local identity. Economic competitiveness can also be threatened by globalisation and younger people moving away to bigger centres.

SusSET aims to develop a mechanism that will help regions and municipalities share their varied experiences of policies, instruments and EU funding to manage small town development better. Dr Brown says the partners’ wide range of cultural, administrative and political backgrounds make this particularly interesting.

The partners are grouped into four clusters, and each includes: one small town close to a city, at least one on the coast, and another that serves a relatively large rural catchment area.

SusSET is based on the understanding that helping the EU’s small, expanding communities develop sustainably and become more competitive will contribute to strengthening economic and social cohesion across Europe. With up to fifty percent of the national population of some EU countries living in these towns, the potential impact is considerable.

Dr Brown said: “We feel that small towns, especially those that are expanding, are not given enough support by EU and national policies. Support tends to focus more on larger cities or remote rural areas.”

So, with awareness raising and striving for stronger policy and funding on an EU level among its main aims, SusSET is striking up links with other international partnerships. These include the INTERREG IIIB project NEWTASC, and the INTERREG IIIC operations Knowledge Networks, EU-topCOM, ChangeLAB and SUVOT.

Between now and its close in late 2007, SusSET will build a best practice model for other small towns managing change across the EU.

And the most exciting aspect of SusSET and INTERREG IIIC? According to the lead partner, it is the new motivation, confidence and raised spirits of the people in the participating towns, and their enthusiasm for sharing their varied knowledge and experience with other regions.

Nick Brown would be interested to hear from people working on similar small town issues who would like to share experiences. He says: “There is little point in SusSET reinventing the wheel”. Please contact him at nick.brown@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or on +44 7769642360.

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE FOUR PROGRAMME ZONES?

INTERREG IIIC North

Special support for financial managers and auditors – North JTS organised seminar in Rostock
In order to support the fourth round operations in compiling their first progress reports, a special seminar was organised on 18 August 2005. The North JTS invited the financial managers and auditors from these operations to Rostock, to provide them with practical information on the financial reporting and auditing procedures and requirements. In addition to the information and practical tips given by the North JTS, three guest speakers (Mr Joel Kook from Estonia, Ms Deimante Jankunaite from Lithuania and Ms Magdalena Zawadzka from Poland) informed about the centralised first level control systems set up in their countries. Moreover, Christoph Diensberg and Ute Bartz from the ongoing North zone operation “BEPART” were invited to the seminar to share their experience related to the financial reporting and auditing of their operations. More information about the seminar as well as all presentations are available for download at http://www.interreg3c.net/web/north_en.

INTERREG IIIC East

JTS office news
The JTS East has moved to new offices, conveniently located within easy reach of the city centre and the airport. The new address is: Museumstrasse 3/A/III, A-1070 Vienna. Phone and fax numbers remain unchanged. A new entry to the IIIC East team is Dana Miskovicova from Bratislava, Slovakia, who started as Programme and Communication Officer in July 2005. Dana has worked for the Slovak Ministry of Economy at the Department of European Union Affairs and speaks fluent German, English, Czech and Slovak.

Good ratings for Communication Training
Feedback from the Communication Training for East zone lead partners (Vienna, 16-17 June 2004) was very positive. In a questionnaire, 94% of participants rated the trainers either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, and 96% rated the training materials ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. Many lead partners said they would appreciate similar events helping them learn from each other and face the challenges of project implementation.

Operation showcase finalised
Project descriptions for all 71 running East operations have now been published in the online Operation Showcase of the East section of www.interreg3c.net. The section is sorted by theme, which should facilitate cross-fertilization between operations and help to market them to other interested regions as a valuable source of practice on regional development. INTERREG IIIC East plans to add more information to the section in cooperation with its lead partners.

INTERREG IIIC South

Financial management and n+2 seminar
South zone lead partners attended a seminar on financial management and the so-called “n+2 rule”, on 31 May in Valencia. The event was run by the South Managing and Paying Authorities and JTS, and national delegations from Spain, France, Italy and Portugal, who explained their respective countries’ certification procedures. See all presentations at www.interreg3c.net.

Steering Committee meeting
The South Steering Committee approved two more RFOs and one Individual Project at its last meeting on 8 June. It also established a priority list of projects to allocate the remaining funds, around 2MEUR.

Talks on the future
The role of territorial actors in 2007-13 was debated at two conferences on sustainable development and the value of interregional cooperation last July in Greece, in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities (KEOE) and the South JTS.

New JTS member
A new financial officer has joined the South JTS team to meet increasing financial monitoring demands at programme and project level.

INTERREG IIIC West

West allocates remaining funds to 11 new projects
The INTERREG IIIC West Steering Committee allocated the last of the West’s funds to eleven new operations at their meeting on 24 June in Brussels, Belgium. The Committee decided to approve four new Networks and seven Individual Projects. A total of 19 applications had been received in this “re-submission round”, which allowed 32 applicants rejected in the fourth round to reapply. This move brings the final number of West zone operations to 76, with a total of 921 partners. Dispersed across all 25 EU Member States, as well as 11 other countries, these partners of West-led projects represent thirty-five percent of the more than 2600 organisations participating in INTERREG IIIC operations across all four zones. A total of 29 INTERREG IIIC projects are led from the UK and 13 from the Netherlands, but in addition there is at least one Lead Partner in each of the seven West zone Member States. Find more information on INTERREG IIIC West at: http://www.interreg3c.net/web/west_en.

INTERREG Conference on Environmental Risk Prevention
29-30 November 2005, Valencia, Spain

In cooperation with ESPON, Interact is organising this event for people working with INTERREG projects on risk management or environmental hazards to meet with colleagues from other programmes. More information at: www.interact-eu.net/479156/479328/557939/845160.

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