



# **INTERREG IIIC** **Regional Framework** **Operation** **“Change on Borders”**

*Change on  
Borders*

**A guide of good examples and  
recommendations for cross-border  
cooperation**

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## 1. What is the RFO “Change on Borders” about?

Interregional cooperation both alongside the European Unions’ borders and among its regions are an essential condition to make a real move towards cohesion and well-balanced regional development. The Regional Framework Operation (RFO) “**Change on Borders**” was a programme-based approach that has by the means of sub-projects promoted interregional cooperation among 25 different border regions in the European Union and beyond. With “**Change on Borders**”, for the first time, such a high number regions have committed themselves to working together in an RFO. “**Change on Borders**” started in September 2003 and was finished in October 2007. The overall objective of the RFO “Change on Borders” was to dismantle borders and border-like barriers in Europe through a stimulation of new cooperation opportunities in different aspects of daily life.

### The RFO “Change on Borders” aimed in particular at:

- The exchange of experiences on themes related to cross-border cooperation,
- Transferring and applying best-practice know-how,
- Spreading information among border regions and cross-border cooperation structures,
- Strengthening regional working cooperations,
- Creating innovation through effective use of knowledge,
- Improving the effectiveness of regional policy instruments.

### The main results were:

- Knowledge and expertise on various subjects was exchanged and thus the basis for innovation and regional learning was formed,
- Awareness for common problems and solutions was raised,
- A strong partnership network of 25 European border regions was created,
- 16 regional and cross-border partnerships in the form of sub-projects or so-called SWGs (Sub-theme Working Groups) were established,
- More than 50 cross-border pilot projects were implemented,
- More than 10 high-level reports and studies were produced on how regions can cooperate better in the future,
- 22 Thematic Fora were held,
- 1 comprehensive project manual on cross-border cooperation was prepared.

### The central recommendations are:

- Sustainable regional economic and social development can be fostered through enhanced cooperation,
- The presence of regional networks and partnerships is crucial for effective lesson-drawing and knowledge transfer,
- Local strategies need to be linked with national and European policies,
- Regional policymakers need to “put their regions on the European map”,
- Get to know your neighbour and define mutual benefits,
- Cooperation comes before competition,
- “Strengthen the strengths”,
- Build up trust and develop long-term strategies,
- Cross-border cooperation needs to be built on “Win-Win” strategies.

## 2. Preface

**“Unless we understand how borders are changing, we will be poorly placed to access the factors that facilitate and limit cross-border cooperation.”<sup>1</sup>**

In recent times, cross-border regions have experienced an upsurge in public interest and are subject to many debates and policies, whether on the regional or national, but most of all, on the European level. A cross-border region is compiled by contiguous subnational units belonging to two or more nation-states<sup>2</sup>.

This proliferation is rather surprising though, since for decades borders were synonymous to barriers and perceived as “breaking and fragmenting economic space”<sup>3</sup> and space- and time-related obstacles to the free movement of goods, services, labour, capital and people. In terms of regional planning strategies and national development plans border regions were also seen as peripheral and often neglected.

Yet, at the same time borders were also understood as rather positive means of protection for economic and social structures, e.g. state tariffs or cultural or national identity. Apparently, after all borders still seem to be more persistent than expected.

For a long time though, authorities and structures concerned with cross-border cooperation at different levels of government and power, were simply not used to working together. This had many reasons such as differences in political institutions, administrative systems and procedures, legal structures and provisions, technical and environmental standards. In addition, differences in language and culture as well as physical obstacles like mountains, rivers and the sea often pose real obstacles. Moreover, the former separation between Western and Eastern Europe still constitutes a difficult situation to be addressed – in particular at the interfaces between old and new Member States. Even though the mutual prejudices and other challenges inherited from the past are about to be overcome, they occasionally still remain obstacles that need to be surmounted.

Addressing the aforementioned situations within the “Europe of the 27”, cross-border cooperation has turned to become a key policy element, manifested in the new regional policy objective “European Territorial Cooperation”. The European Union provides some €8.7 bn between 2007 and 2013 for enhancing the territorial cooperation, putting a real emphasis on cross-border cooperation and addressing the remaining challenges. The EU Community Initiative INTERREG IIIC-funded Regional Framework Operation “Change on Borders” has already at a very early stage taken up many of the challenges specifically faced by border regions and initiated a unique cooperation process of 25 border regions across Europe. Within the framework of this RFO, the regions worked together and developed specific sub-projects and strategies aimed at overcoming obstacles to transfrontier cooperation.

The present “Change on Borders” manual reviews these sub-projects and the strategies developed over the past four years, and provides food for thought for future cooperation. The manual highlights drivers and barriers, the potentials but also the limitations of cross-border cooperation and provides an overview of good practices. This guidebook furthermore presents information on the EU funding period 2007-2013 and on other funding programmes specifically relevant for cross-border cooperation.

**Borders as barriers**

**Borders as means of protection and safety**

**Many challenges still to overcome**

**“Change on Borders has addressed many of those challenges border regions are faced by**

<sup>1</sup> (O’Dowd, 2003: 14)

<sup>2</sup> (Perkmann and Sum, 2002)

<sup>3</sup> (Van Houtum, 2003: 13)

By means of a checklist, guidance for future projects with similar objectives is obtainable. The manual shall enhance and further improve the exchange of experience on themes of major importance for cross-border co-operation and transfer and apply best practice know-how in the design and elaboration of new policy approaches. It is meant to disseminate knowledge to other border regions, cross-border co-operation structures and other actors involved and geared towards improving the implementation of specific EU-programmes in this area.

### How to read this document

This manual was intentionally developed with a view at different target groups and geared towards a broad readership. Therefore, the manual was split into different chapters in order to provide specific and targeted information. In the first chapter, the reader will find general information on the question why cross-border cooperation matters. It is also meant to be a general introduction as it briefly outlines the history and different kinds of cross-border cooperation activities and provides an overview of the different forms of transfrontier cooperation.

In the second chapter the Regional Framework Operation “Change on Borders”, its **working structure and its general achievements** will be introduced.

The third chapter provides an overview on specific **drivers and barriers** for cross-border cooperation. This section is split into six sub-headings, namely:

- Administration and Institutions
- Geographical, Technical & Infrastructural Preconditions
- Politics, Planning Strategies and Networks
- Mutual Awareness and Common Interests
- Finances
- Culture and History

The information provided in chapter three is mainly based on the day-to-day experience in cross-border cooperation of the “Change on Borders” project partners. This part was developed with a particular view at practitioners, but also at those planning to engage in cross-border cooperation projects.

In chapter four, **successful examples for thematic cross-border cooperation** are presented to those who are looking for some practical input. This chapter is based on the Sub-Working Groups of the “Change on Borders” Regional Framework Operation. It outlines the broad variety of cross-border cooperation issues that can be addressed within the scope of targeted projects.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to the 2007-2013 EU budget period and the **funding opportunities provided for regional and cross-border cooperation**. Particular emphasis is put on European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), the former INTERREG initiative. This chapter is geared towards those who want to get involved in projects of this kind and seek some basic advice on future funding opportunities.

In chapter six, a **checklist for cross-border cooperation** projects is provided. The list covers the different stages of an EU-funded cross-border cooperation project. Although the checklist was developed with a particular view at cross-border projects, some of the principles outlined are also valid for other EU-funded projects such as those for transnational and interregional cooperation. The checklist is geared towards current and also potential new stakeholders to synchronise their projects and project ideas with the experience of those who deal with cross-border cooperation projects on a daily basis.

In chapter seven, the reader may find some general **conclusions and recommendations** of a rather broad nature. This part is mainly for those who need a quick overview on the findings of the manual and the RFO “Change on Borders”.

The annex provides **related maps and some general information on each of the Sub-Working Groups (SWG)** of “Change on Borders”.

**Manual is aimed  
at different target  
groups**

### 3. Why does cross-border cooperation matter?

#### Cross-border cooperation in the light of EU Single Market and global challenges

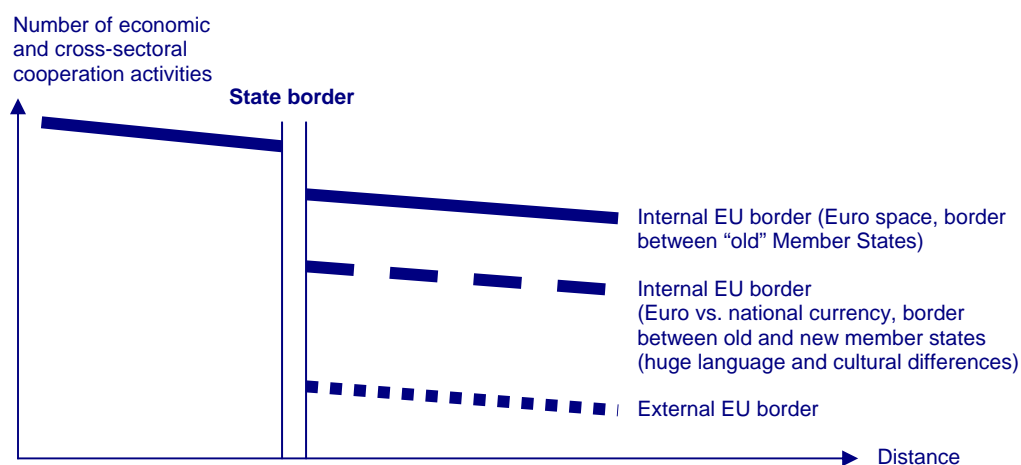
As early as 1975, Freiherr Viktor von Malchus stated: “the construction of a vivid Europe should start at its borders”<sup>4</sup>. Fortunately, nowadays, it is no more the question whether regions should cooperate, but rather how they can cooperate even more successfully. The European motto “unity in diversity” does not seem to be an obstacle, but rather a driving force for further cooperation efforts. Since the early 1990s, in fact, cross-border cooperation is commonly regarded as a virtue and an economically-induced right for EU border regions to associate themselves with their neighbouring regions as they share common problems. This development may also have to do with the fact that over the past 20 years the number of European borders has increased dramatically and that Europe indeed provides a vast range of many very different borders and border regions. Whereas some regions are closer to main European centres of economic activities, others are by far more rural, less densely populated and remote. Some border regions enclose young or disputed national and ethnic borders; some have existed already for more than one hundred years, e.g. the border between Spain and Portugal. There are borders where “old” EU Member States border “new” EU Member States, where “new” Member States are bordering (potential) Candidate Countries or even third countries such as Russia – some are flanked by huge structural disparities constituting enormous challenges.



**Number of borders is still increasing**

In a time when “Europe is increasingly regionalised, regions are europeanized, and state is both regionalized and europeanized”<sup>5</sup>, inevitably region-based cross-border initiatives and programmes are needed even more. In the course of globalisation, strengthening the role of the EU and its competitiveness in the global market whilst fostering the widening and deepening of the European integration process is of course a task to be fulfilled by all kinds of regional cooperation activities. This need was specifically expressed by the Lisbon Agenda and its 2005 review aimed at making the European Union “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world” by 2010. Borders in Europe simply have had to become much more permeable and formalities have had to be simplified. This is in particular true with a view at the flow of goods in border regions and the discontinuities to be observed along the external borders of the EU and those further away from the economic centres since here the level of cross-border activities is much lower than among the countries of the “Euro Space”.

**European borders are constantly changing**



**Fig. 1: Level of activities on different EU borders<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> (Malchus v., 1975)

<sup>5</sup> (Keating, 1998: 332)

<sup>6</sup> Source: amendments according to (Houtum v., 2000: 4)

Further important aspects are the transfer or reallocation of specific institutional and administrative powers upwards, downwards and even sideways (outsourcing) from the national level<sup>7</sup> the end of a post-par European separation and the fact that some (global) challenges simply could not be tackled any longer without thinking beyond national territories and the borders of regions.

**“The phenomenon of transboundary environmental pollution has forced the international community to accept that environmental protection is beyond the capacity of individual states, but also that cooperation is crucial to effective environmental governance.”<sup>8</sup>**

Interestingly enough, also the European Single Market has served as driver and catalyst for cross-border cooperation in the recent past.

Meanwhile, cross-border cooperation is not anymore considered an end in itself, but rather a means for supporting commercial interaction, i.e. free trade, or social welfare. It is seen as a way to improve neighbourly relations between local communities and authorities and as means for cooperation on issues of common concern such as environment, cultural and economic activities and migration. These cooperations are open end arrangements, experimental in nature, difficult to reproduce and, unfortunately, often subject to political and economic fluctuation.

Throughout the past, many examples have proven that only by involving local and regional stakeholders, a real difference can be made in terms of successful cross-border cooperation. Therefore, subsidiarity was identified to be the guiding principle. According to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), subsidiarity prepares the ground for the development and realisation of flexible strategic alliances between the local political, administrative and business community (private sector) stakeholders. Generally, the more decentralised and federalised national states are in the first place, the more likely cross-border cooperation may happen<sup>9</sup>. Hence, indisputable cross-border cooperation projects add value to European cohesion. Improvements can be observed in terms of:

- Political added value
- Institutional added value
- Socio-economic added value
- Socio-cultural added value
- Environmental added value
- Finance and people

Cross-border cooperation of local public bodies is not meant to constitute a new administrative level, but rather a way to exercise their political and administrative power. Common issues addressed by cross-border cooperation are spatial planning, economic development, public services such as water, waste, transport, health, education, leisure facilities, cooperation of universities and bodies for higher education, with varying success though.

**Cross-border  
cooperation adds  
value**

**Cross-border  
cooperation  
facilitates the  
transfer of  
policies on  
various subjects**

<sup>7</sup> (Hooghe, 2002)

<sup>8</sup> (Macrory/Turner, 2003: 59)

<sup>9</sup> (O'Dowd, 2003)



Today, a number of European organisations and initiatives have attended specifically to cross-border cooperations and provide advice and support:

- The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
- The Council of Europe (CoE)<sup>10</sup>
- Assembly of the European Regions (AER)
- Council of the European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
- European Committee of the Regions (COR)
- Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)

### Forms of cross-border cooperation

At present, most cross-border cooperation activities are based on the **Madrid Outline Convention** (1980) and its additional two protocols, initiated by the Council of Europe. The Convention is facilitating the cross-border and territorial cooperation of regions, communities and local municipalities and provides a legal but flexible basis. It includes a set of rules and guidelines for model inter-state agreements and provides a framework on statutes and contracts for bodies which wish to cooperate. The convention itself does not contain any operational provisions though. The basic principle for all forms of legal structures is the consideration of domestic law of the countries and regions cooperating. Based on the Convention, the partners who wish to cooperate can choose whether they wish to give a legal link to the cooperation or not. As far as the Convention is concerned, cooperation agreements can choose between two main alternatives:

- Concerted Actions and exchange of information

This type of cooperation does not create legal links and involves mutual consultation, exchange of information, discussions, joint studies and coordination.

- The conclusion of agreements and arrangements involving the establishment of specific legal ties

This cooperation type does create a legal link. Agreements are concluded between states and arrangements are set up among territorial communities or authorities.

Agreements can be set up in many different ways such as “Agreements of good neighbourly relations”, agreements on certain fields of cooperation (disasters etc.), cross-border commissions, regional planning commissions or memoranda of understanding. Yet in any case, the national government needs to be consulted.

### Means of cross-border cooperation

Starting in the 1960s, when for the first time France (Southern Alsace), Germany (Baden-Wurtemberg) and Switzerland (Basle region) came together to cooperate on issues related to land use planning and labour market requirements, the door was opened for further initiatives. Still, regions and local authorities in the Rhine Basin are seen as “the pioneers of cross-border regions”<sup>11</sup>. The first “real” Euregio though was set up in 1958 on the Dutch-German border as a registered association and is today known as EUREGIO (Gronau). The Euregio Rhine-Waal on the German-Dutch border, formed in 1978, was the first cross-border assembly in Europe established under public law which in 1993 was the first Euregio in Europe to become a public authority.

<sup>10</sup> In terms of interregional cooperation, the CoE has promoted two major documents: The European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985) which was the first multilateral legal instrument to define and safeguard the principles of local autonomy and the Madrid Outline Convention (1980).

<sup>11</sup> (O'Dowd, 2003: 18)

**Legal  
foundations for  
cross-border  
cooperation**

**Euroregions as  
vehicle to  
facilitate cross-  
border  
cooperation**

A standing Committee of European Border Regions (Association of European Border Regions-AEBR) was set up in 1971 at Anholt Castle by a total of 10 border regions. With today **more than 90 member regions**, it is still actively supporting the case of a continuously growing number of **cross-border regions** throughout Europe and has achieved a state where Euroregions have become an indicator of good cross-border relations. According to the Association of European Border Regions Euroregions are<sup>12</sup>:

- An amalgamation of regional and local authorities from both sides of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly;
- Cross-border organisations with a permanent secretariat and experts and administrative staff;
- According to private law based on national associations or foundations from both sides of the border according to the respective public law.
- According to public law based on international treaties which also regulate the membership of regional authorities.

Despite all efforts made throughout the past 50 years, the practical cooperation across frontiers is still a complex endeavour, rarely a spontaneous process and relies on good means of cooperation but most of all trust. Generally speaking, regions wishing to cooperate have to decide at the very beginning of the cooperation activities whether the cooperation is to be conducted using a body with or without a legal personality and which law – private or public – will be applied. If public law is applied, the cooperation will be created by a national law or an interstate convention. When private law structures are favoured, associations, foundations, European Economic Interest Groups (EEIG) can be set up. Private law structures, though, cannot set powers in place of the member regional authorities that have set up this particular structure. There is no possibility to substitute a good policy framework and a well-functioning political structure. With or without legal personality, differences in the geographical scope are possible. In any case, cooperation will always have to be in line with domestic law.

To date, many Euregios operate on the basis of cooperation agreement, an informal basis which calls for very effective coordination among the different authorities and their departments. If, however, the body implementing the cooperation is given legal personality, the domestic law of one of the partners applies. Different names, institutional and administrative structures are common:

- Euregio or Euroregion (comprising usually between 1 and two million inhabitants, covering a territory of some 50 km from both sides of the border)
- Working community
- Cross-border secretariats
- Joint executive committees
- New legal instrument for European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) which can be used as a legal framework for institutional cross-border structures in the future (in operation by September 2007)

Euregios, although they have already existed for several decades, have never before been as much on the agenda as today. In the course of the European integration process, Euregios are seen as a blueprint to bridge the seam between the “old” and “new” Europe. Generally, expectations are quite high from all sides, foremost the European institutions. Whether these expectations can be fulfilled remains to be seen. All organisations, regardless of their names, are mainly responsible for bringing together the different regional initiatives acting as a hub for information. **Joint cross-border organisations can provide a “neutral” ground for further discussion** and defining mutual needs and priorities. Often the extent to which cross-border cooperation is already institutionalised and anchored in the respective regions is higher the more experienced all partners are in terms of European cooperation projects and their management.

**Cross-border  
cooperation can  
take many  
different forms**

**Euroregions are  
seen as a means  
to integrate new  
EU Member  
States**

<sup>12</sup> (AEBR, 2000: 9)

## The INTERREG Community Initiative

Genuine institutionalised European cross-border cooperation began in 1990, when Europe ushered in a new era of cross-border cooperation and the European Union launched the first INTERREG program for border regions. Through the INTERREG Community Initiative, the EU institutions responded to the widening and deepening of the European Union, its different enlargement phases and the resultant challenges.

**INTERREG  
(Territorial  
Cooperation) as  
the driver for  
regional  
cooperation**



**Fig. 2 Overview on the past enlargement phases of the EU<sup>13</sup>**

In the INTERREG funding periods I-II, substantial funds were made available to the border regions in Western Europe to promote trans-boundary cooperation. By the means of so-called Operational Programs, regions were expected to implement the funds. What made INTERREG special was the fact that European grants were awarded to specific cross-border structures like, for example, the Euregios.

<sup>13</sup> [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:European\\_union\\_past\\_enlargements\\_map\\_en.png#filehistory](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:European_union_past_enlargements_map_en.png#filehistory) (14.05.07)

The Community Initiative INTERREG (European Territorial Cooperation) was split into three strands:

**The three strands  
of regional  
cooperation**

**Strand A - Cross-border cooperation**

Cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions aimed at developing cross-border social and economic centres through common development strategies.

**Strand B - Transnational cooperation**

Transnational cooperation involving national, regional and local authorities aiming at promoting better territorial integration within the Union through the formation of large coherent areas of European regions.

**Strand C - interregional cooperation**

The IIIC strand aimed at promoting interregional cooperation between regional and other public authorities across the entire EU territory and neighbouring countries. It allowed regions to work together in common projects and to develop networks of cooperation. The overall objectives were to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments through large-scale information exchange and sharing of experience.

Similar to strand A and B, the INTERREG IIIC programme was financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and co-financed by national project partners. Within INTERREG IIIC, three types of operations were funded: Networks, Individual Projects and Regional Framework Operations – one of which was “**Change on Borders**”.

## 4. The “Change on Borders” Regional Framework Operation

### General information

The Regional Framework Operation “Change on Borders” was a programme-based approach that promoted interregional cooperation among 25 different border regions in the European Union and beyond. The RFO “Change on Borders” offered the opportunity to set up a network of border regions in Europe on the NUTS level I-II<sup>14</sup>. Another rather unique element of “Change on Borders” was the fact that a typical so-called INTERREG A theme (cross-border cooperation) was addressed within the framework of an INTERREG IIIC-type interregional cooperation project. Some partners even had extensive bilateral contacts towards other project partners (Dutch Province of Gelderland and the Polish Voivodship Lubelskie) before joining the project. The RFO aimed in particular at:

- enhancing and deepening the exchange of experiences on themes of cross-border cooperation. It is intended to improve knowledge on best practice examples in Europe and to stimulate cross-border cooperation,
- transferring and applying best practice know-how through the elaboration of new policy approaches or cross-border projects that can partly be implemented directly as “kick-off pilot projects”,
- spreading this information among border regions, cross-border cooperation structures and other actors involved,
- improving the effectiveness of Community regional policy instruments.

**2003 – 2007**

**Total budget:**  
**€8.2m**

**ERDF:**  
**€4.9m**

**25 partner regions**

**The “Unique Selling Points” of “Change on Borders”**

### The working structure of the project

All major project activities were steered by the Lead Partner - the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia, represented by the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, and additionally supervised by the RFO-Steering Committee established by all Main Partners. The Steering Committee was considered a joint decision-making body of the RFO and overlooked the entire RFO management and implementation process. The Steering Committee was composed of the Lead Partner and one representative of every Main Partner. Furthermore, the RFO-Coordination Unit, the Financial Manager and the Helpdesk had a supportive function in the Steering Committee. In general, the RFO cooperation framework was made up of three types of activities:

- **Thematic Fora (TF)**
- **Sub-theme Working Groups (SWG)**
- **Annual Conferences (AC)**

### Thematic Fora (TF)

For each of the three core themes, a Thematic Forum was established. The three Thematic Fora were set up to develop a sustainable cooperation process. For each Thematic Forum, a Lead Region was nominated which was responsible for steering the ongoing work process. The Lead Regions supported the responsible Main Partner region with the organisation of Thematic Forum meetings. The following three Lead Regions were nominated:

<sup>14</sup> The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a geocode standard for referencing the administrative division of countries for statistical purposes (NUTS I and II = mainly regional level).



**Lead Region for Thematic Forum 1**  
**(Integrated and environment friendly development of border regions)**  
 Regional Council of North Karelia / East Finland

**Lead Region for Thematic Forum 2**  
**(Development of labour markets in border regions)**  
 Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia / Italy

**Lead Region for Thematic Forum 3**  
**(Promotion of socio-cultural integration between border regions)**  
 Province of Gelderland / Netherlands

For each Thematic Forum, at least two meetings per year were held and hosted in different Main Partner regions. All partner regions were given the possibility to take part in the two-day meetings concerning specific cross-border questions. The hosting regions of a forum had to choose a subject it had experience with. Besides different speeches and lectures, study visits were organised where concrete results could be visited. Although the exchange of experience was not as intensive as it was within the Sub-theme Working Groups, the Thematic Fora delivered a deep insight into the cross-border subject. Each Thematic Forum was also opened to a much wider group of interested parties. The relatively short duration and the focused character of these events provided experts with the opportunity to attend and share know-how. The Thematic Fora were also aimed at identifying best practice examples and have fostered the generation of Sub-theme Working Groups in particular in the starting phase. The Thematic Fora also built the thematic basis for the Annual Conferences and provided an opportunity for the relevant SWG partnerships to present activities, to meet up and to exchange experience. In total, 22 Thematic Fora were held.

**All partner regions were fully integrated**

### **Sub-Theme Working Groups (SWG)**

Sub-theme Working Groups were set up functioning as RFO-internal sub-projects, i.e. they were aimed at practically implementing the programmatic approach of the overall Regional Framework Operation. In each SWG, 3-10 partner regions worked together. The SWGs were aimed at all regional and local actors involved in cross-border cooperations, who are located in the main partner regions, i.e.:

- Specialised public sector administrative departments, local authorities and associations of municipalities,
- Regional and rural development agencies, innovation agencies and business start-up centres,
- Universities, specialised public or semi-public research centres and innovation transfer agencies,
- Chambers of commerce and industry,
- Public environmental agencies and local public enterprises,
- Public or semi-public cultural centres or cultural organisations.

**Sub-working groups to address specific challenges**

The aim was to find solutions for the particular problems of border regions. Due to their important role within the wider RFO-approach, all SWGs were expected to establish links towards other RFO activities by creating a process of information exchange with their corresponding Thematic Forum. This was meant to help in assuring that new ideas or good practise examples are transferred to the other SWGs. Furthermore, the SWGs provided the opportunity to organise study visits or staff exchanges. In addition, SWGs enabled the realisation of cross-border pilot actions in the respective border regions. Throughout the life time of the RFO "Change on Borders", in total 16 SWG were set up.

## Annual Conferences (AC)

Through the Annual Conferences, a cross-thematic integration of the RFO activities and outputs, developed within the Thematic Fora and Sub-theme Working Groups, was realised. Furthermore, the meetings were used to discuss current political developments related to European and specifically cross-border cooperation, hence the Annual Conferences also helped to spread RFO-achievements widely throughout Europe. In total, four Annual Conferences were realised within “Change on Borders”:



**Fig. 3 Annual conference in Krems/Austria**  
Source: “Change on Borders”<sup>15</sup>

**Annual  
stocktaking and  
knowledge  
exchange**

- March 2004 in Düsseldorf, North Rhine Westphalia, Germany
- March 2005 in Joensuu, North Karelia, East Finland
- March 2006 in Syros, South Aegean region, Greece
- March 2007 in Krems, Lower Austrian region, Austria

The final conference took place in October 2007 in Düsseldorf, Germany.

All thematic activities of the RFO “Change on Borders” were arranged around three core themes with three related sub-themes, each forming the basis for the work of the Sub-theme Working Groups and Thematic Forums.

### **Theme 1: Integrated and environment friendly development of border regions**

1. Cooperation among regions with similar geographical features
2. Governance in border regions
3. Environment-friendly development & water management

### **Theme 2: Development of labour markets in border regions**

1. Developments of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), research and development (R&D) and innovation in border regions
2. Cross-border labour market development
3. Tourism development in border regions

### **Theme 3: Promotion of socio-cultural integration between border regions**

1. Strengthening of social cohesion in border regions
2. Training, education and cross-border mobility
3. Culture, media & people-to-people activities

<sup>15</sup> Source: Change on Borders

## General achievements of Change on Borders

First and foremost, the RFO has delivered new approaches for tackling cross-border challenges. “Change on Borders” has brought together different border regions from all over Europe working on innovative and unconventional projects and acting as a catalyst for the development of peripheral areas. This has resulted in the development of new ties and links between “old” and “new” EU Member States. Already existing contacts within and among border regions have also been strengthened or extended. The general understanding of different European border regions and their strengths and potentials has been increased, best practices and experiences were shared and through direct contacts on the working and expert level, potential future cooperation partners could be identified.

**A catalyst for  
cross-border  
cooperation  
activities**

The intense and content-focused exchange of experience & know-how helped to re-think already existing approaches in order to improve cross-border strategies and to foster project development. By holding workshops in nearly every partner region, new insights were gained and a transfer of knowledge based on practical case studies, project visits or lectures could be achieved.

**The diffusion and  
transfer of  
policies was  
facilitated**

“Change on Borders” has proven that intra- and interregional networks are useful instruments for enhancing cross-border cooperation. Within the framework of “Change on Borders”, the partners were enabled to analyse the level of success of cross-border cooperation activities in regions where collaboration has been based on a more institutionalised framework compared with regions working with less intense cooperation structures. The project has delivered **specialised Europe-wide networks on a wide range of issues** such as environment, water management, people-to-people, languages, legal aspects of cross-border co-operation, labour market, healthcare and SMEs.

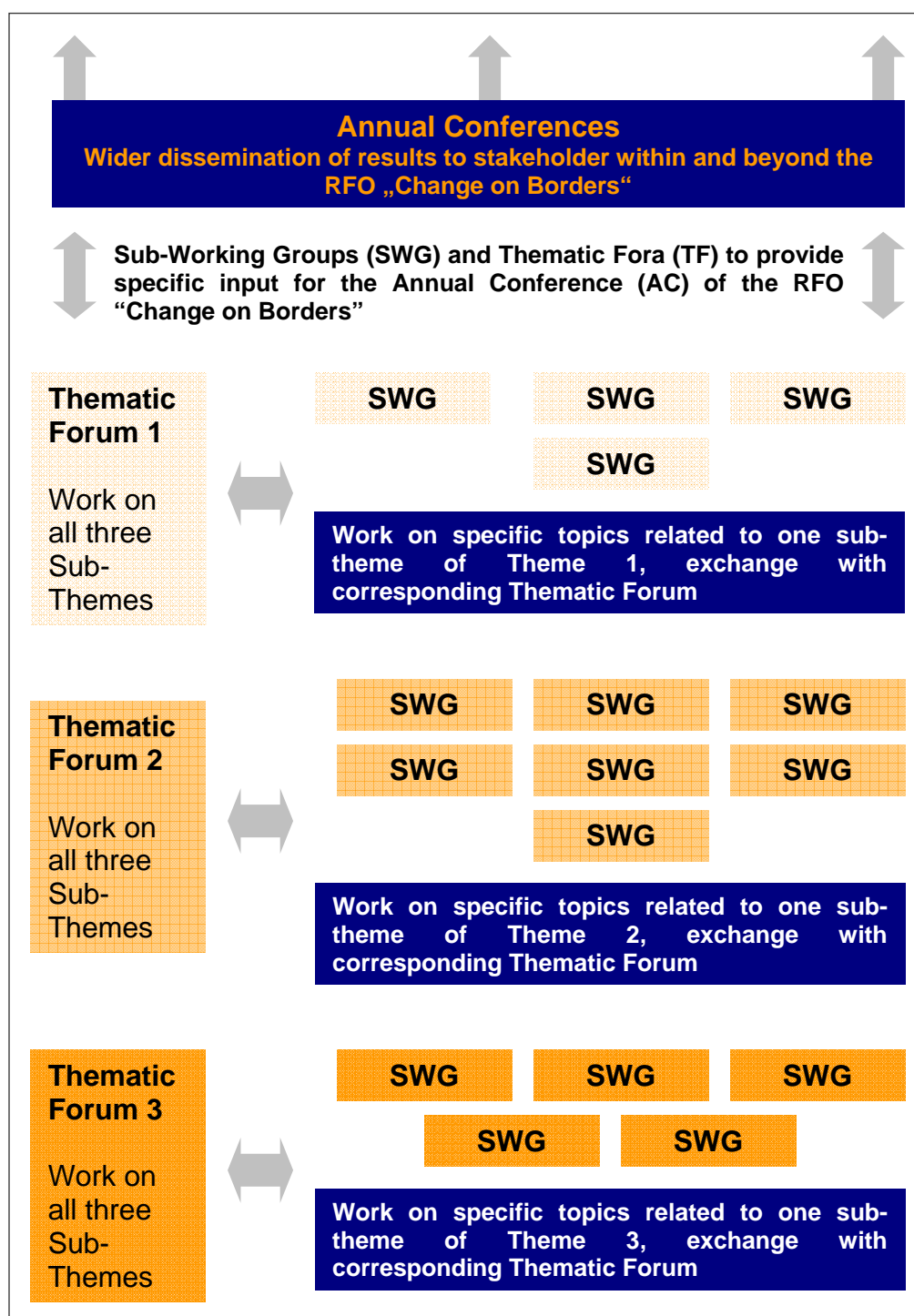
Concrete sub-project results were published in the guidelines such as “Putting New Neighbourhood into Practice” (REGBOUR), several other sub-project reports were finalised. Through interregional cooperation, links were made between concrete cross-border initiatives for economic development (Rhine Bicycle Path, WIN). In many cases, citizens and pupils of the border regions were directly involved in project activities (Youth4I, LABS, MEB) and real contributions to finding solutions to improve the citizens’ life in border regions (e-health) were made.

**Preparing for  
future projects  
and challenges**

The project provided a platform for exchanging ideas and proposals as regards territorial co-operation in the next programming period 2007-2013.



## Overview of RFO activities



A well developed and sound management structure

Different levels of cooperation and intensity of exchange – horizontal and vertical cooperation

Fig. 4 Schematic diagram of all “Change on Borders” activities<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Source: amendments according to [http://www.change-on-borders.net/rfo/annual\\_conference\\_map.php](http://www.change-on-borders.net/rfo/annual_conference_map.php)

## 5. Cross-border cooperation framework conditions – solutions and challenges

Despite its achievements, cross-border cooperation is yet often an underused means for fostering regional development and exploiting the full potential of many border regions, even more since this particular kind of regional collaboration provides a huge potential for improvements to border regions in terms of their economical, social and ecological performance. Based on the RFO results this section shall provide answers and solutions to the following questions:

- What are the drivers for cross-border cooperation?
- Which problems and common challenges can be identified when working across borders?

Cross-border cooperation is heavily depending on a number of stimulating drivers and incentives. Therefore, this section will focus on the most important success factors derived from the “Change on Borders” Sub-theme Working Groups and the Thematic Fora. Since indicators for successful cross-border cooperation can be either output-related (e.g. number of research papers or press releases developed) or problem solving-focused (“Is the problem identified in the first place solved?”) or stakeholder-related (“How many stakeholders are satisfied with the overall project?”), this chapter outlines overall success factors and framework conditions for cross-border cooperation. The drivers presented are on the one hand meant to serve as a guideline but of course cannot be seen as a blueprint for successful project implementation. Nonetheless, it will also draw attention to the bottlenecks still existing in cross-border cooperation.

In the following, the most important solutions and challenges for regional and cross-border cooperation were categorised by six main areas.

- **Institutions and administrations**
- **Geographical, technical & infrastructural preconditions**
- **Politics, planning strategies & networks**
- **Mutual awareness and common interests**
- **Finances**
- **Culture and history**

The input for this section goes back to the experience made by the “Change on Borders” partners, accumulated throughout several years of intense and close cooperation. In addition, also the longstanding and very successful work of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and its recently published “White Paper on European Border Regions” was included, and interviews with experts in the fields of cross-border cooperation were carried out to develop a holistic approach towards the barriers and potentials of cross-border cooperation.<sup>17</sup>

**Cross-border is still an underused means for enhancing the performance of border regions**

<sup>17</sup> In the process of developing this manual, two workshops were held and 6 interviews with external experts were carried out. Within the framework of a focused workshop on the back of a Thematic Forum, Change on Borders partners were also asked to identify challenges and drivers for successful cross-border cooperation.

## Institutions and administrations

### Drivers

When it comes to institutional and administrative frameworks, it is of first and foremost importance for successful cross-border cooperation to work within **common functional management structures** such as Euregios, working groups or cross-border secretariats with members of staff equally representing both sides of the border. Partner regions should aim at establishing one and the same office for the regions involved because wherever cross-border secretariats are in place, there is in general a greater scope for genuine cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, information centres providing information on the respective neighbouring region in terms of the job market, the welfare system, the economic situation including various contact points and leisure facilities, can help to **increase the mutual awareness** of possible potentials and advantages of the neighbouring region.

The **cross-border cooperation process needs to be fully integrated** into the administration of the regions and municipalities, ensuring genuine cross-border objectives and the compliance with EU criteria for cross-border programmes including the provision of funds (INTERREG).

Well-functioning consultation mechanisms and facilitating the **exchange of knowledge** by the means of organising seminars, study visits, trainings and publications can help to enhance the experience of local authorities. Short lines of communication, determined individuals and prominent figureheads are always essential for a successful cooperation process.

**Providing legal assistance** and putting mechanism in place for evaluating the progress made will likewise help to achieve successful cross-border cooperation.

Encouraged by EU legislations and funding programmes, administrations have started **thinking beyond borders** (the EU water framework directive and joint risk management strategies are good examples since water doesn't stop at borders). Institutions and administrations simply have to adapt to this situation.

Develop common functional management structures

Get to know the partner and raise awareness for the partner region

Integrate cross-border cooperation structure into your own administration

Assistance and evaluation

Think beyond your own region

### Project reference

Due to the relatively long tradition of cross-border cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany, in particular, "Change of Borders" partners such as the Dutch Province of Gelderland and the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia have contributed to extending the knowledge base on this subject. For example, the Province of Gelderland has contributed its experience when outlining why three Dutch Provinces neighbouring Germany (including the Dutch Province of Gelderland) have decided to act as one when cooperating with the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia in developing a cross-sectoral working program. Also the SWG **RIVERCROSS** has produced evidence for the efficiency and need of cooperations of this kind.

Through the direct involvement of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) acting as "Change on Borders Helpdesk", the longstanding and highly valuable experience of this organisation in terms of cross-border cooperation could be taken on board as well.

## Barriers

Since regions - in governance terms - are usually represented by institutionalised public sector structures, they play an important role by nature. However, although institutional obstacles are easy to identify they are difficult to address and remedy.

Successful and seamless cross-border cooperation is often **lacking a good understanding of the institutional structures** of the respective neighbouring region. Hence, partners are sometimes not able to respond to unusual and unfamiliar institutional and administrative structures in a flexible manner. Very often, **cross-border cooperation is not really relevant for (political) institutions**, as they only feel committed to the voters within their own constituencies. Furthermore, technically all administrative rights stop at the borders and limit the desire for achieving good also on the other side of the border.

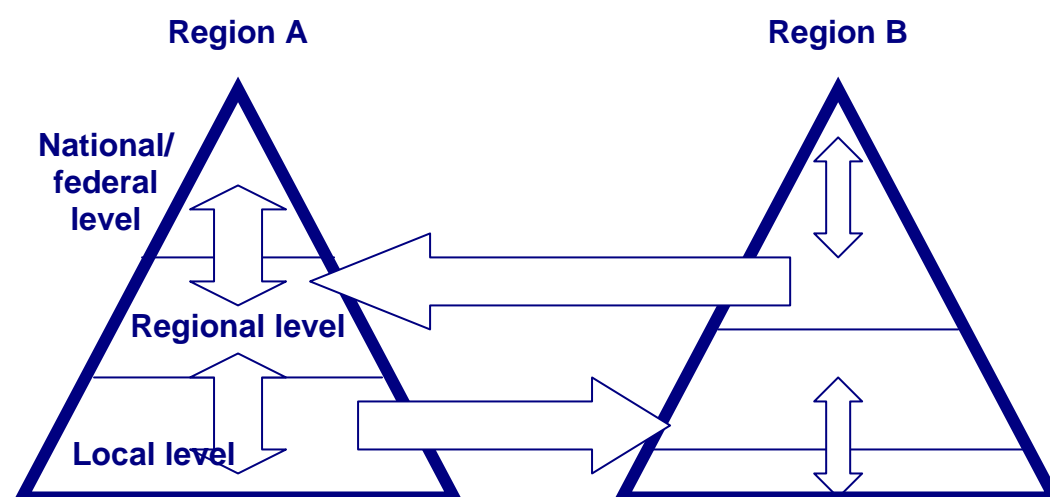
**Identifying the right institutional or administrative counterpart** on the other side of the border is often a problem, since similar tasks can be taken up by different authorities or departments and administrative levels, e.g. environmental issues can be dealt with at the department for environment, for transport, economic affairs, etc. The **institutional (administrative) complexity** of the potential partner regions quite often seems to be hampering cooperation. This is of course closely linked to a lack of clear institutional structures and competence on the regional level.

Often, when governance structures differ between partner countries, (and hence, directly related, often also the level of responsibilities among local, regional and national authorities) and **institutional systems are also not aligned** (e.g. the Dutch provinces are much smaller when compared with the German Länder disposing of fewer competences), problematic issues arise. Very often, the lower level of authority will not be seen as appropriate discussion partner although in terms of the issue concerned it would fully match the situation.

**Lack of knowledge of institutional structures of the partner region**

**Institutional complexity**

**Not the right counterpart**



**Fig. 5 „Eye level problem” – unequal allocation of responsibilities among authorities of border regions<sup>18</sup>**

<sup>18</sup> Source: drawn by the author

**Different legal frameworks** and different procedures in terms of the management of funding programmes and sectoral policies concerned (e.g. water management, management of natural resources, spatial planning or education) can also become obstacles. Convoluted internal processes within the own and the partner organisation are linked to this.

**Different frameworks and procedures**

**Frequent changes** regarding the social, legal, economic and administrative systems on both sides of the border have often resulted in challenging situations, especially since direct, trusted and personal contacts and networks are very important at the beginning of cooperations.

**Frequent staff changes**

For cross-border cooperation, in particular, appropriate institutional **structures are quite often missing**. Despite the formal introduction of a number of Euregios, the day-to-day work is often lacking a good understanding of specific cross-border collaboration structures or the political will and perception to introduce appropriate structures respectively. Stringent visa requirements of the neighbouring country sometimes pose a serious obstacle towards frequent and personal contacts and meetings. Furthermore, **divergent levels of regionalisation** – federal states vs. centralised states - can constitute an environment which does not facilitate sound cross-border cooperation.

**No specific cross-border cooperation structures are in place**

Beneficiaries of European funding sometimes feel that **too much bureaucracy** in the management and control procedures leads to a cost increase related to the management and can endanger the cost/benefit rate of EU funded projects.

**High costs for management and bureaucracy**

#### Project reference

Matters related to administrative and institutional barriers were specifically addressed within the **REGBOUR** and **RIVERCROSS** SWG.

Within **REGBOUR** the five participating regions (Italy-Slovenia-Austria-Croatia, Finland-Russia, Sweden-Norway, Greece-Bulgaria-Turkey, Poland-Belarus-Ukraine) were sharing their experiences made at different external borders regarding cross-border cooperation structures and processes and compare best practices to bring innovative regional solutions for cross-border cooperation into a broader discussion. The sub-project focused on institutional and administrative models of cross-border cooperation in light of the "New Neighbourhood programme", which should help to develop more efficient management structures. The project's outcomes also supported the regional authorities in adapting the "New Neighbourhood programme" and will help the partner regions to effectively prepare future cross-border programmes for the funding period 2007-2013. The outputs are collected in the edited report "**Putting New Neighbourhood into Practice**" either in the single regional reports.

**RIVERCROSS** has facilitated the work of partners from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Greece investigating the different exposures to river basin management activities in border regions. In particular, the **institutional tuning between cross-border regions was at the heart of the projects' activities**.

Due to the large number of different partners involved throughout the entire lifetime of "Change on Borders", many diverse regional administrative and institutional structures were dealt with. The RFO has intentionally facilitated the exchange of knowledge among all partners on issues specifically related to cross-border cooperation structures within the public sector. All partners were given multiple opportunities for learning from best practice examples (see Thematic Fora) in terms of successful cooperation models for cross-border relationships.

## Geographical, technical & infrastructural preconditions

### Drivers

It was suggested by many interviewees to put the initial **focus always first on technical problems**, and only in second step on the political side, as this can be addressed at a later stage. The aim should really be to create some kind of solidarity between professionals and experts (*"We are the experts."* and *"We might know a solution."*)

There might be occasions, though, when only **real investments** for example in border crossings connecting neighbouring countries or regarding the enhancement of ports and airports may help to make a difference. Physical infrastructure assets such as the "Eurotunnel", the "Oresund Bridge" or the "Alp Adria" motorway may serve as an example. Support for the enhancement of communication infrastructure, including for example the fields of fibre-optic networks, should also be considered. Whether or not these so-called European "lighthouse projects" are successful in the economic sense of the word remains to be seen, but without a doubt they can be perceived as a strong symbol for European cohesion. Last but not least, waterways and other alleged natural barriers should be seen as bridges and **connecting elements rather than barriers**.

It is furthermore crucially important that the **physical links across the border** are perceived as assets of national importance. This might be easier for transit countries such as Germany, Slovakia or Slovenia rather than for - in a European sense - less central countries such as Portugal, Great Britain or Greece. This issue is of course also closely linked with the EU policy for external cooperation with countries neighbouring the EU such as Russia, Turkey or Ukraine. In order to identify the **funding** needed, all sources of financial support should be analysed, also including EU funding opportunities such as the Structural Funds, but also new instruments such as JASPERS, JEREMY or JESSICA<sup>19</sup>.

All regional **development strategies preferably need to be prepared jointly** (all regional stakeholders need to be consulted) and the plans and strategies need to be tied into national investment plans to make sure that efforts and resources will be combined. In order to have a good understanding of the funding needed, a clear analysis of the potential of the existing infrastructure is needed (SWOT analysis).

#### Project reference

Within the framework of the SWG **Trans-EA** a common method to assess the effectiveness of cross-border transport infrastructure was developed. The efficiency assessment model was developed jointly by all SWG participants and has been applied in comprehensive regional analysis activities. The model was designed in a way that allows for the consideration of the specific conditions of each participating region. This was in particular important to foster regional economic development and competitiveness.

<sup>19</sup> JASPERS is a partnership between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It aims at improving the preparation of major projects to be co-financed by the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in particular in the new Member States

JEREMIE is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Investment Fund with the European Investment Bank. It aims at improving access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and in particular the supply of micro credit, venture capital, loan or guarantees and other forms of innovative financing.

JESSICA is a joint initiative of the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank. The aim is to combine the grants under the programmes for urban development and renewal, or social housing where appropriate, with the loans and the expertise of the Banks for urban development and renewal, including social housing.

Focus on  
technical issues  
in the first place

Real  
investments are  
sometimes  
needed

Link regional  
investment with  
national  
development  
strategies

All regional  
stakeholders  
need to be  
involved and  
consulted when  
developing a

Good analysis is  
needed



## Barriers

Typical physical barriers and bottlenecks are not just rivers, mountains and areas of vast wetlands, but also long distances in general terms, missing border crossings such as bridges or tunnels, or frequent natural disasters such as floodings.

As the economic competitiveness of national and regional economies in a globalised world is dependent on the mobility of people and goods from one country to another, **infrastructure is nowadays absolutely vital** for cross-border cooperation. Nonetheless constraints are very often caused by the **low development level of all kinds of regional infrastructure** such as roads, railways, aviation or inland waterways, resulting in long waiting queues on border crossings.

Due to alleged technical reasons, trains can often not cross the border, are simply too slow or are forced to stop at the very first station after the border and cannot connect the respective hinterlands. Ticketing systems often do not respond to the transfrontier situation, frequently several tickets are needed for one trip. The area of rail-related constraints repeatedly also includes less obvious issues such as **different requirements** in terms of technical safety systems (important for cross-border train connections), different voltages for power trains, different track gauges or simply the fact that the trains or cars drive on the left (right) hand (as happening between Germany and Belgium). Motorways are also often simply missing and waterways incl. dikes and locks are not in an up-to-date condition. In this respect, also other technical facilities, including efficient logistic procedures and centres, are considered very important for the cross-border flow of all kinds of traffic, but often they are not fully developed.

**Common communication barriers** in border regions result from the lack of well developed technical infrastructure such as transmitting stations for mobile phone communication or different standards regarding the supply of broadband technology.

In many cases, a **joint regional development strategy** in terms of regional transport infrastructure, developed by both partner regions, is simply missing. Even the sheer availability of a reliable data set combining information from both sides of the border is often a problem. Whereas the needed investments can be made and implemented quite quickly they have to be prepared and planned rather carefully and with a long-term perspective. Hence, closing the gaps of infrastructure is often a **longwinded process**, and a lot of time is needed in advance for defining the needs and priorities.

### Project reference

The management of natural resources (water), specifically in border regions, and issues of general risk management were addressed by the **RIVERCROSS** and **Risk & Innovation** projects.

Particular infrastructure-related issues have been addressed by a number of "Change on Borders" activities such as the **Trans-EA** or the **RIVERCROSS** projects, several Thematic Forum 1 meetings and study visits examining outstanding examples of rail-bound connections between Germany and the Czech Republic. The analysis of availability of cross-border data material has been focused on by the **CROSS-SIS** project. Within the scope of the **eHEALTH** project, the RFO has aimed at addressing the issue of bridging distances between cross-border partner regions without physical movements. Extending and utilising better infrastructure already existing was the aim of the sub-project **Rhine Bicycle Path**.

**Rivers, mountains, wetlands, missing links and crossings**

**Underdeveloped infrastructure**

**Different national technical requirements**

**Lack of up-to-date freight hubs**

**Insufficient telecommunication technologies**

**No reliable data set**

**Implementation of infrastructure investments takes a lot of time**

## Politics, planning strategies & networks

### Drivers

**Joining forces** is imperative for successful cross-border cooperation. Ideally, all partners of border regions should develop a joint, task-oriented cross-border development strategy providing long-, medium- and short-term aims. All cross-border strategies should be processed on the assumption of **long-term time scales** ensuring continuity on a personal, institutional and financial level.

Experience has shown that partners need to put their local challenges into a European perspective, i.e. **links between European policy frameworks and regional strategies** need to be identified and direct contacts between decision makers on both sides of the border and within the European institutions need to be established. In order to successfully bid for EU funding, regions usually have to team up with other regions. Therefore, it is necessary to establish and **maintain close links towards other potential partner regions** in advance. Regions need to present themselves at meetings in Europe as a potential partner and open minded. One option is the active participation in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe<sup>20</sup>. Projects and project **applications always need to be prepared well in advance** since the time between the launch and submission of relevant calls is usually too short to prepare a high-quality project application and to identify the right partners. In order to make sure that the content side is well presented, experts from the regions also need to be brought together to develop and participate in thematic networks. Experience gained through previous projects could be summarised and collected by the means of focused manuals (e.g. on tourism). Often regional politicians and other stakeholders strive to stimulate cross-border cooperation by promoting so-called “lighthouse projects” such as cross-border business parks or golf courses. Whereas, generally speaking, concepts of this kind sometimes help to stimulate impact on the economic development of border regions, their importance is often overestimated. In many cases they do not work, since those projects do not match the regional infrastructural, ecological and structural framework conditions and result in huge implementation costs. An **honest reflection** on major regional projects can help to avoid disappointments and unrealistic expectations:

- Do they reflect the local and regional needs and framework conditions?
- Can they fulfil the high expectations?
- Are the projects backed and supported by the region and its citizens?

Resources always need to be focused and concentrated on **development cores** and hubs according to mutually developed priorities. The principle of a “decentralised concentration” should be applied on both sides of the border regardless where the respective sources and elements of regional importance (major tourist sites, commodities, industries, etc.) are placed. Once projects are approved successfully all partners have to make sure, that **sufficient and experienced staff resources** are also in place and available to implement the project.

### Project reference

Throughout the entire duration of the RFO “Change on Borders” it was sought to broaden experience. Here, SWG such as **LABS**, fostering bilingual education as a potential for economic development or **MEB** enhancing regional development through multicultural education have played a major role for other partner regions. The SWG **MENT** sought to contribute to similar aims by improving tourism strategies based on regional cultural, natural and traditional assets considering both sides of the border.

Join forces and develop mutual strategies

Put local challenges into an EU perspective

Team up with other regions

Present your region on a European level

Start preparation well in advance

Honest reflection on own development strategies

Focus your resources



## Barriers

Successful cross-border cooperation is heavily depending not only on political support and the joint will of all regional politicians concerned, but also on the **embeddedness into national policies**, the development of joint strategies and the creation of networks. These links are often too weak and not fully developed. Sometimes, even **links between regional development strategies** for border regions and national strategic frameworks are missing.

In quite some cases, a **lack of political will** on the national level to remove cross-border constraints can be observed. Since border regions only constitute a small share of a country, occasionally cross-border cooperation is not high enough on the national political agendas. This is of course also linked with a lack of inter-regional policies and strategies which can be detected sometimes.

**Different political strategies**, divergence regarding the implementation system in the neighbouring regions and the dependency on political agreements on a higher level (EU, national) have posed challenging situations. All partners involved have often witnessed the situation of ambitious goals but with only little (political) means available.

Since cross-border cooperation always requires a long-term view, it sometimes stands in contradiction to **periods in office** and **election cycles** demanding short-term outputs. Usually, politicians need to be convinced first before supporting activities which are outside their constituencies.

Often, regions are **not used to working and thinking in network categories** and they rather consider partners as potential competitors. Hence, networks are either not existing or not comprehensive enough, or were simply built up too late.

Joint **regional marketing strategies** to promote and find partner regions very often provide room for improvement.

Regional representatives often **do not know the right contact points** on the regional, national and European level (e.g. Members of the European Parliament, regional representations in Brussels, contact points of the different funding programmes or the appropriate lobbying organisations).

### Project reference

Within the framework of several different SWGs, "Change on Borders" has brought together experts on different issues related to politics and the development of embedded and integrated strategies.

Whereas for example the **WIN** project has analysed existing political structures of border regions and also delivered new approaches, the **REGBOUR** project has analysed political and strategic issues arising from the new EU funding period (2007-2013) and its new instruments related to regions of EU Member States sharing borders with countries which have not yet become part of the European Union. The **SWG Knowledge Roadmap** was set up to strengthen the non-metropolitan border-cities with high knowledge potentials by means of elaborating a roadmap strategies and projects to promote cross-border cooperation for knowledge-based development.

**Lack of political support**

**No links between regional and national development strategies**

**Different political strategies and strategic aims**

**Long-term view vs. need for short-term outputs**

**Networks of potential partner regions are missing**

**Knowledge regarding contact points on the regional, national and European level is limited**

<sup>20</sup> The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress) is the local and regional arm of the Council of Europe (COE). The COE is the pan-European intergovernmental body of 46 Member States, which was established in 1949 to promote human rights and democracy.

## Mutual awareness and common interests

### Drivers

All kinds of potential developments of the neighbouring country should be anticipated and analysed quite in detail. This requires a good level of knowledge of the respective neighbouring partner country, and also to know the own region very well in order to be able to point out and **identify own strengths and weaknesses**.

**Anticipate development strategies of your neighbour**

Partners should aim at “strengthening the strengths”, using regional powers as basis and stimulus for establishing cooperation. In the long term, a joint approach seems to be much more promising than each region developing its own strategies. **Complementary cross-border development strategies**, however, have to be based on reliable information and joint databases combining the strengths of both regions avoiding unnecessary duplications in, for example, the health or tourism sector.

**Strengthen the strengths**

The fact that both neighbouring regions should equally be involved and **represented on all levels of cooperation** is also very important. The partners should strive to provide a liable and also legal basis for working across borders, e.g. aim for setting up suitable working groups or Euregios. All these measures need to support **building up trust** between partners which of course can only happen step by step.

**Partners should be equally represented**

Experience has shown that, whenever possible, **responsibility should be given to the local and regional level**, applying the European principle of subsidiarity. This is relevant in order to benefit from local, longstanding and specific expertise in terms of already existing networks, challenges to be tackled, solutions to be found and opportunities to be used.

**Delegate the responsibility to the local level - apply the principle of subsidiarity**

In order to ensure that the cooperation really goes beyond just political lip services, the **involvement of all stakeholders** such as citizens, politicians, institutions and the business community is imperative. Cross-border cooperation has to address all aspects of daily life in border regions.

**Involve the national government**

Yet, besides the regional level, also the respective **national government still remains important** and needs to be truly involved on both sides of the border to achieve a better integration of border region strategies into regional strategies. Otherwise, conflicts regarding competencies are likely. Cross-border cooperation should always strive to **realise synergies involving both sides** of the border by identifying common interests as basis for a mutual exchange on the local level.

**Establish a need for real cooperation on both sides**

Successful cross-border cooperation must always be based on the conviction of both partners that there is **a real need for cooperation**. Already at a very early stage, both border regions have to make sure that the planned cooperation fully addresses the needs of both partners and does not disadvantage one partner. Mutual benefits can only be reached when using each other's facilities to transfer knowledge. Within the framework of strategic regional alliances, the cooperation of stakeholders on all levels, i.e. economy, civil society, policy, etc. can be fostered.

In the field of tourism in particular **common interests** could be defined rather easily. The slogan “Let's make holiday in two countries” underlines the need and possibility to make the most of the differences and to consider the neighbour as a market, i.e. making use of the different holiday seasons. Over the last decade it has turned out that it might help to utilise the differences by building up appropriate regional marketing strategies.

**Define mutual benefits**

Although enforcement and regulatory powers (e.g. town or regional planning) are excluded from cross-border cooperation, the regions cooperating are always free to coordinate their strategies on a voluntary basis.

The partners should not aim at having researched every little detail before launching the first activity, as early actions often have a catalyst effect. Early activities should **not be overambitious**.

In general, the meaning and importance of cross-border cooperation can be enhanced by bilateral contracts and a **professional communication strategy**.

Technical infrastructure (such as all kinds of media) is also vitally important for receiving information on the respective “other side”. It is of key importance though, that the media are equally available on both sides of the border without additional technical equipment.

In order to **raise awareness also among the young generation**, day visits (“One day in Poland”) can be organised by schools or even kindergartens.

**Make  
professionally  
use of the media**

### Project reference

The “Change on Borders” partners have - within special projects - developed model solutions for addressing these challenges within cross-border cooperation, e.g. **eHEALTH** through bringing together four partner regions to exchange experience regarding cross-border health care. Its main aim was to seek to explore the possibilities of these so called “e-Health” applications across borders and exchange experience on the partners’ needs, problems and solutions in that field. As a result, good practices and recommendations on how differences in health care systems, communication technology and legislation can be overcome were produced in order to serve as profound knowledge base for further steps.

The SWG **Labour Market** analysed the cross-border labour market trends and developments in particular at EU-external borders with the aim to identify barriers and opportunities. By means of reliable databases, local employment agencies or cross-border networks of employers, the partnership has raised awareness for and informed about the labour market possibilities on both sides of the border and has stimulated cross-border cooperation and employment opportunities especially for young people.

Through these SWGs, the RFO “Change on Borders” has helped the entire partnership to raise awareness of new opportunities inherent in cross-border cooperation. Several regions have cooperated on a high level. The RFO has provided an excellent and outstanding opportunity to test case new cooperative strategies for real cross-border cooperation.

The RFO “Change on Borders” has brought together border regions with quite similar profiles, i.e. facing similar challenges but also opportunities to develop innovative and theme-oriented cooperation strategies. These strategies were based on real-life projects and aimed at overcoming still existing barriers and also at providing good practice solutions for other border regions within Europe and beyond. A set of pioneering solutions can also be found in chapter 4.

## Barriers

Usually, the respective neighbouring region only gets attention when **something goes wrong** or difficulties arise.

It has turned out that quite often the interests of cooperating border regions are far from being known to the respective other region. Sometimes not even **mutual benefits** and interests of the cooperation activities were discussed and outlined in advance of the cooperation. Regional partners seldom identify, at a very early stage, their own regional **strengths and weaknesses**, economic structures and regional competencies.

Quite often there is also **no visual awareness** of the respective neighbour as maps do not show the neighbouring regions.

Repeatedly it was reported that **raising awareness with experts** and activating them could be a challenge. This is sometimes also due to insufficient dissemination of (previous) project achievements or simply the short-term timing of activities.

**Spatial planning strategies** and development processes of the respective neighbouring country are often not fully acknowledged.

This might be relevant as, for example, due to economic changes, longstanding and traditional **commuter flows** from one country to another **may also change direction** at some point. Occasionally, previously weak partners became economically stronger and provided many unexpected opportunities for the neighbouring region. Examples of this kind can be observed between Germany and Poland and Germany and the Netherlands.

Partners very often do **not benefit from affluent neighbouring regions**, but rather create an artificial environment of competition, ignoring the impulses springing from the partner region. Contacts often are hard to establish since business people do not have enough time.

Often **differences between neighbouring countries** do not only concern culture and sports but also norms and other economy- related key factors.

### Project reference

All "Change on Borders" SWGs were geared towards raising awareness of joint working and identifying strengths and weaknesses for better cooperation. This was in particular possible since all SWGs were open to all kinds of regional stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation.

In particular the SWGs **B2S2B**, **Labour-market** or the **CROSS-SIS** have served as outstanding opportunities to gain knowledge of the neighbouring region and to identify the areas for cooperation in order to develop a clear understanding of mutual benefits and interests when working across borders.

The SWG **Y4I** was specifically focused on developing training and education tools to foster an intensive and sustainable cross-border cooperation in order to further encourage regional innovation capacities and to raise awareness for the capacities and strengths of the respective neighbouring region.

**Lack of mutual knowledge regarding strengths and weaknesses**

**Experts are hard to activate**

**Planning strategies of your neighbour are often neglected**

**Border regions often compete rather than cooperate**

**Politicians have different needs than normal residents**

## Finances

### Drivers

Since successful cross-border cooperation will always and despite its benefits produce costs, all partners should, at a very early stage, **be clear about finances** and other related resources such as well-trained staff. The budget needed for the cooperation has to be identified upfront. Since projects will usually only be partly funded, all partners need to ensure that **sufficient match funding** can be provided. Finding **the right figureheads**, acting as driving force for cooperation projects is crucial, as this can help to identify the financial resources needed and to create cross-sectoral links making sure **all stakeholders concerned will be integrated** appropriately. Monitoring and evaluating the cooperation is very important in order to analyse achievements and mismatches regarding the overall aims. Among regions from one and the same country (cooperation of provinces), **equal financial framework conditions** should be sought. Financial incentives for CBC can sometimes help; however, it needs to be made clear that the actual aim for the cooperation must not be the extra money.

#### Project reference

Due to the intense networking of all involved “Change on Borders” partners (regional partners, AEBR and federal governments) a set of connections has been created. Based on this network, information on available EU budgets and new funding programmes could be conveyed efficiently.

In particular SWG such as **SEP** or **B2S2B** have benefited from these activities as their core activities, developing new cross-border cooperation procedures and framework conditions for a cross-border business parks and the stimulation of new industrial technologies, are heavily depending on a secured financial concept.

Be aware of the need for sufficient match funding

Monitoring and evaluation

Be clear about the finances at a very early stage

### Barriers

Financial resources are very often a precondition for making a real difference and for delivering investments in border regions. Institutional cross-border structures such as Euregios or special working groups also need **sufficient financing** for meetings and administration. The continued existence of cross-border secretariats is, in many cases, directly depending on the provision of EU funding and the respective match funding which very often constitutes a problem. Frequently, **partners are not aware of the life cycles of EU funding programmes** which in turn results in financial gaps. Different levels of financial resources available in the cooperating regions can constitute a real challenge since one partner may feel disadvantaged and lagging behind. Different currencies, tax and welfare systems often also create challenging situations. **Huge differences regarding the financial possibilities** among neighbours can cause difficulties. Only if the decision on the joint use of funds is taken in a coordinated manner (e.g. by the same institution or even person), real added value can be achieved. The actual decision, though, on how to use the funding, has to be taken locally.

#### Project reference

A number of “Change on Borders” SWGs have explored new funding schemes and resources for cross-border cooperation available within EU funding programmes. In particular, the SWG **“REGBOUR”** has analysed new cooperation and funding possibilities, particular for those regions located at the new external border of the European Union.

Insufficient funding

Partners are often not equally equipped

Administration is often depended on EU funding



## Culture & History

### Drivers

Since experience has shown that first ad-hoc cooperation initiatives are usually followed by formal structures, it is necessary to first **get to know the potential partner** and the respective neighbouring region and to facilitate these initial steps. This applies to the historical background, traditions, habits, political and legal structures and economic situations, but most importantly to culture and language.

**Cooperation and competition** between regions at the same time does not have to be a contradiction in terms or an obstacle as long as the fields for cooperation are identified carefully. The development of mutual standards for labour migration, cross-border exchange or social affairs can help lowering own costs while still enhancing the regional performance.

The joint preparation and implementation of regional events, even events of national importance such as Winter Olympics or fairs can also provide a huge potential for joint activities and mutual benefits.

A general discussion about problems and challenges is necessary to make sure both partners **speak the same language** and have a common understanding of issues to be tackled ("Is the problem identified really the problem?"). **Good language skills** are once again imperative. Last but not least, all partners have to trust each other and have to be **willing to overcome differences**.

Make yourself familiar with the cultural background of your neighbouring region

Define areas of cooperation and areas of regional competition

Build up trust

### Project reference

"Change on Borders" has provided a forum to get in touch with other border regions in order to discuss ways for overcoming animosities and prejudices. All 16 SWG have - due to their transnational character - created an environment to gradually build up trust in a "safe environment" in order to prepare further cooperation initiatives.

Based on this framework in particular the SWG **MEB** and **LABS** have benefited. Within the scope of **MEB**, the three regions involved aimed to foster multiculturalism in their regions and searched for models to develop concrete strategies and actions for multicultural education. The project activities were in particular geared towards children and the youth as a key target group to foster multiculturalism as their early involvement in cross-border cooperation activities was considered crucial to raise awareness for and increase knowledge about the culture of the neighbour country and establish good neighbourhood relations. The overall purpose of the sub-project was thus to exchange experience on working methods and tools to improve multicultural education and to better involve children and young people in cross-border cooperation activities. The project partners created a new kind of local partnership between schools and stakeholders of cross-border cooperation for example by drafting material for multicultural education and organising periodic events in schools.

For the **LABS** participants on the other hand it was important to find out more about the advantages and potentials of multilingualism. Very often, these differences are still considered as a disadvantage and barrier by people and companies. The partnership agreed though that a multilingual situation should be understood as strength and used as a tool for regional development. But why then do some people learn a new language easily, while others struggle? Why do some individuals have no interest in a language, while others become enthusiastic for it? How can the status of a language be elevated? These were the main questions of the researchers involved in the project. Through the exchange of experience and the elaboration of answers to the above mentioned questions, the project furthermore led to a better cooperation in the field of education in multilingual regions.

## Barriers

For cross-border cooperation more than for any other kind of cooperation, aspects of **culture and history are very important and have to be considered**. Be it the separation between Eastern and Western Europe for more than five decades, the uneven allocation of commodities such as coal or water or several armed conflicts in the recent and sometimes even ancient past – the way and willingness of people to cooperate with each other is always affected.

Usually, **language** constitutes one of the most obvious but also most important challenges for cross-border cooperation. Although the English language has become the European lingua franca, specific knowledge of the respective neighbouring country is essential, but very often missing. This is of course directly related to historical developments which can turn out to be very sensitive as border regions often have a common cultural heritage.

Different levels of economic development resulting in smuggling and all kinds of activities related to the **black market** in some areas constitute time and again issues for cross-border cooperation all partners have to cope with.

**Overcoming prejudices** and animosities is surely also one of the most important aspects of cross-border cooperation. The ability for intercultural communication (not just language-related) leaves often room for improvement in many areas. Cooperation is still perceived as a sign of weakness.

Repeatedly underestimated is the issue of **regional competition** in areas such as tourism, businesses, housing estates, political attention or external funding.

Differing cultures may also **hamper a sound coordination** due to a different understanding of each others priorities.

**Different historic backgrounds and levels of economic development**

**Insufficient language knowledge**

**Prejudices and a lack of intercultural communication skills**

**Inner-regional competition**

### Project reference

Addressing the importance of culture and history, "Change on Borders" has set up a number of projects strengthening the regional capacities of border regions.

The SWG **LABS** has aimed specifically at improving multi-lingual skills within border regions in order to enhance the cross-border labour market and intercultural mobility. The sub-project **MEB** again was geared towards an increased interest in foreign cultures and cooperation with neighbouring countries among the children and young people living in border regions.

The SWG **MENT** was focused on cross-border development opportunities and concepts in the field of tourism, based upon three key elements: memorials of the past, unique nature and traditions. The aim was to attract tourists by special features of the region regardless on which side of the border they can be found. The aim was to work out a method which helps border regions to exploit cross-border cooperation in order to develop a common tourist concept.

## 6. Good practice examples of cross-border cooperation

This section will provide information on how the “Change on Borders” activities have addressed the specific regional challenges in order to overcome bottlenecks in cross-border cooperation and how these experiences can be used further to improve future co-operation approaches. In order to provide concrete guidance the focus of this part of the manual is put on the projects themselves, the specific regional lessons learnt and the solutions found.

Theme	Sub-theme	Sub-theme Working Groups
<b>Theme 1</b> Integrated and environment-friendly development of border regions	1.1 Horizontal cooperation among regions with similar geographical features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CROSS-SIS</li> <li>Trans-EA</li> </ul>
	1.2 Governance in border regions and joint cross-border structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>REGBOUR</li> </ul>
	1.3 Environment and friendly water development and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk and Innovation</li> <li>RIVERCROSS</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2</b> Development of labour markets in border regions	2.1 Developments of small and medium sized enterprises (SME), research and development (R&D) and innovation in border regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEP</li> <li>B2S2B</li> <li>Knowledge Roadmap</li> <li>WIN</li> </ul>
	2.2 Cross-border labour market development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Market</li> </ul>
	2.3 Tourism development in border regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MENT</li> <li>Rhine Bicycle Path</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3</b> Promotion of socio-cultural integration between border regions	3.1 Strengthening of social cohesion in border regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eHEALTH</li> </ul>
	3.2 Training, education and cross-border mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth 4I</li> <li>LABS</li> </ul>
	3.3 Culture, media & 'people-to-people' activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MEB</li> </ul>

**Fig. 6 Overview of “Change on Borders” themes, sub-themes and the related sub-theme working groups<sup>21</sup>**

<sup>21</sup> Source: drawn by the author



## Theme 1: Integrated and environment friendly development of border regions

European regions witness a growing pressure for competition and further development, deriving from the increasing trend towards globalisation and a changing institutional architecture within the EU. These trends do not just affect the economic performance of regions, but increasingly also the social, ecologic and climate change-related agenda. Undeniably, this is in turn also resulting in a need to identify new cross-sectoral approaches for regional management and governance. Regional planning has to go beyond administrative or national borders when searching for new and innovative solutions. However, at the same time maintaining some sort of regional identity becomes increasingly important as it serves as a counterbalance for globalisation, and constitutes a value to build on.

Formulating new and integrated and environment-friendly regional development strategies has been taken up by a number of “Change on Borders” SWGs such as **CROSS-SIS**, **Trans-EA**, **REGBOUR**, **RIVERCROSS** and **Risk and Innovations**.

In the developing Information Society, access to spatial information will be a key factor for territory-related decision making. **CROSS-SIS (Cross-border spatial Information System with High Added Value)** was geared towards enhancing the use of spatial data as a source for spatial decision-making in cross-border settings. Therefore, Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) developments currently experience particular attention on all levels, from the local to the European.

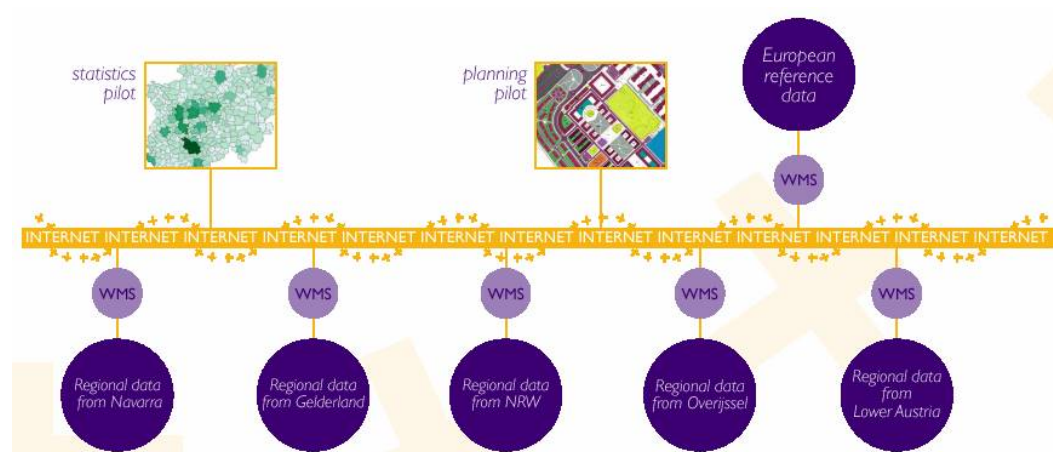
The main achievement of the **CROSS-SIS** project has been the good practice and information exchange on the subject of SDI data. The project has revealed that each region has still different structures, procedures and databases regarding spatial information, and, therefore, the cooperation activities developed during the project have changed the partners’ point of view regarding Spatial Information Systems. The project has shown the necessity to achieve effective interoperability among European Spatial Information Systems. In this respect, it has been confirmed that the different territorial structures have to be fully considered in order to develop an effective interoperability between Spatial Data Infrastructures. Throughout the lifetime of the SWG, two pilots were developed focussing on statistics and planning in order to demonstrate the practicability of cross-border SIS services.



**Good practise  
and information  
exchange**

**Better  
interoperability is  
needed**

**Further  
information can  
be found on  
[www.cross-sis.com](http://www.cross-sis.com)**



**Fig. 7: Schematic overview of the project structure of CROSS-SIS<sup>22</sup>**

<sup>22</sup> Source: Courtesy of CROSS-SIS project management

The **Trans-EA (Efficiency Assessment of cross-border transport infrastructure)** project was geared towards minimising bottlenecks in the performance and operation of cross-border transport infrastructure – in particular in the axis Germany-Poland-Ukraine (Pan-European Transport Corridor III) - by exchanging experience and comparing conditions with other European border regions. The project was supposed to deliver strategies and solutions on how border regions can benefit from transport infrastructure development and to find ways for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of specific infrastructure and operational measures in order to select priority instruments (attraction and efficient use of national/European funds).



**Fig. 8: Trains at the border**

Source: Courtesy of Trans-EA project management

The project has developed a common method to measure the effectiveness of cross-border transport infrastructure in the light of, in particular, cross-border economic development and competitiveness. The model was designed to ensure that the specific conditions of each participant's regions could be considered.

Compared with similar existing assessment procedures, the model enables the user to consider both infrastructure and operational measures in an integrated assessment model, and is flexible in terms of setting priorities and also in terms of availability of input

data. As the efficiency assessment model was developed to respond to the diverse requirements of different border regions in a flexible manner, it is not just a specific tailor-made solution but can be applied to other border regions beyond the SWG grouping. Since the subject of infrastructure efficiency assessment has a high relevance all over Europe, a significant feedback and high external interest concerning the results of the SWG can be observed.

Within the framework of **REGBOUR (Euregios and New Neighbourhood)**, information on experience in cross-border cooperation programmes on external borders of the EU was gathered. Under the leadership of North Karelia, partners from 5 different border regions with external borders cooperated with the aim to exchange experiences concerning existing institutional models for cross-border cooperation at the pre-enlargement external borders. Furthermore, gathering information related to cross-border cooperation at the post-enlargement external borders was one of the key aspects. The project was, also geared towards assisting regional authorities in the practical implementation of the new European Neighbourhood Programme and at bringing the regional innovative initiatives into a broader discussion.

The results of each phase have been put together in a handbook. It includes a theoretical part which briefly summarises the legal framework as well as the Community programmes and instruments whereas the practical part describes the implementation of cross-border cooperation in the participating regions and addresses concrete recommendations for regional authorities and project leaders. The handbook has been elaborated in order to provide knowledge to actors involved in cross-border cooperation at the external EU borders and to deliver concrete recommendations for future programmes and project implementations on EU, national, regional and project level, e.g. developing a special policy for regions with external borders, allocation more national resources for (language) training and capacity building, enhancing the role of intermediary organisations, involving more local actors. One further important conclusion of the SWG analysis was that even though the situations found in the participating regions were different, the question and problems faced in CBC are similar and that it seems to be possible to find common answers to these issues.

**How can border region benefit better from transport infrastructure?**

**Developing a common method**

**Great deal of interest in the results**



**Cooperation on the external borders of the EU**

**Common challenges and common answers**

The **RIVERCROSS (Many Rivers to Cross)** project was geared towards exchanging experience in the management of border-crossing river basins. The project was centred on the following questions:

- What is the nature and scope of cross-border cooperation in river basin management in the participating regions?
- How is cross-border cooperation in each region influenced by the characteristics of the cross-border policy arrangement itself?
- How is cross-border cooperation in each region influenced by the characteristics of the policy arrangements in each of the countries involved?
- How is cross-border cooperation in each region influenced by the differences and similarities between the policy arrangements in the countries involved?



**Fig. 9: Border River**

Source: Courtesy of RIVERCROSS project

The project facilitated four international workshops related to border water management and several expert meetings. It has substantially improved the cooperation between Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish partners and a better understanding of success factors in cross border policy arrangements was developed. All partners gained more insight into the different levels of cross border cooperation throughout Europe. A more permanent cooperation in the Dutch-German border region between the University of Twente, the University of Duisburg-Essen and Radboud University was enhanced. All regions have delivered so-called quick

scans of their region briefly describing the cultural and organisational context of river basin management in their region. Once these short documents were prepared, situation reports were developed in which experts have discussed the findings of the quick scans in greater detail. All results related to cross-border river management were summarised in a final report and will be published in a book titled *“Many rivers to cross”*. Furthermore, a more permanent portal to exchange information courses was established.

The SWG **Risk & Innovation** focused on cross-border cooperation related to various risks linked to globalisation and innovation processes. The aim was to commonly prevent, manage and solve cross-border risks covering industrial, environmental, health- or human-related issues. Its objectives were to stimulate and support the exchange of information and know-how on cross-border risk management, to improve knowledge and understanding of approaches, methodologies and good practices related to innovation risk and risk management and to stimulate and promote awareness of cross-border risks within the local population.

The project in particular addressed industry-related issues such as risks resulting from genetically modified crops, nuclear plants or water pollution. Environmental issues, e.g. forest fires in border regions or the impact of investments in infrastructure, humanitarian challenges and health-related issues like illegal border crossing and the risk of epidemics etc. were also subjects of the SWG.

All results were published in the jointly developed *“Handbook on cross-border globalisation and innovation risks: EU views and experiences”*. All project documents and further material can be viewed on the SWG website [www.riskandinnovation.eu](http://www.riskandinnovation.eu).

**How to manage cross-border river basins?**

**Understanding the differences**

**Further info can be found on [www.rivercross.nl](http://www.rivercross.nl)**



**Addressing cross-border risks**

**Handbook on risks and innovations**



## Theme 2: Development of economic fabric and the labour markets in border regions

Whereas nowadays capital and commodities can flow across borders more freely than ever before, labour and people cannot. Therefore, developing a joint labour market is one of the key policy areas for border regions.

Strengthening the labour market can be done by various means: strengthening inner-regional partnerships and networks of public and private sector stakeholders, enhancing cooperation between the business community and academia, strengthening the position of smaller cities to reduce their dependency on bigger agglomerations and promoting new skill sectors such as life science technologies or SMEs connected to renewable energies. Within the RFO “Change on Borders”, several projects were geared towards tackling these newly emerging challenges.

The **SEP (Strengthening economic potentials at border regions by means of cross-border business parks)** SWG was aimed at improving the economic cooperation within border regions by the means of cross-border business parks to make a contribution to



**Fig. 10: Aerial view at the business park in Zittau**

Source: Town Zittau

strengthening the economic potentials of the Zittau (Germany) – Bogatynia (Poland) – Hradek nad Nisou (Czech Republic) border region. The project delivered new cross-border marketing concepts and strategies, cooperation procedures and it established framework conditions for the development of a cross-border business park. It improved the level of cooperation in the German-Polish-Czech border regions. Within the framework of a pilot project a marketing concept for the cross-border business area “Kleines Dreieck” was prepared.

**Economic cooperation within border regions**

**New marketing concepts and development strategies**

Within the **B2S2B SWG (Business to Science to Business)**, the project partners addressed the lack of a critical mass of stakeholders in the value chain of innovation particular in border areas. The project aimed at the creation of new processes to be adopted in other border regions and at connecting research and business on both sides of the border. Throughout the project, new networks were created, “old” networks were intensified and four pilot projects were implemented:

### Alsace – Baden Wurttemberg

An innovative audit of technological service platforms in the field of life sciences was conducted successfully on 16 cooperation platforms in Alsace by Alsace BioValley, in collaboration with Université Louis Pasteur. About 115 criteria were analysed for each platform according to five groups: organisation & leadership, human resources, finance & administration, process & technical facilities, client's perspectives. Such an analysis allows for the qualification of internal and external performances of each platform and the construction of an action plan to support the “maturation” of platforms in terms of service quality. The pilot project implemented within the scope of “Change on Borders” aimed at delivering experience and deploying the process in the regions of Baden-Wurttemberg (Germany) and Basle (Switzerland) in order to implement a cross-border network of service platforms sharing the same standards of industrial quality.



**Cooperation in life sciences**

**Further information can be found on: [www.b2s2b.eu](http://www.b2s2b.eu)**

### Andalusia - Morocco

This project transferred innovations, knowledge and experiences from the Chambers of Commerce in Andalusia to the Chambers of Commerce in the North of Morocco. This included the transfer, explanation and use of computer tools to develop business plans and make decisions through the Internet. This technology transfer promoted entrepreneurship in Morocco and facilitated relations between Andalusian and Moroccan business people.

**Enhanced cooperation of different Chambers of Commerce**

### Navarra - Aquitaine

The cross-border Navarre-Aquitaine pilot project was geared towards promoting collaboration among Science (University), Technology (Technological Centre) and Industry (SME) to carry out an R&D Project. The project was aimed at developing a new kind of ecologically recyclable substrate for out-of-soil plant cultivation. RESCOLL Centre Technologique provided its knowledge regarding new technologies on adhesives and adhesive bonding. Expected benefits were products that fulfil greenhouse substrate needs, an increase in market share and market diversification, and job creation for the new product manufacturing line.

**Better connections between industry and research**

### Friuli Venezia Giulia - Slovenia

The Friuli Venezia Giulia – Slovenia cross-border pilot project likewise promoted cooperation among research and industry. The research focused in particular on the gastrointestinal absorption and distribution of food polyphenols, natural substances of fruit, vegetables and wine and beer. The SMEs were both co-financing and carrying out part of the research. The “Change on Borders” pilot project provided a stable asset of relationships between Slovenian and Italian partners and was in itself a model of a best practice to improve cross-border issues and to foster the enhancement of the critical mass of research and industry within cross-border regions. All project activities were seen as a good basis for new European cooperation projects and built up and identified new synergies and practical working models among business and science in the partner regions.

**Pioneering new forms of economy related cross-border cooperation activities**

Cities, especially those with universities and research institutions, are important for delivering the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. Yet, already in 2004, several universities and science cities from North-Western Europe launched a study addressing the importance of cities for the implementation process of the Lisbon agenda. One result of this research revealed that cities in a border situation are often subject to specific challenging conditions regarding their knowledge economy.

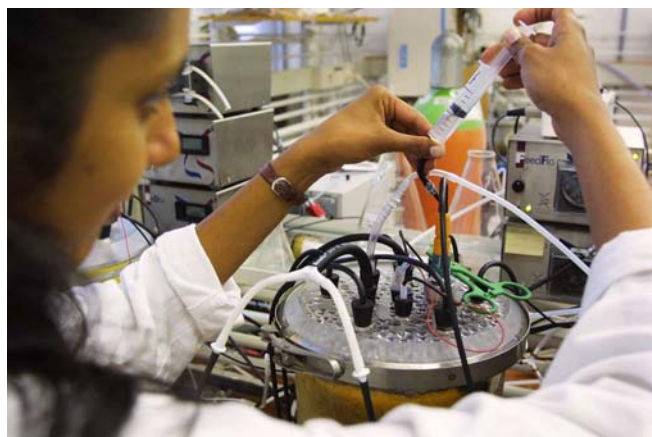
**Cities as means to deliver the Lisbon agenda**

Within the SWG **Knowledge Roadmap (Cross-border cooperation for knowledge based development – Towards a Roadmap)**, Spanish, Dutch and German cities were in looking at the knowledge based potentials and opportunities of border regions. Based upon the results of an international study the project was designed to develop a practical "roadmap" for politicians and other stakeholders, which can help improving existing linkages and explore new opportunities for cooperation. Furthermore, the partner cities exchanged know-how and transferred experience on knowledge-related regional development approaches.

From January until April 2007, five in-depth case studies of existing cross-border co-operations were carried out. The research study was delegated to the European Institute for Comparative Urban Research (EURICUR) which is based at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. In each case study, the research institute conducted interviews with key stakeholders of the specific region. The interviewees were identified in close cooperation with the project partners who met twice throughout the project lifetime.

During the project meetings, the partners got to know each other, presented their cities, border regions and cross-border activities and had the opportunity to discuss the future benefits of cross-border co-operation.

For the development of new regional answers and strategies to the challenges resulting



**Fig. 11: At Nijmegen University**

Source: Courtesy of Knowledge Roadmap management

from the general shift towards the knowledge-economy, the project and its final report has delivered new and concrete policy recommendations. *Inter alia*, it has stressed the relevance to first set up well structured “internal local and city-based coalitions” before turning to the regional level, to build on existing partnerships rather than ‘reinventing the wheel’ and to assess the situation of a city first before taking action. Overall the final report has put emphasis on the growing need for regions and cities to cooperate in order to be successful in the long term.

**Build on existing partnerships**

**Always assess the situation first before taking action**

Life science are interdisciplinary, internationally-oriented and one of the most important and innovative future markets. Especially in the pharmaceutical industry there is a strong need for new solutions to reduce investment costs, development times and to improve the validity of research data. Knowledge and technology transfer, at each development level as well as along the complete development chain, is vitally important.

To date, many efforts have been made to coordinate various institutions in the field of basic research, applied research and industry across borders. This has led to the formation of Bio-Regions – clusters of excellent academic institutions, start-up biotech entrepreneurs and leading pharmaceutical companies - with a strong impact on the regional development. So far, some initiatives have been set up to link locally operating Bio-Regions on a national basis. However, only few attempts have been made to connect cross-border operating “bio-regions”.

The SWG **WIN (Working in Networks)** has taken up this challenge and analysed the connection of cross-border operating life science regions to establish an interregional experience and know-how exchange platform in order to exploit synergetic effects and best practice solutions between the participating border regions. Within this framework the Bioregions Bavaria, Biovalley (Basel/ Freiburg/ Strasbourg), Heartbeat of Life Science (Aachen/ Maastricht/ Liege) and Biosaregion (Upper Austria/ South Bohemia) have joined forces. The project screened and evaluated scientific and industrial needs and requirements and entered into targeted interregional matchmaking, coordinating first trials of interregional cooperation. Furthermore, a public partnering conference was organised and the project was promoted at several cross-border events. The creation of a personalised interregional network has contributed in particular to overcoming regional innovation gaps.

**Connecting life science regions across borders**

Subsequently, the efficiency and operation of cross-border activities was improved because of the achieved knowledge transfer and the application of the elaborated best practices as to how to bridge the gap between science and industry. For successful technology transfer management within cross-border/interregional life science regions, i.a. this means:

- Bridging the information and culture gaps at the science/industry interface at an earlier stage of the (joint) development process.
- Supporting the collaborations with services not only in the field of providing lab-space and/or funds but also by providing early stage business development to get from ideas to business models.
- Providing legal services (patent law) to effectively protect scientific knowledge, enabling the scientific partners to enter early stage information exchange.
- Stimulating the co-operation of researches with complementary technologies on the level of basic research, to get from interesting but isolated scientific islands to develop applicable (and fundable) technical solutions.

The **WIN** project clearly showed that successful daily work of life science regions should be done on regional, cross-border/interregional and international level.

**The regional level is vital for further promotion of life science regions**

The labour market situation in border regions often proves difficult. The main problem the regions are faced with is the lack of reliable and consistent sources of information on job opportunities, language and cultural barriers, differences in recruitment practices, legal environment, different structures and competences on each side of the border.

**Establishing cross-border labour markets**

**Labour Market (Labour Market move possibilities across borders in Europe)** was geared towards increasing the dissemination of information among people of border regions concerning the possibilities of the labour market across borders. The project delivered two research studies on the specific situation of cross-border labour-markets in Spain and Lithuania and a general overview of the situation of labour markets in Europe. Within the studies, detailed recommendations and specific proposals for further improving the cross-border labour market situation were elaborated:

- Creation of a reliable and easily accessible regional database of workforce information,
- Formation of labour market flows directed by local employment agencies,
- Establishment of a specialised employment centre,
- Organisation of special training for neighbouring border regions,
- Cross-border networks of employers, employment centres etc.,
- Promotion of cross-border labour markets on a national and regional level,
- Simplification of legal procedures for visa and work permit for residents of border regions,
- Reduction of legal restrictions for foreign employees.

Existing networks and partnerships were consolidated, future projects developed and experiences and best-practices were exchanged. All partners were very active in the implementation of the project activities and considered it very beneficial to have a partnership encompassing countries as different as Spain, Switzerland and Lithuania.



Border regions possess rich cultural resources and opportunities for cross-border development of leisure concepts. Yet, these opportunities often face limitations that are border-specific. To date this potential is often being hampered by the lack of know-how concerning the further utilisation and development of a common tourist product for both sides of the borders.

In order to stimulate cross-border development opportunities and concepts in the field of tourism, the **MENT (Memory, Environment and Tradition Trails on borders)** SWG was set up. The project was based on bringing together tourism, culture and history as key elements with the main aim to stimulate border-regional and cross-border development opportunities, based upon a combined use of available local/ regional resources (often on both sides of the border), related to the outstanding remaining memorials of the past (**memory**), unique natural sites and environmental assets (**nature**) and vivid traditions of multicultural communities living in border areas (**tradition**). Thus, the main objective of the SWG MENT was to elaborate a common method for border regions to develop cross-border cooperation in order to produce a common tourist product leading into the development of one integrated region ("Make holidays in two countries"). The SWG project MENT successfully established very close links among different European border regions which worked together on the implementation of the project. The SWG held two major meetings including a focused workshop, and two reports were produced.



**Benefiting from the rich cultural potential of border regions**

Within the framework of **Rhine Bicycle Path (The Rhine from the spring to the estuary)**, a joint communication and marketing concept was created. The key element was to develop common standards linking existing cross-border bicycle paths. The situation which led to setting up this SWG was the fact that up to now each city and region along the Rhine promotes "its" part of the Rhine Cycle Path individually. All measures undertaken to attract (cycle) tourists and to promote the Rhine area have neither been coordinated nor harmonised. As the Rhine is an important economic element, a number of partners supported the idea of developing a common communication and marketing strategy.



**Creating a joint communication and marketing concept**

Rhine Bicycle Path organised and delivered:

- a coordinated international strategy
- a flyer in four languages
- a website in four languages
- a joint cooperation convention on the political level
- a joint statement on practitioners level was agreed and signed in autumn 2007

Despite a different cultural background and several disparities in administration, quality and "state of the art" concerning (cycle) tourism in each region involved in the project, the partners succeeded in "speaking with one voice" towards the tourist. Generally, all participants felt that the idea and the concept of the SWG were successful and the project experienced backing also from the involved regions along the Rhine. On all levels (responsible authorities and tourism organisations), people were willing to work together and put the idea forward. Further information can be found at [www.rhinecyclerroute.eu](http://www.rhinecyclerroute.eu).



### Theme 3: Promotion of socio-cultural integration between border regions

Supporting socio-cultural cooperation in border regions is in particular important since border regions have always been places where in history tensions between different cultural and national identities have led to disputes. In this respect is cross-border cooperation also very much about bridging this gap and creating an environment of understanding regarding in particular cultural differences and the inherent potential and opportunities. Therefore several "Change on Borders" - SWGs have put a strong focus on supporting this kind of cooperation approaches.

The **eHEALTH** SWG (**Telemedicine and e-health in cross-border hospital cooperation and health care**) was aimed at improving cross-border health care and hospital co-operation by means of e-Health technologies and telematics with the aim of facilitating the mobility of patients across borders.

The SWG was in particular designed at improving the existing cross-border co-operation of the partner hospitals in the diagnosis and treatment of individual patients by optimal use of **eHEALTH** technologies and telematics such as telepathology, telemonitoring, videoconferencing, telecommunication between doctors, teleteaching and telecoaching. The analysis of the legal aspects as well as the uncertainties which still exist in the application of eHealth in the area of cross-border health care, hospital co-operation and the application of telemedicine were also at the heart of the project. The overall aim was to make improvements to a seamless mobility of patients which allows them to visit any hospital or care provider, also across the border.

Within the framework of **eHEALTH**, a first analysis of the cross-border problems in technical infrastructure for cross-border use of health cards was carried out as well as an initial technical description of solutions based on accepted international standards. Moreover, an inventory of the cross-border contracts between hospitals and the juridical systems in the partner countries took place. This activity delivered a first draft for answering the juridical questions posed by the European Commission in its recent consultation with regard to patient mobility and health services in Europe. Throughout the SWG a method for cross-border neuromonitoring during aortic surgery in Aachen/GER was developed and implemented in Maastricht/NL. Remote online diagnostic EEG was also realized, tested and confirmed for its reliability and diagnostic quality. Also tools such as teleconsulting have been addressed by this SWG.

Specifically linguistic and multicultural aspects in cross-border cooperation were at the heart of the **LABS** and the **MEB** SWG. These two SWG were based on the conviction that living in an environment with more than one language should no longer be an obstacle to economic development. Instead, it shall become a motor of cross-border cooperation, and work as a bridge for interregional understanding.

**LABS (Language Bridges)** was aimed at enhancing the exchange of experience between border regions with two or more linguistic communities and focused on special linguistic features, bi-/multi-lingual areas, language policies and education. Whereas sometimes the multilingual situation is still seen as a challenge, hindering mobility and job chances, this SWG understood the multilingual situation of border regions as a resource and as a chance also for economic development.

**Improving cross-border health care through better cooperation**



**Using modern ICT in order to increase the quality of health care in border regions**

**Taking the border as an advantage**

**LABS** contributed to improving the regional development strategies, through a better understanding of the status of languages, the identification of motivation factors in language learning, and the development of new language learning tools and language learning campaigns. The aim was to help decision makers to launch appropriate educational policies and language learning initiatives which can, in the long run, positively influence an amicable cohabitation, education and job chances and thus can enhance the prosperity of bilingual regions.

Facilitated by the project, all participating regions gained new insights in linguistic and educational perspectives of different regional language policies. A series of public discussions and expert meetings in the participating regions were organised to stimulate broader language consciousness. Besides the organisation of a specific Thematic Forum on language issues the project has delivered a Ukrainian online course which was developed by the Lublin partner. LABS furthermore demonstrated the language potential in border regions through study visits of teachers between the participating border regions (i.a. a visit of the Italian Ladin community). The know-how and experience of each participant was increased and the language-specific network of experts improved. Eventually, a high-level expert conference on multilingualism across Europe with more than 300 participants was organised. The strategies and instruments fostering language learning and multicultural education were also taken further in another project: "Multicultural Education on Borders".

**Capitalising on the language potential of border regions**

**For further information visit:**  
[www.eurac.edu](http://www.eurac.edu)

**MEB (Multicultural Education on Borders)** was aimed at the promotion of multiculturalism and creation of a background to increase children's and youths' abilities to participate in cooperation activities. This situation was considered relevant as in especially national policies to promote multiculturalism are often too general and not adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of border regions.

The project was based on the idea to respond to the growing immigration and the changing situation in the border regions. The aim of the project was to develop tools to increase the cultural competence of the participating regions. The three regions involved in this sub-project aimed to foster multiculturalism in their respective region and searched for models to develop concrete strategies and actions for multicultural education. In order to do so, all participating regions carried out local pilot activities jointly based on their own regional situation. Partners in Italy and Greece who had a long experience of migration and working in multicultural and multilingual societies were able to share their experience with others such as Finland where migration is a quite new but growing phenomenon. In **MEB** the most important achievement was to transfer the knowledge concerning migration to Finnish partners. All local activities also played an important role and gave an additional impetus regarding the promotion of multiculturalism within border regions.

**Multiculturalism as driver for the development of border regions**

The **Y4I - Youth for innovation** SWG designed training and education tools to foster intensive and sustainable cross-border co-operation in order to further encourage regional innovation capacities. The project addressed the rather low innovation standard in border regions in comparison to the national level. By working on regional relevant subjects and supporting contacts with international businesses and regional players, the SWG aimed at strengthening social structures of border regions. Together with the partners, an international framework innovation curriculum for different types of schools (general schools, vocational schools, universities/ polytechnics) was developed and adopted in the partner regions.

The project has been developed in collaboration with six European partners: the City of Oldenburg (DE) as the leading participant, Andalusia (ES), Lubelskie (PL), North Karelia (SF), South Aegean Region (GR) and Upper Austria (AT), each with its particular neighbour region. In these regions, schools were taken on board to implement the innovation curriculum and to realize cross-border *mini-innovation* projects. Altogether, 52 projects were successfully carried out.



**Enhancing regional innovation capacity through education**

For example, in the Weser-Ems region, the **Youth 4I** project is widely known through the participation of 13 schools and polytechnics in 10 districts and independent cities with 34 groups of pupils or students implementing an innovative project. In four other regions, 18 mini-innovation projects were presented, although originally project implementation was only foreseen in two regions besides Weser-Ems. These projects dealt with issues ranging from economic fields which are especially relevant for the region, such as agro business, tourism, environment technologies, information and communication technologies up to mechanical engineering solutions or new concepts for a healthy and balanced nutrition.

Two further examples are the mini-projects called “Groningen (NL) as guest in Oldenburg (DE)”, where a flyer targeted to Dutch people from 16 up to 25 years was developed, presenting the “hits and tips” for Oldenburg or a Finnish mini-project called “Solutions for export of Shiitake mushrooms for markets in St. Petersburg”, where a suitable mushroom package was designed for the Russian market and distribution channels to the Russian market were recommended.

Within the SWG **Youth 4I** a good-working cooperation between the partners was established and the aims of the project were fully achieved. A set of tools (checklists, guidelines, manuals etc.) as well as a modular system of “cross-border innovation curricula” were developed and the implementation of a considerable number of innovation pilot projects (mini-innovation projects) took place.



**Fig. 12: At the final conference in Oldenburg the mini R&D projects were presented. Pupils, students and teachers could present their work to about 200 participants**

Source: [www.y4i.net](http://www.y4i.net)

During the Final Conference in Oldenburg, all 52 mini innovation-projects were presented. During the Final Conference, 16 mini projects were even awarded for their work.

Based on the developed material and the gained experiences, every partner is aiming to establish “Youth for Innovation” as a cross border project at a regional scale.



**Project flyer**

**For further information visit:**  
[www.y4i.net](http://www.y4i.net)

## 7. The future of European Territorial Cooperation

### INTERREG 2007 – 2013

The structure of European financial assistance provided for regional development and territorial cooperation has changed substantially compared with the previous funding period (2000-2006). The EU Structural Funds, i.e. the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, but also the European Cohesion Fund are now based on three overall headings (objectives):

- **Convergence**
- **Regional Competitiveness and Employment**
- **European Territorial Cooperation**

The former Objective 1 and Objective 2 regions were replaced by so-called “Convergence Regions”, “Phasing-out Regions”, “Phasing-in Regions” and “Competitiveness and Employment Regions” (see annex). In financial terms, some € 8.72 bn (some 2.5 % of the total EU budget for cohesion) will be available between 2007 and 2013 for European Territorial Cooperation. The INTERREG initiative as well as other EU funding programmes were integrated into the “European Territorial Cooperation” heading which is geared towards strengthening **cross-border co-operation** (former strand INTERREG A) through joint local and regional initiatives, fostering **trans-national co-operation** (former strand INTERREG B) aiming at integrated territorial development, and supporting **interregional co-operation** (former strand INTERREG C) and exchange of experience. The total budget split for European territorial cooperation is as follows<sup>23</sup>:

- € 6.44 bn for cross-border co-operation
- € 1.83 bn for transnational co-operation
- € 0.44 bn for inter-regional co-operation

For further  
information visit:  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

### INTERREG IVC

The new INTERREG IVC<sup>24</sup> programme on interregional cooperation is about to start in autumn 2007. It is one out of four other EU interregional and networking programmes such as **URBACT II**, **INTERACT II** and **ESPON II** and is foreseen to run until 2013. The current model consisting of four programme zones will be replaced by one Europe-wide programme with a single management structure. The programme will be run by just one Managing Authority which is the Conseil Régional Nord-Pas de Calais in Lille/France. It will be supported by four so-called information points: in Rostock, Katowice (with support from Vienna), Valencia and Lille.

INTERREG IVC was designed to have a clear focus on regional development policies in the areas of innovation, knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention. Different types of interregional cooperation projects and networks will be funded. Funding will be provided for regional initiatives and so-called Fast Track Networks. There will no longer be fixed types of cooperation and the cooperation can also vary in intensity (from light networking to mini-programmes).

For further  
information visit:  
[www.interreg3c.net](http://www.interreg3c.net)

<sup>23</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/policy/object/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/object/index_en.htm)

<sup>24</sup> The official title is still to be decided

## European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

Since currently only 6% of the INTERREG IIIA programmes are run by a cross-border structure<sup>25</sup>, acting as Managing Authority (MA), Paying Authority (PA) and/ or Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), most of the programmes are actually managed by different local, regional or national authorities. In principle, two main management principles are applied:

- **"Concentrated" management:** a single authority is in charge of managing the programme, acting on behalf of the other partners, on the basis of a convention signed by all partners.
- **"Decentralised" management:** the functions of MA, PA and JTS are ensured by several authorities (on one side or on all sides of the border), or the authority in charge of these functions uses intermediate bodies to implement part of these functions in the other country.

This situation, however, results in a number of challenges, mainly connected with the legal personality resulting in implications on e.g. the power to hire international staff or to be bound to a national legal framework. The **European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)** was set up as a new legal instrument under public law with a specific view at addressing these challenges in order to facilitate cross-border, transnational and/ or inter-regional co-operation between regional and local authorities. It has entered into force in 2007.

The objectives of the new instrument are to:

- reduce difficulties in "actions within the scope of national laws and procedures"
- provide a solution to the inadequacy of existing instruments
- complete and not circumvent the framework provided by the Council of Europe
- facilitate territorial cooperation within and outside Structural Funds, the main task being the implementation of Territorial Cooperation programmes or projects

Besides the management of EU Structural Funds, other functions can also be envisaged:

- the implementation of a Territorial Cooperation programme;
- **acting as Lead Partner or partner for a Territorial Cooperation project;**
- other cooperation actions with or without EU-funding (yet actions outside EU funding can be restricted by Member States to ERDF-like actions;

The EGTC is meant to be a **new legal framework** at the Community level for the creation of cooperative groups, in order to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation. The EGTC was given a legal personality and capacity recognised by EU law and can thus acquire property, hire personnel, be party to legal proceedings. According to the different national laws, the EGTC will be developed under a wide range of models. The regulation gives preference to a broad partnership that extends beyond just local authorities and their groupings. The EGTC will be open to all "contracting authorities", i.e. any legal entity under public law not carrying on an industrial or commercial activity, including the states and public-sector administrative establishments (universities, national nature parks, etc.). The EGTC will be governed by the community regulation, its convention and its statutes and, for matters not covered by these texts, by the laws of the member state where the EGTC has its registered office. The participation of each member must be approved by the state under the law of which it has been formed.

**A new tool for  
regional  
cooperation**

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.interact-eu.net/1177144/1177146/1178862/0>



### Project reference

Due to the cross-border nature of the RFO “Change on Borders”, awareness for this new cooperation instrument was raised among all partners. Within the scope of a Thematic Forum in Greece, even a workshop on the European Commission’s proposal of implementing a legal instrument called “European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation” (EGTC) took place. In the context of a Thematic Forum 1, meeting representatives from North Karelia (FI), Lead Region of Thematic Forum 1, gave a comprehensive introduction into the subject and stressed the importance of an instrument for border regions, particularly for effective cross-border cooperation. The Association of European Border Regions also stressed that with the EGTC, cross-border cooperation will depend less on changing majorities or opinions at the political or administrative level.

By some “Change on Borders” partners, the EGTC was considered a good start, but it was suggested to extend the instrument beyond the EU 27 and to also enclose the neighbouring countries of the EU.

For further  
information visit:  
[www.interact-eu.net](http://www.interact-eu.net)

### The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) is a **new instrument aimed at assisting countries which share a land or sea border with an EU member state**. Since the beginning of 2007, financial support for the European Neighbourhood Policy and ENP countries is provided. A key objective of the ENPI is **to enhance the EU's relations with its neighbours** on the basis of shared values and to provide opportunities to share the benefits of the EU enlargement. The ENPI will target sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and legislation, and bring a substantial improvement regarding cross-border cooperation along the EU’s external borders. The ENPI is a “policy driven” instrument that is meant to operate in the framework of the existing bilateral agreements between the European Union and the neighbouring countries. It will in particular focus on supporting the implementation of the so-called European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans. In that respect it is supposed to go beyond simply promoting sustainable development. Legislative approximation, regulatory convergence and institution building will be supported as well as using mechanisms such as the exchange of experience, long-term twinning arrangements with Member States or participation in Community programmes and agencies.

A specific feature of the instrument is meant to be the **cross-border co-operation component**. Under this component, the ENPI will finance “joint programmes” bringing together regions of Member States and partner countries sharing a common border and it is based on earlier experiences under TACIS, MEDA, PHARE and INTERREG. A number of other lessons drawn from the experience of CBC cooperation in recent years have also been taken into account in the development of the new ENPI CBC: Whereas local and regional authorities within border regions usually have shown to be enthusiastic in working together, political and administrative support at the national level was often lacking and has proved to be an obstacle to successful cross-border cooperation. The importance of the shared experience of programme partners in working together, and of relevant capacity-building has also been addressed within the scope of the new instrument. Under previous CBC programmes, the combination of different sources of funding with different procedures has in itself been an obstacle to effective CBC. The new ENPI was designed to both combine different funding tools and provide support for training and capacity-building to those regions in need of administrative assistance.



The cross-border component of the ENPI was specifically developed to provide assistance to regions characterised by different rates of economic development, high income disparities and different demographic dynamics.

**Table 1: Income levels in border regions (regional GDP per capita, in Euro, 2002)**

Land and short sea-crossing programmes<sup>26</sup>

North		East		South	
EU regions	Partner regions	EU regions	Partner regions	EU regions	Partner regions
23,180	2,448	3,391	1,249	14,107	1,325

Environmental issues are important in the context of shared sea basins like the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea or with regard to transboundary rivers and lakes. Public health issues were also given particular importance in a cross-border context, for example in relation to diseases such as tuberculosis or HIV-Aids, or possible epidemic or pandemic diseases. Furthermore, the new instrument was designed to also address the issue of organised crime. Summarising, cross-border cooperation within the scope of the ENPI is intended to help to:

- promote economic and social development in regions on both sides of common borders;
- work together to address common challenges in fields such as the environment, public health and the prevention of and the fight against organised crime;
- ensure efficient and secure borders;
- promote local cross-border “people-to-people” actions.

The instrument is supposed to bring a simplification in procedures and substantial gains in efficiency. It is foreseen to use a “Structural Funds” approach, based on multi-annual programming, partnership and co-financing. The European Neighbourhood Policy covers the EU’s neighbours to the East and along the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean and Black sea, i.e. Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The total available for ENPI-CBC programmes for the period 2007-10 amounts to some €583 m (€274 m from ENPI, and €308 m from ERDF). For the period 2011-13, it is foreseen that a further €535 m will be made available.

#### Project reference

The RFO “Change on Borders”, its sub-projects and their results were strongly linked towards the future programme period.

Due to the mostly peripheral location of some participating partner regions, the different administrative and legal structures as well as the implementation of new financial instruments of the EU at the external borders (ENPI and IPA), the challenges are still important for a sustainable development of the border regions. Therefore, the participating organisations of “Change on Borders” have strongly promoted a sustainable exchange of information and experiences which is expected to last beyond the project duration.

**For further  
information visit:  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)**

<sup>26</sup> Source: European Commission (i): 8

## Network of European Eastern Border Regions (NEEBOR)

In 2005, a number of specific border regions established the Network of European Eastern Border Regions (**NEEBOR**). Its aim is to support regions on both sides of the EU's Eastern border, from Finland in the North to Greece in the South, as cross-border co-operation has been singled out as one of the areas of territorial co-operation that can deliver additional momentum for the cooperation process between the EU Member States and its neighbours.

NEEBOR aims to **increase the awareness** of EU institutions, Member States, regions and local authorities and the civil organizations on both sides of the borders of the existing weaknesses and strengths of the cross-border region. NEEBOR was set up to become a **platform for dialogue and coordination** of joint actions and initiatives in order to promote the exchange of best practices to enhance cooperation and synergies in the region.



For further  
information visit:  
[www.neebor.eu](http://www.neebor.eu)

## EU Partnership with Russia

The existing Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) will finish its initial 10-year period in 2007. The EU and Russia agreed in 2006 to negotiate a new overall agreement for EU-Russia relations to replace the PCA. They agreed that the PCA should remain in force until the new agreement is in place and that the Common Spaces Road Maps adopted in May 2005 remain the work programme for EU-Russia cooperation in the short and medium term.

For further  
information visit:  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

## The new Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is the Community's **financial instrument for the pre-accession process** for the period 2007-2013. The IPA is intended to serve as a flexible instrument and provides assistance which depends on the progress made by the beneficiary countries and their needs as shown in the Commission's evaluations and annual strategy papers. Assistance is provided within the framework of the European Partnerships of the **potential candidate countries** and the Accession Partnerships of the candidate countries. Cooperation will be coordinated with other Community instruments for cross-border, trans-national and interregional cooperation. In case of cross-border cooperation with EU Member States, this component shall cover the regions on both sides of the respective border or borders, either terrestrial or maritime. The main aim of the new instrument is to support the respective countries in cross-border, and, where appropriate, transnational and interregional cooperation with each other and between them and the Member States. The core objective is to **achieve good neighbourly relations**, to foster stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of all countries concerned, and to encourage their harmonious, balanced and sustainable development. The IPA is to support institution-building and the rule of law, human rights, including the fundamental freedoms, minority rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, both administrative and economic reforms, economic and social development, reconciliation and reconstruction, and regional and cross-border cooperation. The beneficiary countries are divided **into two categories**, depending on their status as either candidate countries under the accession process or potential candidate countries.

### Category I

- Croatia
- Turkey
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

### Category II

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Montenegro

Assistance under the IPA can take, inter alia, the following forms:

- investment, procurement contracts or subsidies;
- administrative cooperation, involving experts sent from the Member States;
- action by the Community acting in the interest of the beneficiary country;
- budget support (granted exceptionally and subject to supervision).

IPA will replace the respective programmes for the period 2000-2006, namely PHARE, SAPARD and ISPA, PHARE Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) and Coordination, pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey and the programmes for potential candidate countries (CARDS). **Between 2007 and 2013 IPA will provide some €11 bn in total.**

**For further  
information visit:  
[www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)**

#### **Project reference**

A positive opinion on the new Pre-accession Instrument was also expressed by the partners of the SWG **REGBOUR**, underlining that the IPA will give the regions in the potential candidate countries the unique opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Structural Funds and to deepen relationships already existing in the area of the Adriatic and Balkans.

Besides, the IPA will in particular put the potential candidate countries in a position to "practice" the Community's cohesion policies by applying rules as closely as possible to the Structural Funds.

## 8. Checklist for cross-border cooperation

The checklist below is meant to be a **simple tool for decision makers and administrations dealing with cross-border and territorial cooperation policy making** and strategy development but also practitioners already involved in concrete cross-border activities and projects. The tables below outline relevant aspects of cross-border cooperation projects in order to facilitate the initiation but also the implementation.

### Stakeholders and partners to be considered for cross-border cooperation projects

Sector	Details	Background information
<b>Public sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National authorities</li> <li>Regional (federal) governments and authorities</li> <li>Related municipalities</li> <li>Planning associations</li> <li>Related NGOs</li> <li>Development agencies</li> <li>Universities</li> <li>Regional and focused (supranational) associations such as the Association of European Border Regions, the Council of Europe, the Assembly of European Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions</li> <li>Related politicians (regional, national and European level)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All possible stakeholders need to be involved in order to ensure a comprehensive and broad financial and social support</li> <li>Involving as many stakeholders as possible helps to ensure a good level of publicity</li> <li>For further project implementation, practical support from several society sectors will be required and hence needs to be prepared at a very early stage</li> <li>The links between regional, national and European policies often need to be explained to the media in order to be supported properly</li> <li>There is nothing wrong with lobbying to raise awareness!</li> </ul>
<b>Private (semi-public) sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chambers of Commerce and other regional business networks</li> <li>Private companies (business community)</li> <li>Marketing boards</li> <li>Trade associations</li> <li>Press, Media</li> <li>Linked Transport Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private sector can possibly close financial gaps</li> <li>Since the present involvement of private sector experts is rather low, special emphasis should be put on this matter</li> </ul>

### Aims and strategies to be considered for cross-border cooperation projects

Aims	Sublevel	Details	Background information
<b>Strategic aims</b>	▪ Region	▪ Develop regional aims which are in line with regional development strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop short-, medium-, and long-term strategic objectives of the partnership (cooperation)</li> <li>▪ Clear strategic aims are crucially important in order to define precise and concrete outcomes (evaluation) for the whole cooperation</li> <li>▪ What are specific regional priorities and development aims?</li> <li>▪ How does the project fit into the regional development strategy?</li> <li>▪ How can the project help to deliver the regional development strategy?</li> <li>▪ Which development clusters or policies will be enhanced by the project?</li> <li>▪ Identifying priorities and aims on a local/ regional level can help creating cross-sectoral synergies</li> </ul>
	▪ Nation State	▪ Consider national development priorities	▪ National and regional strategic aims need to be compared for overlaps and areas of cooperation and possible positive enhancement
	▪ Europe	▪ Consider European development priorities and policy aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making oneself familiar with European policy aims helps to define regional development strategies</li> <li>▪ Putting regional aims into a European perspective will help to receive approval for the project application</li> </ul>
	▪ Neighbouring region	▪ Carefully analyse the development strategies of the neighbouring region	▪ Own strategic aims need to be compared with those of the neighbouring region in order to identify areas for cooperation but also those for competition
<b>Political aims</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider and analyse European, national and regional political aims</li> <li>▪ Search for political support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political aims are by nature often short-term-oriented</li> <li>▪ Do the political aims fit the project and match the time scale of the project?</li> <li>▪ Are the regional politicians willing and prepared to support the project in general terms?</li> <li>▪ Support from national politicians as well is usually beneficial to the project</li> </ul>

Aims	Sublevel	Details	Background information
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to create and develop links between all political levels and create positive interdependencies (Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda)</li> <li>Define those project outputs specifically helping to implement national and European policies and strategies</li> <li>According to experience, it is impossible to implement cross-border projects without political support from the regional level</li> </ul>
<b>Content related aims (deliverables)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define scope of the project</li> <li>Define content-related aims (objectives) of the partnership and all related partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear scope for the project needs to be defined (e.g. transport, health, infrastructure, economy, environment, water, ecology etc.) in order to facilitate a good standard for evaluation</li> <li>Defining the scope of the project will help to identify the right funding programme, respectively the most appropriate measure of funding programmes</li> <li>Only by creating a “win-win” situation can forces of both partners be joined efficiently</li> <li>Does the topic also match the needs of the neighbouring region?</li> </ul>



## Administration and technical coordination issues

Matter		Details	Background information
<b>Timing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be aware of the submission deadline for the project application</li> <li>▪ Consider the anticipated project lifetime</li> <li>▪ Mind the lifecycle of EU funding programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the timing feasible for setting up a consortium and identifying the (match) funding?</li> <li>▪ Are the expectations concerning the project implementation realistic in relation to the lifetime of the project?</li> <li>▪ Which already existing partnerships and networks can be developed further?</li> <li>▪ Does the funding required match the lifecycle of the EU funding programmes?</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational framework conditions</b>	Legal aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the most suitable type of organisation/ legal body for cross-border cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which type of organisation serves the needs of the project and the specific cross-border situation best? The Partnership needs to decide whether or not the cooperation structure has to be equipped with a legal personality. This question is closely related to the tasks foreseen for the entire cooperation. Different solutions are possible. In this respect, also other questions might be relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is it necessary to establish a joint entity?</li> <li>– What added value or benefit would it provide compared with other less formalised forms of cooperation?</li> <li>– Who are the main partners and what competences do they have?</li> <li>– What are the specific objectives of the partners (hidden agenda)?</li> <li>– What types of legal entities are available to all partners and what are the main features?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Who should be represented at the project steering board? An equal representation of both partners is important in order to ensure a sound cooperation</li> <li>▪ Which regional figureheads (if needed at all) should be represented at the project steering board in order to provide an additional impetus?</li> </ul>

Matter		Details	Background information
	Joint office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equal representation of the project partners needs to be ensured</li> <li>▪ Partner organisations to be considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which organisations in the own and the partner region can help to achieve the project objectives?</li> <li>▪ The place where the project office is located can sometimes turn out to be a sensitive question (regional pride and identification plays an important role)</li> <li>▪ Which organisation could possibly host the office?</li> <li>▪ How can the office be financed? A cross-border cooperation administration requires sufficient financing. Costs can be shared, though, between both partner regions and other synergies with other regional bodies are also feasible.</li> </ul>
	general matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Setting up technical (thematic) working and political steering groups may help to deliver concrete results</li> <li>▪ Decide on the working language</li> <li>▪ Set timeframe</li> <li>▪ Agreement on the working procedures</li> <li>▪ Definition of first and initial, but also limited objectives for the project</li> <li>▪ Agree on a common vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The political management structure ensures the political involvement of the key players of the region. This task could be fulfilled by a "Steering Group".</li> <li>▪ The technical working group makes sure the content side of the project will be covered sufficiently. Representatives could be civil servants of the different departments of the project partners, meeting more frequently than the Steering Group and providing support to the politicians. By the means of a technical working group, the process made can be monitored, technical (staff) exchange can be organised and research and meetings can be prepared.</li> <li>▪ Working procedures include for example the agreement on the (rotating) chairmanship, the meeting venues or the frequency of meetings, reports or newsletters.</li> <li>▪ Limit the project and cooperation objectives to make them achievable</li> <li>▪ All partners should try to agree on a common vision as it will provide the framework for all further activities.</li> </ul>
Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CBC requires special skills and experience, i.e. working and thinking in networks is imperative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the staff have the specific regional knowledge, e.g. the language of the partner region, regional decision makers, etc.?</li> <li>▪ What kind of cross-border work experience can be brought in?</li> <li>▪ What kind of personal networks and contacts are available?</li> <li>▪ Staff from both sides of the border needs to form the core implementation team</li> </ul>

Matter	Details	Background information
<b>Financial resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Own match funding needs to be secured</li> <li>Funding from other sources such as EU funding programmes has to be identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Own financial contributions need to be secured also in the long run (cash flow) and links towards the regional budgets need to be identified (budget will be needed to cover i.a. staff time, overheads, travels costs and costs for technical equipment)</li> <li>Project costs will never be covered at 100%. Hence own funding will always be required. Experience has shown that projects should not be initiated and EU funding asked for only for the sake of money. EU funding can always only provide an additional incentive.</li> </ul>
<b>Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Double-check eligibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The objectives of the project need to match the objectives of the funding programme as much as possible</li> <li>What kind of project consortium is expected by the funding authority?</li> <li>Which countries are eligible (EU member States, Candidate Countries, third countries etc.)?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check grant rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which grant rate does the funding programme offer?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the exact scope of the funding programme and its priorities for cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What exactly is the scope of the relevant funding programmes? Does it fit the project and its objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>Getting and providing information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify contacts needed to push the project idea and the application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the programme provide contact persons in close proximity?</li> <li>Who can be contacted for general and specific queries?</li> <li>Where is the managing authority located?</li> <li>Who should be informed or should (carefully) be lobbied for additional support for the project?</li> </ul>
<b>Working together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consortium agreement (and other agreements, e.g. co-financing statement, subsidy contract)</li> <li>Contingency plans</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Dissemination</li> <li>Evaluation</li> <li>Quality control (internal and</li> </ul>	<p>Working together also requires a specific set of tools ensuring a sound implementation. The tools will provide a legal and reliable basis for each partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint Convention (other partnership agreements) should for example address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The joint aims and responsibilities of the partners and their mutual obligations</li> <li>Funding</li> <li>Distribution of resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Matter	Details	Background information
	<p>external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Justification towards money lender</li> <li>▪ Reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Financial liability</li> <li>– Duration of the project</li> <li>– Disputes and penalties</li> <li>– Financial Management structure</li> <li>– Reporting obligations and related deadlines to be met</li> <li>– Working languages</li> <li>– Problem solving means</li> <li>▪ Ongoing project evaluation ensures a constant comparison against specific target indicators</li> <li>▪ By the means of quality control, the project's achievements can be measured against its overall objectives and aims</li> <li>▪ Sound dissemination tools such as websites and a professional cooperation with the media help to achieve the project objectives and to gain regional awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Afterlife of the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long-term strategic view and aims</li> <li>▪ Follow-up projects</li> <li>▪ Evaluation of achievements</li> </ul>	<p>For follow-up projects it might be helpful to assess the impact the project made. Politicians often need hard facts to be presented to the wider public in order to sustain ongoing support.</p>

## Cross-border cooperation partners

Level	Details	Background information
Partner/neighbouring region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain general information</li> </ul>	<p>Knowing the potential partner region is of utmost importance. This includes several aspects such as culture, language, administrative structure, etc.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of contacts are already in place with the neighbouring region?</li> <li>Key data concerning the partner region., i.e. size, economic situation/ inhabitants</li> <li>What are the strengths and weaknesses of the neighbouring country?</li> <li>What is the preferred language?</li> <li>Who are the right contact persons for administrative and institutional matters?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain specific information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of specific fiscal and legal framework conditions need to be considered?</li> <li>Which are the specific laws and regulations (e.g. on water, energy, civil protection)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify points both partners have in common or that are shared anyway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which technical assets, e.g. infrastructure such as train tracks, motorways, business parks etc. that are used by both partner regions and could hence provide a good area for cooperation?</li> <li>Which social aspects such as history or culture could offer common denominators?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific differences constituting potential barriers</li> </ul>	<p>For a sound cross-border cooperation it is, however, also important to identify and anticipate the potential stumbling stones already upfront, i.e. the areas where barriers can potentially occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural differences</li> <li>Different strategic and political aims</li> <li>Different ways of working</li> <li>Different administrative structures</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Historical issues</li> </ul>

## 9. Conclusions – “Step by step towards win-win”

### Lessons learnt from “Change on Borders”

Fortunately, the meaning of borders is nowadays not anymore limited to their barrier function, but they are also seen as “bridges, resources and symbols of identity” (O’Dowd, 2003: 14). The further development of border regions is therefore **a key factor to fostering European economic integration and social cohesion**. Considerable progress has been made there during the past few years since the introduction of the single market, the economic and monetary union and last but not least also thanks to cross-border cooperation and regional development programmes.

Within the framework of the Regional Framework Operation “Change on Borders”, **for the first time ever 25 European border regions worked together** by means of smaller specific and Sub-theme Working Groups. Subsequently a huge number of transferable examples and tangible results were delivered. Several pilot projects brought new insights in different fields of cross-border cooperation. By the means of sub-projects, workshops, regular meetings, websites, thematic networks, site visits, expert exchange, reports, handbooks and studies, the further integration of cross-border cooperation structures was fostered and new knowledge gained and communicated into the regional administrative structures of the partner regions. Despite the fact that every cross-border cooperation project has its own specific character, many theme- and topic-specific recommendations and also a number of general recommendations were drawn from the RFO “Change on Borders”, among others:

- Cross-border regions are advised to collect information about the neighbouring region to be clear about the strengths and weaknesses of all partners involved. This helps to define areas of mutual interest to identify **“Win-Win”** situations.
- **Political commitment** should be sought and a sufficient budget has to be secured in advance.
- All partners are expected to set their own targets and an experienced project **leadership** should be put in place. The individual commitment from within the project but also externally (politicians) should be secured.

All partners stated jointly that cooperation just for the sake of receiving EU-funding will not achieve sustainable results as the cooperation would only happen for the duration of the funding period. The conclusions drawn from the RFO “Change on Borders” were developed with the view both at internal and external borders of the European Union.

### Limitations and potentials of cross-border cooperation

Yet, **limitations** can be observed too. Due to the nature of EU funding programmes and their focus on public sector authorities, networking activities in border regions are often characterised by the **absence of the private sector** and the domination of public sector authorities, i.e. federal ministries, municipalities, public agencies, cities and universities. The success in terms of also stimulating private sector involvement is still limited. Furthermore, tangible and practical results of cross-border cooperation in terms of the development of joint land-use plans, common urban strategies or the coordination of tourism has also proven elusive. Cooperation in practice often means that collaboration is constraint by **complex regional governance** (involving local, regional, cross-border, federal and national authorities), insufficient staff and financial resources, mismatched competences and conflicts on staff allocations **and a deficit of mutual trust** resulting in the duplication of efforts and a general lack of success.

**“Win-win”  
through a clear  
analysis of  
strengths and  
weaknesses**

**Political  
commitment is  
vitaly needed**

**Leadership and  
clear targets**



Regional politicians very often focus on hard and physical results such as roads, rail links, bridges and business parks while neglecting the importance of soft measures supporting cultural cohesion and understanding, but also mutual respect. In the past, EU funding programmes were often lacking co-ordination mechanisms between different funding sources and the number of small scale co-operation projects was too small. Due to a limited knowledge of EU funding mechanisms, the involvement of local and regional authorities in cooperation activities provided much room for improvement and requires **support to capacity-building among local and regional authorities**.

The funding available for **European Territorial Cooperation** for the current EU budget period (2007-2013) amounts to € 8.72 bn, i.e. about one per cent of the total EU budget for 2007-2013 which amounts to € 864.3 bn. Although the absolute figures have increased, the tasks ahead are also immense, considering European disparities and the challenges arising from European integration. Therefore, without INTERREG funding being embedded in a comprehensive and joint cross-border development strategy, the danger may exist that these funds are only an additional component of border-dependent resources existing anyway without reaching their potential in helping border regions to compete within the Single Market and to overcome still existing disadvantages caused by their often peripheral position. Hence, in particular in border regions, priority should be given to actions which contribute to the increase of living standards as these areas still face severe challenges. Cross-border cooperation in practice is still very often characterised by rather abstract terms such as clusters, districts, networks, trust, transaction costs, learning, embeddedness, cooperation and alliances, and its importance is therefore hard to convey to the wider public.

Cross-border cooperation is usually a **long-term exercise** and thus changes can not be expected to happen overnight. It requires the ability to combine historical developments with strategies for the future and has to be process-oriented: "Step by step towards win-win". Usually, the following steps can be observed when working cross-border: **contact, attraction, interaction, transaction, relationship and success** (van Houtum, 1998).

On the other hand, cross-border cooperation clearly does have also a very **positive impact** on the development of mutual strategies and regional identities spanning borders. Cross-border cooperation may not only strengthen the cultural and economic integration, but it also **foster and support the (re)development of regional structures**. Stronger cross-border links in turn mean diminished spatial distances and social reserves providing the enhanced opportunity for local exchange and mobility with regard to many daily needs.

These developments can happen more genuinely the more **historic, cultural or linguistic links** towards the respective neighbouring region are still or already existing. In order to ensure a successful cooperation approach, **all regional stakeholders need to be involved** and all different aspects of borders and their regions need to be acknowledged and taken into account, i.e. culture, history, language, economic situation, etc.

One of the main preconditions for successful cross-border cooperation and interregional networking is **voluntariness** based on a reliable cooperation framework and the partners' willingness and capacity to manage the programme, and notably to establish a system of joint management responsibility. Successful cross-border cooperation requires the **partners' knowledge** and capacity to develop and implement project proposals and the national level's support.

**European  
funding for vast  
challenges**

**Long-term  
strategies  
support  
successful  
strategies**

**Strong regional  
identities through  
cross-border  
cooperation**

**Connecting  
history with the  
future**

**Support from the  
national level**

## Outlook towards the future

Despite all its achievements and the obvious benefits, cross-border cooperation still needs **enhancement and continuous political and regional support**. Especially with regard to the successful integration of the new EU Member States, cooperation alongside borders remains crucially important, in particular to bridge the economic disparities still existing in the European Union.

Towards many of these questions, the RFO “**Change on Borders**” has gained a vast amount of highly valuable experience and knowledge. New regional partnerships were built, reliable networks were created and specific platforms of experts were initiated.

Therefore, all “**Change on Borders**” partners are united in their view that the presented cooperation has widely opened up a door towards an even more intense and continuous approach on cross-border cooperation. All partner regions hope that the experiences presented in this manual will be of use to all those who would like to learn more about the probably only way to unite Europe on its road towards peaceful understanding and future-oriented collaboration – **teamwork, partnership and regional cooperation**.



**Fig. 13 “Change on Borders” partners at the Annual Conference in Krems/Austria<sup>27</sup>**

Düsseldorf, Germany, October 2007

<sup>27</sup> Source : Change on Borders

## 10. Annex

### Maps on European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013

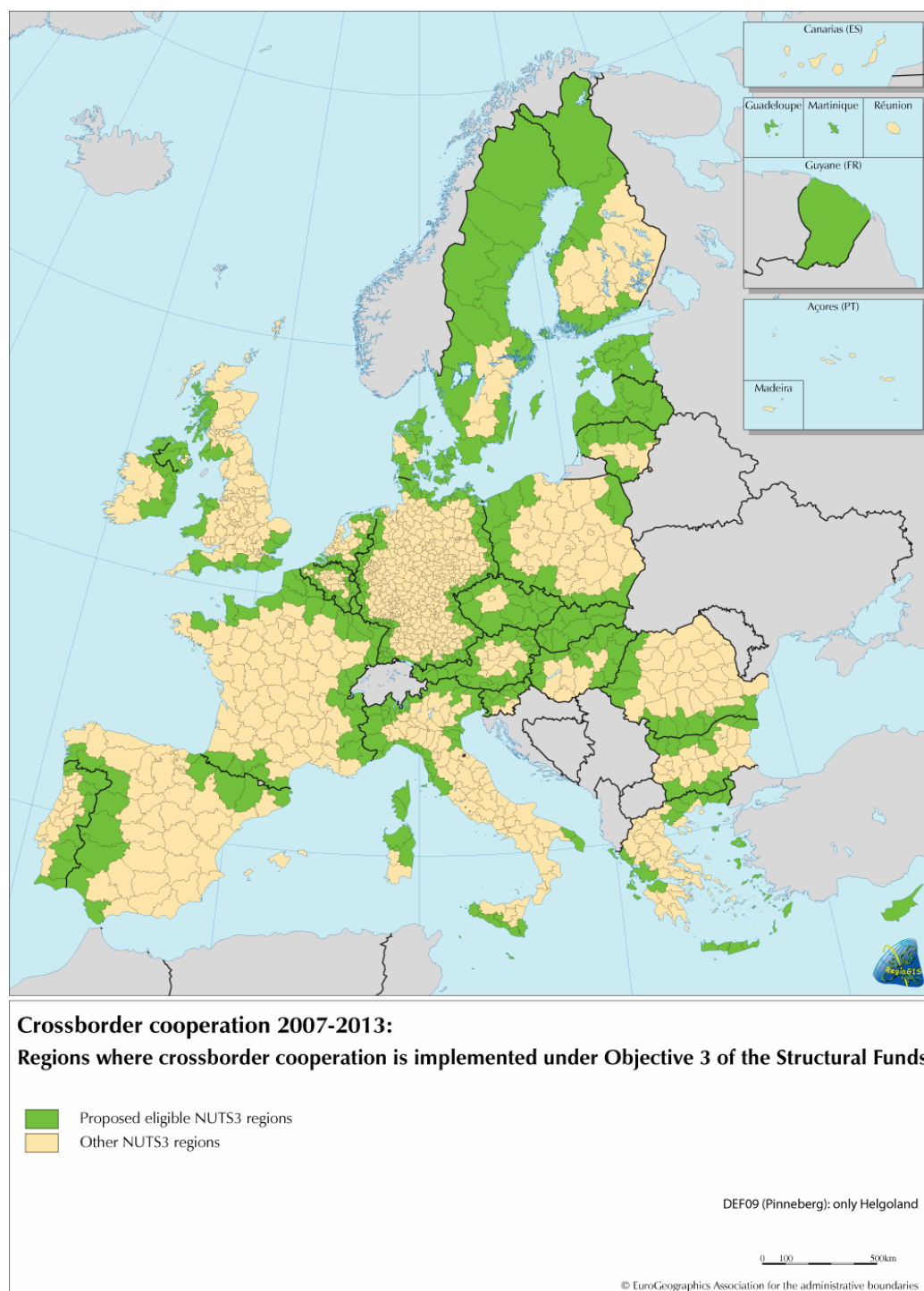
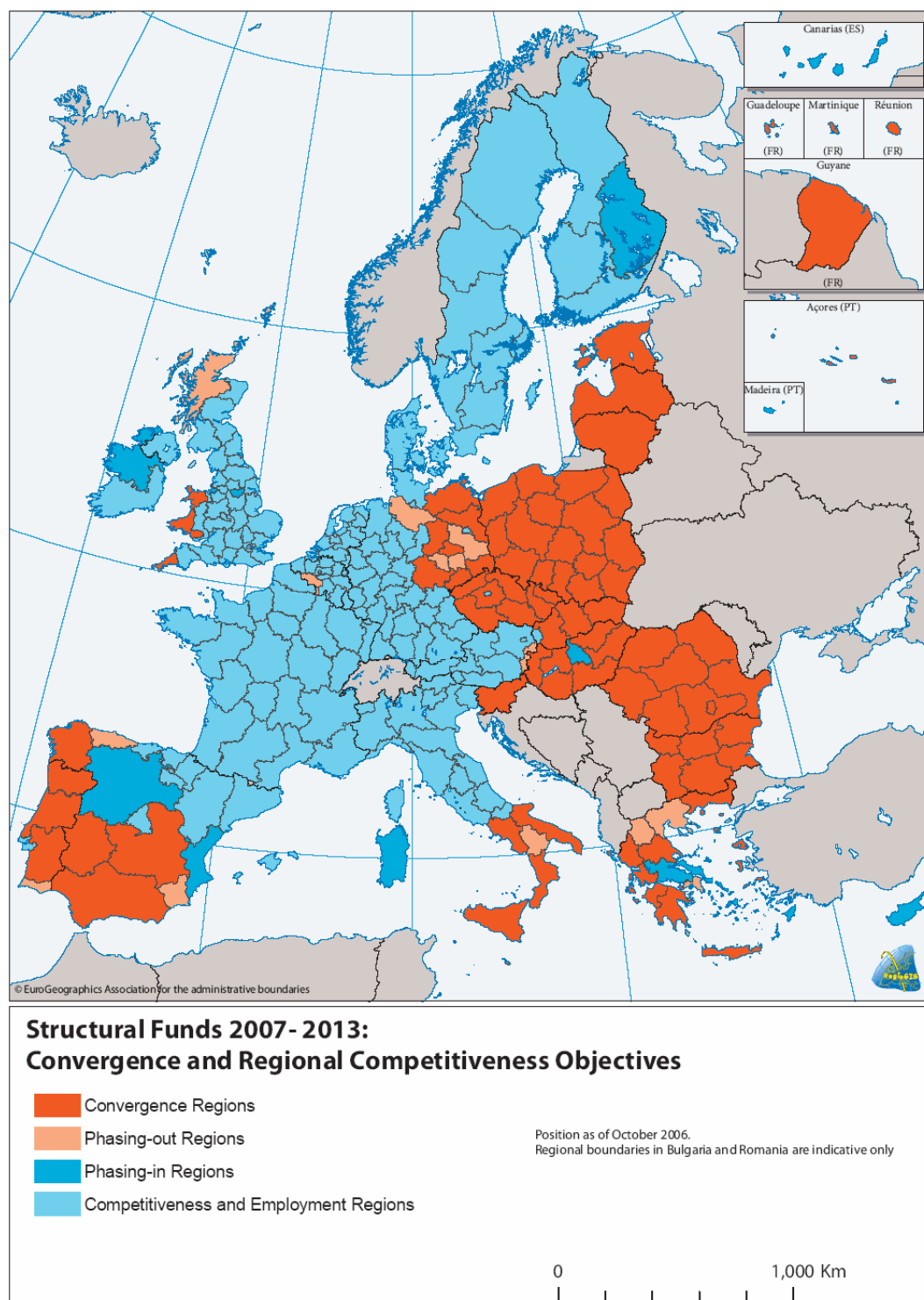


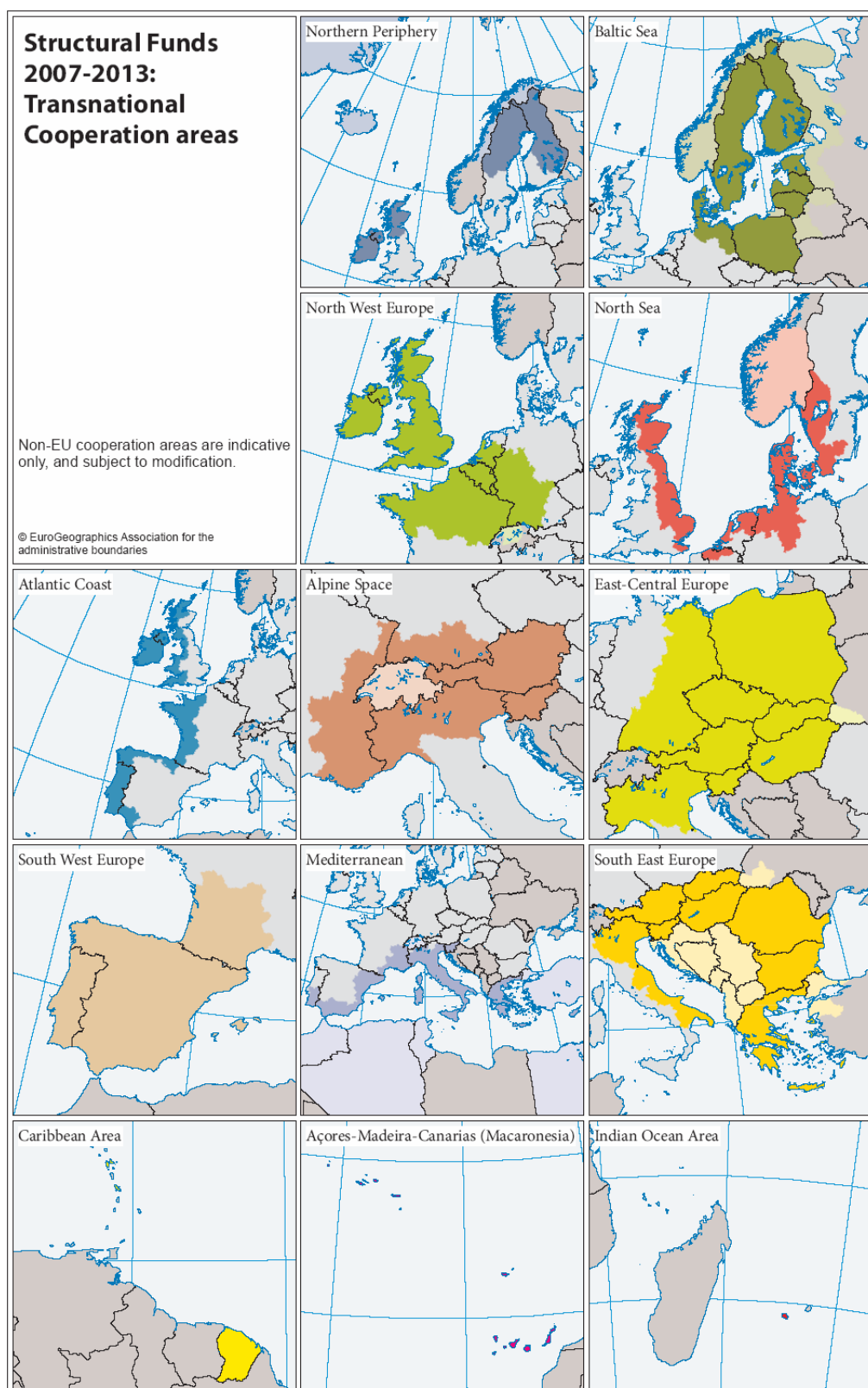
Fig. 14: Cross-border cooperation 2007-2013<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Source: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)



**Fig. 15: Structural Funds 2007 2013, Convergence and Regional Competitiveness Objectives<sup>29</sup>**

<sup>29</sup> Source: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

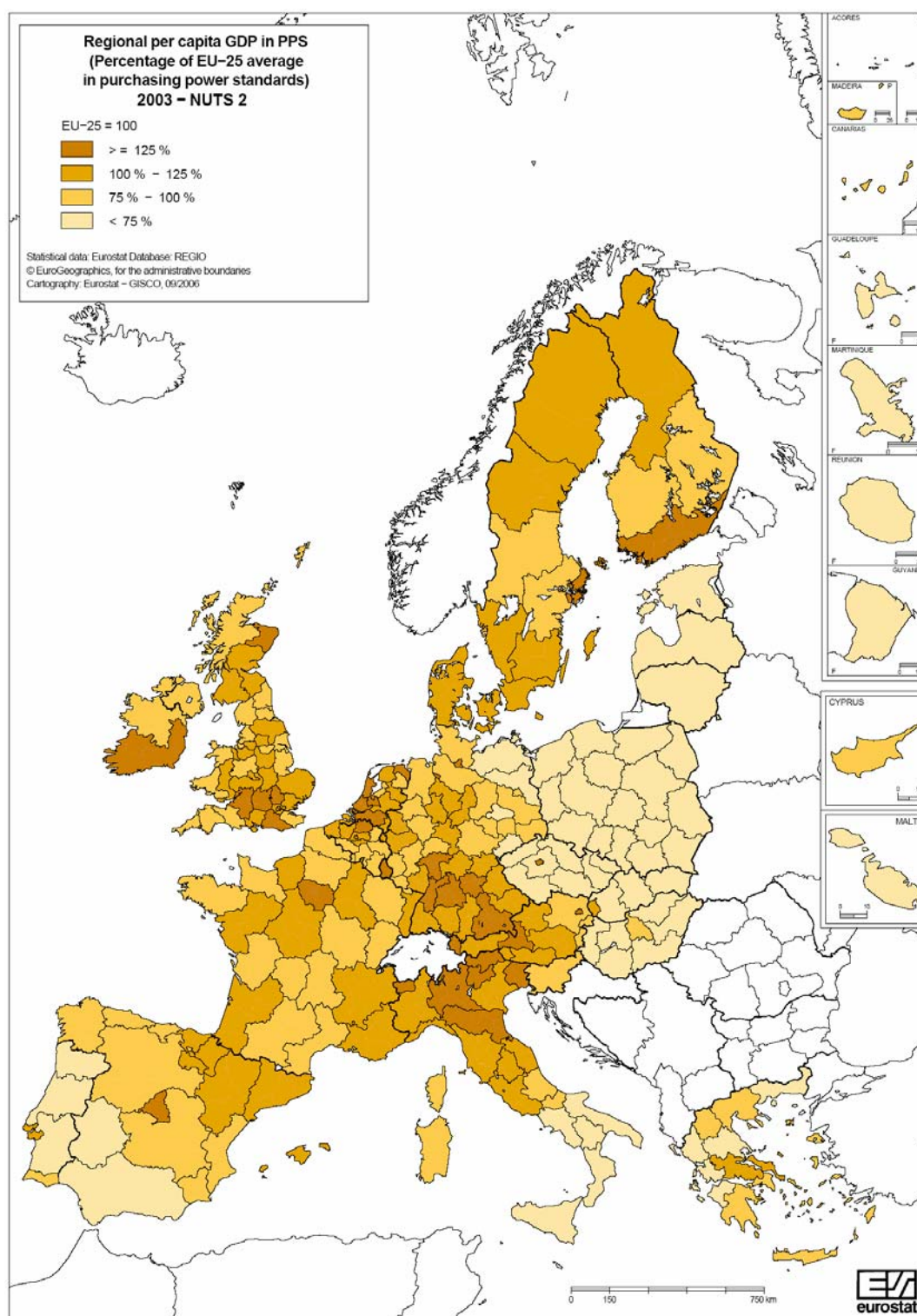


**Fig. 16: Structural Funds 2007-2013: Transnational Cooperation areas<sup>30</sup>**

<sup>30</sup> Source: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

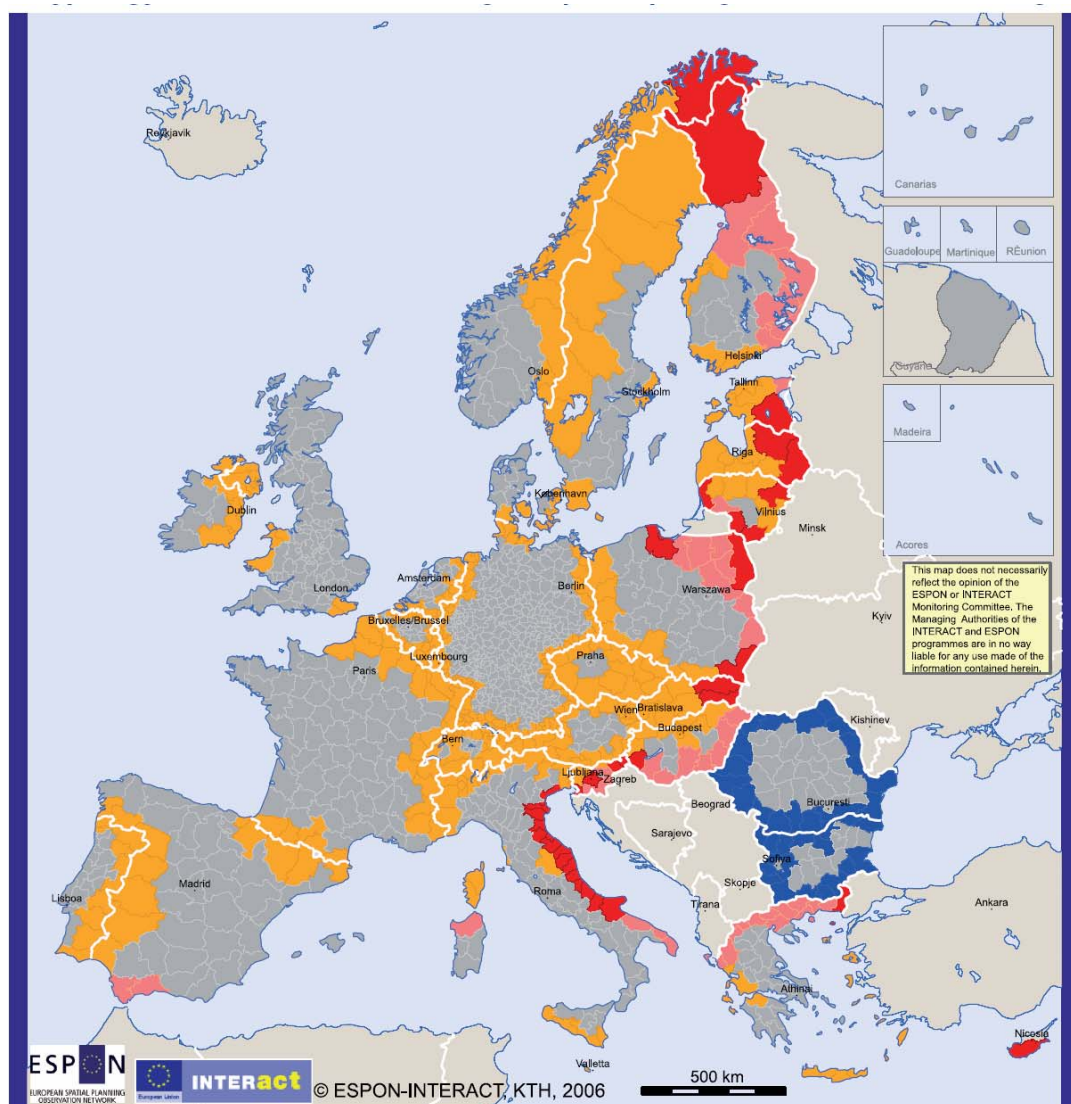


## Maps on European key data



**Fig. 17: European Union GDP per capita in 2003<sup>31</sup>**

<sup>31</sup> Source: Eurostat



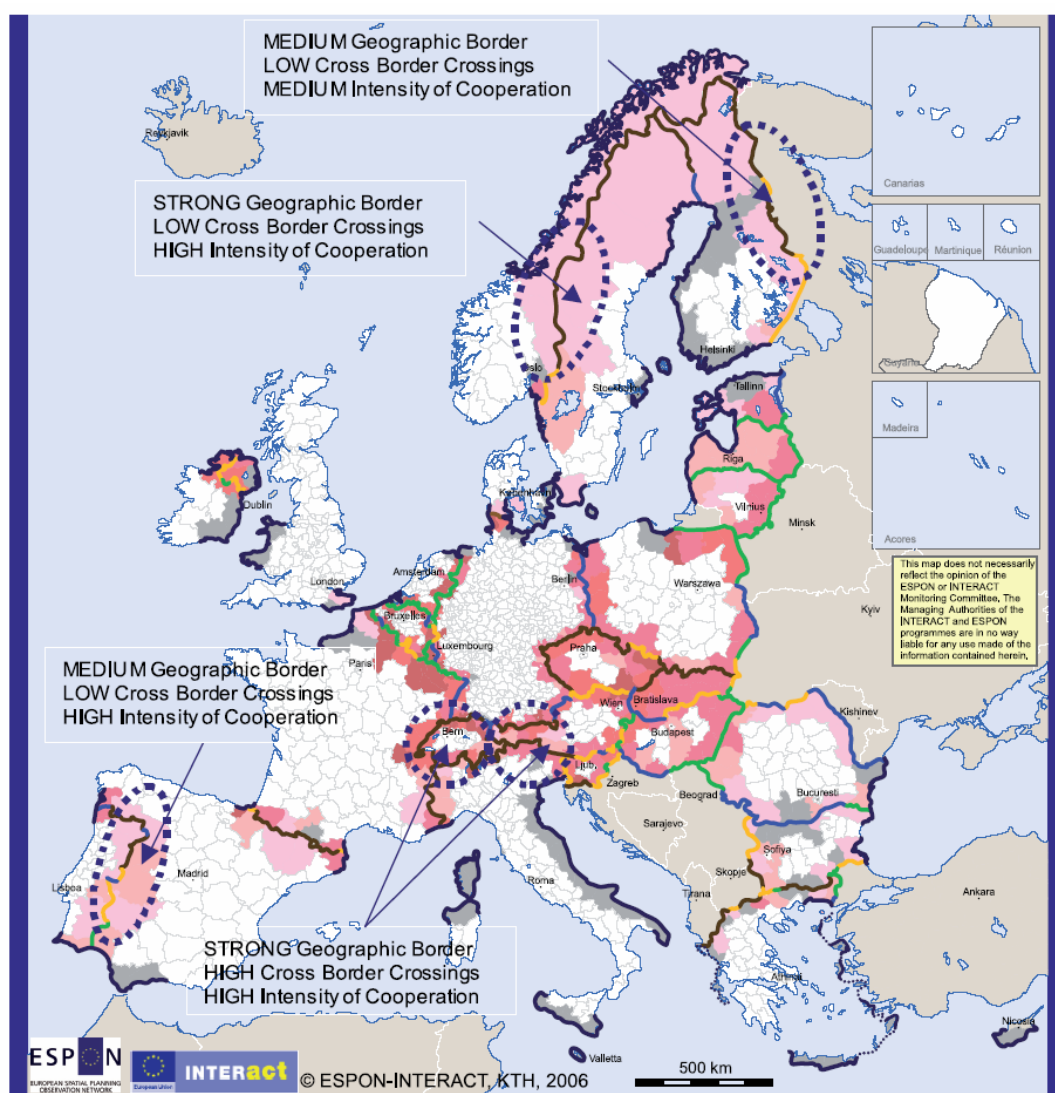
© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

Source: KTH, Border regions Database, 2006

- Non participants in INTERREG III A Programmes
- Internal Border: completely within EU 27
- External Border: Borders with non EU 27
- Internal & External Border: mixed borders with EU 27 and non EU27
- Accession Countries

**Fig. 18: Typology of border regions in NUTS3 regions participating in INTERREG IIIA programmes<sup>32</sup>**

<sup>32</sup> Source: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)



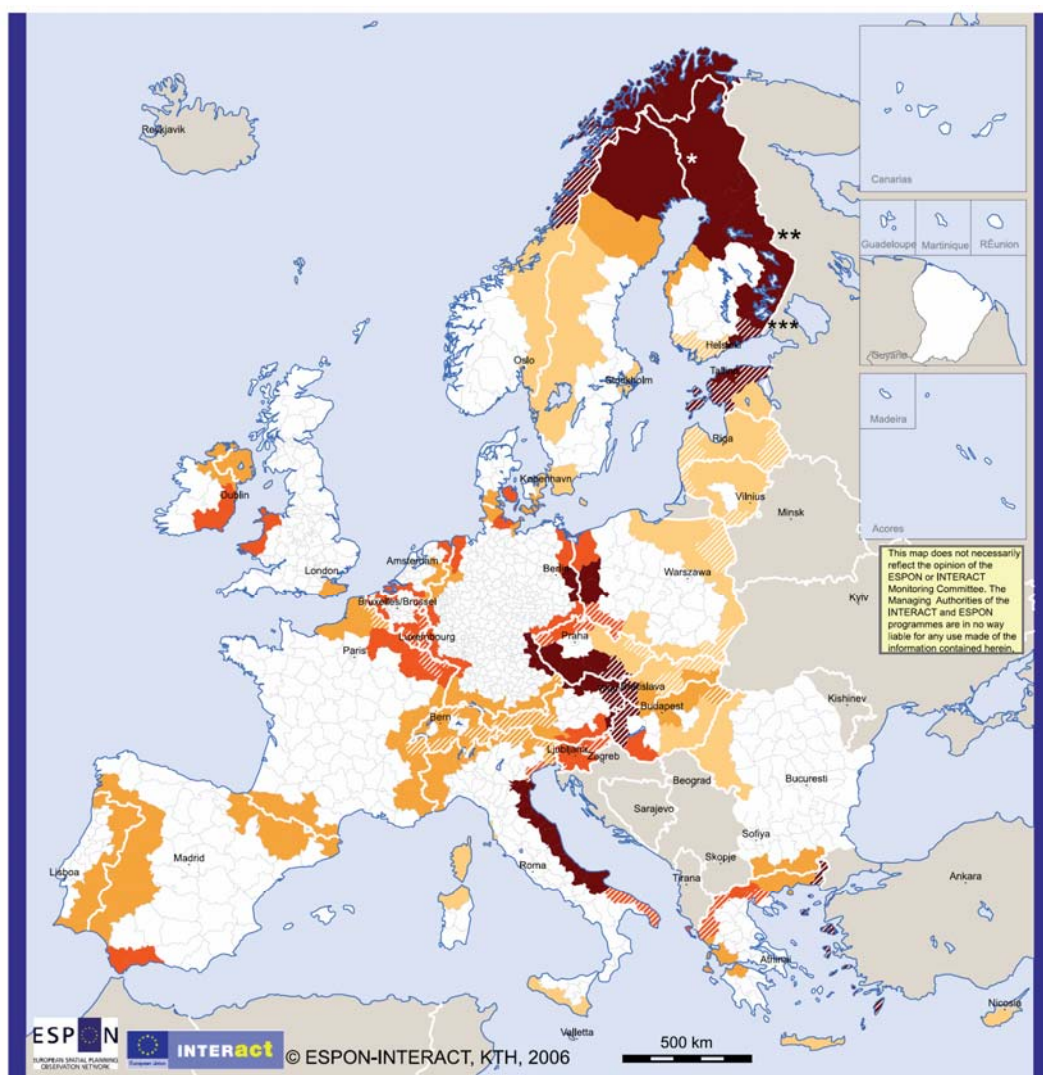
© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

Source: KTH, Land crossings in border regions Database (2006) for density of accessibility and location of rivers and green areas. Nordregio 2004/DG Regio for location of mountains.

**Fig. 19: Analysis of geographic type of border of NUTS3 regions plus density of accessibility by land (roads and rail crossings per 100km) in border regions across EU 27<sup>33</sup>**

<sup>33</sup> Source: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)





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Source: KTH, Cross Border Regions Database (2006) for identification of border regions  
Economic data for EU25 and Candidate Countries from EUROSTAT, 2003; for Norway and Switzerland from National Statistics Offices, 2003

Economic disparities, based on Euro-per-inhabitant as percentage of EU 25 average, 2003

- Non border regions
- Areas without significant disparities
- Areas with Low levels of disparities
- Areas with High levels of disparities
- Areas with Very High levels of disparities
- NUTS 3 regions included in more than one INTERREG IIIA Programme

\* INTERREG IIIA Nord:  
Programme area includes Murmansk, Russia

\*\* INTERREG IIIA Euregio Karelia:  
Programme area includes Karelian Republic

\*\*\* INTERREG IIIA South East Finland - Russia  
Programme area includes Leningrad Oblast and St. Petersburg Oblast, Russia.

**Fig. 20: Level of disparities between areas of INTERREG IIIA programmes approximated to NUTS3 regions<sup>34</sup>**

<sup>34</sup> Source: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

## The RFO Main Partner regions

**Table 2: The “Change on Borders” partner regions**

1.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany	DE
2.	South Aegean Region	GR
4.	Region of Navarra	ES
5.	Regional Council of Andalusia	ES
7.	Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology	DE
8.	Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia	IT
9.	Office of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria	AT
10.	Office of the Provincial Government of Upper Austria	AT
11.	Province of Gelderland	NL
12.	Province of Limburg	NL
13.	Province of Overijssel	NL
14.	Regional Council of North Karelia - East Finland	FI
15.	Saxon State Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour	DE
16.	County Administrative Board of Värmland	SE
17.	Ministry of Economy, Employment and Transport of Lower Saxony	DE
18.	Marshall's Office in Lublin (Lubelskie Voivodship)	PL
19.	Government Office of Republic of Slovenia for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy	SI
20.	Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau	LT
21.	Union of border and cross-border regions of the region of East Macedonia-Thrace	GR
22.	Regio Basiliensis / Northwest Switzerland	CH
23.	Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol	IT
25.	Euroregion Nisa	CZ
26.	Regional Council of Alsace	FR
27.	Local Government of Hajdú-Bihar County	HU
28.	The Rhone-Alps Regional Council	FR



Main Partners of the INTERREG IIIIC-RFO “Change on Borders”  
 ■ Main Partners ■ Other regions

(note: due to administrative technical reasons the total numbering does not correspond with the actual number of partners)

**Fig. 21 Overview on the main partners of “Change on Borders”<sup>35</sup>**

<sup>35</sup> Source: [www.change-on-borders.net](http://www.change-on-borders.net)

## The Change of Borders Sub-Working Groups - summaries

### "Risk & Innovation"

The globalisation processes in industry and research can cause serious risks that can hardly be adequately managed or prevented by single regions on their own. Problems related to water and environment pollution, nuclear plants, spread of viruses and illegal immigration don't stop at the border, but also influence the decision making and policies in the neighbouring states. Therefore, it is indispensable to co-ordinate measures across borders and launch common prevention activities. In order to raise the awareness for the exigency of a cross-border co-operation in terms of risk management, to improve the existing risk management and information systems as well as to get informed about best practices and methodologies in other regions, the five SWG partners worked in an interregional network providing the opportunity to exchange experiences and elaborated new approaches and ideas.

Lead Participant: Chamber of Commerce of Seville (ES)

Main partner regions involved: Region of Andalucía (ES), Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (IT), East-Macedonia Thrace (GR)

### "eHEALTH" – E-Health and Telemedicine in cross-border hospital cooperation and health care

The lack of interoperability between the health-care systems in the European Union is still an important obstacle to the Integration process and especially obvious in border regions. The provision of cross-border health care is in particular a challenge for regions with intensive cross-border patient mobility. Information- and Communication Technologies can help health care providers to facilitate data transfer and medical communication and thus reduce border-related barriers. The four partner regions sought to explore the possibilities of these so called "e-Health" applications across borders and exchanged experience on the partners' needs, problems and solutions in that field. As a result, good practices and recommendations on how differences in health care systems, communication technology and legislation can be overcome were produced.

Lead Participant: Province of Limburg (NL)

Main partner regions involved: Province of Limburg (NL), North-Rhine Westphalia (DE), Regio Basiliensis (CH), Lower Austria (AT)

### Working in Networks (WIN)" - Knowledge and Technology Transfer in Cross Border Life Science Regions

Life Science is an interdisciplinary and growing sector of the European Economy. Several regions are fostering the cooperation of different stakeholders of that sector in so called "Bio-Regions or Bio-clusters". However, border regions are still facing similar challenges in this context: differences in cultures, languages and regulatory frameworks are examples of questions the four partner regions have to deal with. Therefore, the partnership aimed at creating a network of cross-border operating Life Science regions which jointly elaborated current and new practices. Furthermore, the sub-project sought to facilitate the networking within and between the border regions und fostered the development of labour markets in border regions. This new network combined existing networks of Life Science regions to boost a further exchange of knowledge and expertise between relevant stakeholders of this sector and explore synergies.

Lead Participant: Upper Austrian Research GmbH (AT)

Main partner regions involved: Bavaria (DE), Regio Basiliensis (CH), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Province of Limburg (NL)



### **"MEB" - Multicultural Education on Borders**

Multicultural education is an important means to improve contacts and mutual understanding between citizens on both sides of the border. However, national policies to promote multiculturalism are often too general and not adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of border regions. The three regions involved in this sub-project had the aim to foster multiculturalism in their regions and therefore searched for models to develop concrete strategies and actions for multicultural education. The project partners looked at children and the youth as a key target group to foster multiculturalism. Their early involvement in cross-border cooperation activities is crucial to raise awareness of and increase knowledge about the culture of the neighbour country and establish good neighbourhood relations. The purpose of the sub-project was thus to exchange experience on working methods and tools to improve multicultural education and to better involve children and young people in cross-border cooperation activities. The project partners therefore created a new kind of local partnership between schools and stakeholders of cross-border cooperation for example by drafting material for multicultural education and organising periodic events in schools.

Lead Participant: Regional Council of North Karelia (FI)

Main partner regions involved: East-Macedonia Thrace (GR), Province of Bozen / Bolzano (IT), North Karelia / East Finland

### **"Labour Market" - Labour market move possibilities across borders in Europe**

Border regions along external borders are still facing a lot of new challenges and opportunities through the EU-enlargement. Changes in the labour market situation and the labour mobility are also questions that are associated with the European Integration process and which the border regions have to deal with. However, a lot needs to be done to explore new opportunities and to develop a functioning cross-border labour market at external borders, where often very little information is available about the employment opportunities, working conditions or legal requirements at the other side of the border. The partnership – consisting of three partner regions with different experience in implementing cross-border labour markets – sought to analyse the cross-border labour market trends and developments in particular at EU-external borders with the aim to identify barriers and opportunities. Furthermore, the partnership raised awareness of and informed about the labour market possibilities on the other side of the border and thus hope to stimulate cross-border cooperation and employment opportunities especially for young people.

Lead Participant: Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau, PA (LT)

Main partner regions involved: Nemunas Euroregion (LT), Regio Basiliensis (CH), Andalucía (ES)

### **"Knowledge Roadmap" - Cross-border co-operation for knowledge based development: Towards a Roadmap**

Cities are increasingly playing a crucial role in creating the knowledge economy and reaching the targets of the "Lisbon strategy" to develop the European Union into the most competitive economy of the world until 2010. With scientific support, the sub-project partnership was in particular looking at the potentials and opportunities of border regions in this respect and aimed at fostering the knowledge-based development of the border cities. The project built upon an international study and analysed and discussed the creation of cross-border partnerships in order to strengthen the knowledge economy in the partner regions. Based on the results, the project developed a practical "Roadmap" for politicians and other stakeholders, which can help to improve existing linkages and explore new opportunities for cooperation. Furthermore, the partner cities exchanged know-how and transferred experience on knowledge related development approaches

Lead Participant: City of Aachen (DE)

Main partner regions involved: Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Andalucía (ES)

### **“Rhine Bicycle Path” - Communication and Marketing concept for the Rhine from the Spring to the Estuary**

From its spring in Switzerland to its estuary delta in the Netherlands, the river Rhine is a central and characteristic feature of the cantons, states and provinces through which it flows. Furthermore it is a natural border between countries such as France and Germany or Switzerland with a large potential for tourism activities. Regional bicycle paths have been developed in almost all regions alongside the Rhine as well as across borders; however, joint qualitative standards and marketing strategies are missing until now.

The partnership developed a joint communication and marketing concept linking existing cross-border bicycle paths. It aimed at setting common standards for a joint bicycle path along the Rhine in the future so that it will be possible to book a bicycle tour alongside the Rhine from its spring to its estuary delta on one continuous bicycle path.

Lead Participant: Euregio Rhine-Waal (DE)

Main partner regions involved: Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Alsace (FR), Basiliensis (CH), *Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate (DE); Utrecht (NL), South-Holland (NL) [associated partners]*

### **“Trans-EA” - Efficiency assessment of cross-border transport infrastructure**

National infrastructure often has the highest standard of formation around the economic centres of a country. In contrast, the infrastructure in border regions is usually less developed. But especially at the border, infrastructure is nowadays of vital importance for cross-border cooperation. The economic competitiveness in times of globalisation is dependent on the mobility of traffic and goods from one country into another. In this context not only the available technical facilities but also the quality and efficiency of logistical procedures at the borders is important for the cross-border flow of traffic. The experts within this sub-project analysed the infrastructural needs of frontiers and its effects on the border region. In this way, they discovered the opportunities (e.g. economic growth) as well as the disadvantages (e.g. environmental problems) of the different technical facilities for the respective areas. The results will be useful for example in the context of regional decision-making and planning processes and they should support in particular the development of European Corridors. As a result of the sub-project, a transferable methodology for an efficiency assessment for cross-border infrastructure was drafted.

Lead Participant: Saxon State Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, Saxony (DE)

Main partner regions involved: Saxony (DE), Lubelskie (PL), North Karelia / East Finland

### **“MENT” - The Memory Environment and Tradition trails on Borders**

Tourism is becoming more and more important in the service-based economy. In rural areas, in particular, the efforts are increasing to base the economy on tourism. For border regions, which usually do not have a high concentration of companies, the tourist market is seen as an important factor for regional development and source of income. The key issue of the project was to work out a method and strategy which helps border regions to exploit cross-border cooperation in order to develop a common tourist product. Tourists should be attracted by the special features of the region no matter on which side of the border they are to be found. It was considered important that the offers reflect the characteristics of the region. In this context Memory (memorials of the past), Nature (natural sites and landscapes) and Tradition (multicultural environment & heritage) are the key points of focus in cross-border tourism development. By working together, regions on both sides of the border can offer more attractions and benefit from a common marketing strategy that combines local and regional resources.

Lead Participant: POLIS - Network of Municipalities Greece-Turkey-Bulgaria, East Macedonia-Thrace (GR) / South Aegean Region (GR)

Main partner regions involved: Lubelskie (PL), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT), Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)

### **“Y4I”- Youth for Innovation**

Innovation, competitiveness and employment are on top of the agenda of the European Union and are seen as key to the further development of the Community. With respect to these targets, many European border regions are in an unfavourable situation. Efficient infrastructure as well as education and research institutions are rather thinly scattered, the structure of enterprises is characterised by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with little international orientation. The economic and social capacities are less developed and fewer work forces are available, on which the regional (cross-border) development could be based.

This sub-project tackled this problem at its roots: the development of suitable measures in the field of training and education for young people before entering their professional life appears to be promising in order to increase regional competence. Therefore the project exchanged experience and know-how on the cross-border utilisation of schools and universities as instruments for regional development. The partners developed training and education tools to foster intensive cross-border cooperation with emphasis on the “Lisbon objectives” of growth, competitiveness and employment. The overall capacity for innovation in border regions was promoted by establishing cross-border school networks and developing a set of tools (checklists, guides, manuals etc.) as well as a modular system of “cross-border innovation curricula”. The results have been applied through the implementation of innovative “mini-R&D” projects of pupils in order to test the tools.

Lead Participant: City of Oldenburg, Lower Saxony (DE)

Main partner regions involved: Lower Saxony (DE), South Aegean Region (GR), Lubelskie (PL), Andalucía (ES), North Karelia / East Finland

### **“B2S2B” - New concepts and processes for the whole innovation value chain in a cross-border environment**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the economic development of regions. It is in particular their ability to react flexible to customer needs and their potential of being innovative that makes them so important. In the last couple of years, it has become obvious that the closeness to science institutions can be crucial to improve an innovation process. But border regions are often far from the research centres and from customer markets; indeed borders are still considerable barriers for economic development. These barriers should be overcome since in many cases science institutions can be found closely at the other side of the border.

This was the reason why experts from seven countries have come together in order to investigate the possibilities of building up integrated SMEs and knowledge centres in a cross-border context. They took a close look at effective models throughout Europe to find out the best way to bring SMEs and science institutions into contact, especially for transferring the results into border regions. By disseminating best practices and successful stories in cross-border areas, the participants hope to bridge the knowledge gap and the mental differences.

Lead Participant: Confederazione Nazionale dell’Artigianato e della Piccola e Media Impresa, Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT)

Main partner regions involved: Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT), Navarra (ES), Slovenia (SI), Hajdú-Bihar (HU), Overijssel (NL), Andalucía (ES), Alsace (FR)

### **“River Cross” - Many Rivers to Cross**

Climatic changes already led to an increased risk of flooding in Europe's rivers, as Rhine, Elbe and Danube have shown in the last few years. At many rivers, the concept of "river basin management" has been developed in order to face these challenges through an integrated and interactive water management approach. Especially when border areas share the same river basin, the cooperation between the neighbouring countries is necessary. However cultural differences, differences in perception or organisational barriers often hinder the cooperation and thus an effective cross-border water management. Partners from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Greece have investigated the different exposures to river basin management activities in the participating border regions. In particular, the institutional tuning between cross-border regions is important to be able to solve common river-related problems. As a result RIVERCROSS contributed to solutions for river basin management in cross-border regions by facilitating reflection, information sharing and policy learning about cultural and institutional barriers and opportunities.

Lead Participant:

University of Nijmegen, Province of Gelderland (NL)

Main partner regions involved:

Gelderland (NL), Overijssel (NL), North-Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Lubelskie (PL), East Macedonia-Thrace (GR)

### **“CrossSIS” - Cross-border Spatial Information Systems with High Added Value**

Spatial data and statistics often end at the administrative borders of regions or countries. Up to now, it is very difficult to find data of two countries within one single map. But very often neighbouring regions are working on similar or related themes where joint data would be very beneficial. The aim of the project was to show how spatial data is used in the different regions and to develop an implementation strategy for setting up cross-border Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) or Spatial Information System (SIS) services. The partnership succeeded to improve the application of spatial data in order to facilitate its cross-border utilisation.

Lead Participant: Government of Navarra (ES)

Main partner regions involved: Navarra (ES), Lower Austria (AT), North-Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Gelderland (NL), Overijssel (NL)

### **“SEP” - Strengthening economic potentials at border regions by the means of cross-border business parks**

Border regions are usually perceived as having a peripheral position in the national context. However, seen from a European perspective, they are often centrally located. Therefore, border regions increasingly try to explore new possibilities of economic development associated with the potentials of cross-border cooperation and promotion. Cross-border business parks are one instrument to stimulate the economic development by bringing together advantages of both sides of the border. However, realising a cross-border business park is often not easy. A lot of questions are resulting from different tax systems, legal requirements or planning and building permissions, which have to be solved before a cross-border business park can be successfully realised. Therefore, the project partners from three regions, which are developing or already implementing cross-border business parks, worked together to learn from each. Avoiding already known difficulties and errors in the development of cross-border business parks was a central aim of the partnership.

Lead Participant: Technology Centre in Zittau, Saxony (DE)

Main partner regions involved: Saxony (DE), Euroregion Nisa (CZ), Lower-Saxony (DE)

### **“REGBOUR” - Euregio and New Neighbourhood**

Since the EU-Enlargement, new external borders are shaping the European Union. This also brings along new challenges and cooperation possibilities for the regions located at these new external borders. EU-financial instruments to support the cross-border cooperation along the external borders are in place, but the coordination of the EU-instruments between different EU Member-States and their neighbouring countries has been a major difficulty so far; for example in the development of regional cross-border structures and management practices. Therefore, the five participating regions shared their experiences made at different external borders regarding cross-border cooperation structures and processes and compared best practices to bring innovative regional solutions for cross-border cooperation into a broader discussion. The sub-project focused on institutional and administrative models of cross-border cooperation in light of the "New Neighbourhood programme" set up by the EU, which should help to develop more efficient management structures. The project's outcomes were summarised in a handbook and support both the regional authorities in adapting the "New Neighbourhood programme" and can help the partner regions to effectively prepare future cross-border programmes for the funding period 2007-2013.

The handbook "Putting new neighbourhood into practice" has been published by the SWG "REGBOUR" and elaborated in order to provide basic knowledge to actors involved in cross-border cooperation at the external EU borders and furthermore to give concrete, practical recommendations for future programmes and project implementations. The theoretical part of this handbook briefly summarises the legal framework as well as the Community programmes and instruments whereas the practical part describes the implementation of cross-border cooperation in the participating regions, addressing concrete recommendations for regional authorities and project leaders.

Lead Participant: Regional Council of North Karelia (FI)

Main partner regions involved: North Karelia / East Finland (FI), Lubelskie (PL), East Macedonia-Thrace (GR), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT), Värmland (SE)

### **“LABS” - Language Bridges**

Many border regions are characterised by specific linguistic features like a bi- or even multi-lingual situation. Therefore, multilingualism of the inhabitants is important for mutual understanding as well as for a functioning labour market and in order to facilitate mobility across borders. For the participants of the LABS project it was important to find out more about the advantages and potentials of multilingualism as it is often still considered as a disadvantage and barrier by people and companies not practicing it. The partnership agreed that a multilingual situation should be understood as strength and used as a tool for regional development. But why do some people learn a new language easily, while others struggle? Why do some individuals have no interest in a language, while others become enthusiastic for it? How can the status of a language be elevated? These are the main questions addressed by the researchers involved in the project. Through the exchange of experience and the elaboration of answers to the above-mentioned questions, the project furthermore led to a better cooperation in the field of education in multilingual regions.

The sub-project "Language Bridges" is initiated by the European Academy (EURAC) of Bozen/ Bolzano and dealt with the problem of multilingualism in border regions. It focused on four core topics: motivation for language learning, status of languages, new technologies and better awareness on language learning within the population.

Lead Participant: EURAC, European Academy Bozen/Bolzano (IT)

Main partner regions involved: Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano (IT), Regional Council of Alsace (FR), Lubelskie (PL), Regio Basiliensis (CH), Region of Navarra (ES), East Macedonia-Thrace (GR)



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## Interviewees

The following people were interviewed and consulted (focused interviews) in the course of the development of the present manual:

- All "Change on Borders" Main Partners and Sub-Working Group partners

Extended interviews were carried out with:

- Mrs. Ilka Meisel, Lead Partner, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
- Mrs. Mirjam Witschke, Lead Partner, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
- Mr. Doede Sijtsma, Province of Gelderland, the Netherlands
- Mr. Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secretary General, Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

