

CAPITALISATION THROUGH COORDINATION ACROSS EU FUNDS

Lessons learned from an experimental call for proposals

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DISCLAIMER

This document is a technical input from practitioners, who designed and implemented the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE fourth call for proposals. It does not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission or views from Member States participating in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the end of 2018, Member States of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme (Interreg CE) gave a mandate to the programme Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat to design an experimental call for “capitalisation through coordination”.

The call should encourage beneficiaries to increase the impact of existing transnational cooperation results in central European regions, in coordination with other EU-funded projects. More concretely, the aim was to improve access of regions and cities to excellent research results in order to better address their territorial challenges. Results from projects funded under EU programmes directly managed by the European Commission should be matched with territorially based outputs and results developed by regional and urban stakeholders in Interreg CE in order to improve existing solutions in the regions.

When preparing the call, surveys showed a clear potential for reaping synergies between R&I and Interreg project results. R&I and Interreg stakeholders expressed their high interest in working together and combining results for a stronger take-up at the policy level as well as a broader roll-out to new target groups and territories. However, the surveys also revealed an obvious shortcoming: Despite the expected benefits, stakeholders remain rather passive in seeking coordination pro-actively. They seem to need a deliberate “nudge” like this call to seek and make use of synergies across funds.

The call was opened in March 2019 to Interreg CE beneficiaries and partners from funded projects of other directly managed EU programmes. A specific focus in terms of outreach and support measures was put on coordination with Horizon 2020 and its forerunner Research and Innovation (R&I) Framework Programmes. The preparation of the call was directly supported by the Directorate General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission - Unit RTD.B6 “Common data and knowledge management services”. However, despite this cooperation, availability of well-structured data on results to foster match-making proved to be limited at both ends (DG RTD and Interreg CE) and needs to be addressed.

In December 2019, Interreg CE selected nine projects for funding. In the proposals, R&I and Interreg CE stakeholders convincingly described how existing project outputs and results will be combined and further tailored to territorial needs. An increased impact of existing project results is therefore expected as a result of these projects.

Overall, it can be concluded that the new “capitalisation through coordination” approach developed in this Interreg CE experimental call shows promising potential to effectively strengthen coordination between Interreg programmes and R&I and other EU directly managed programmes for increasing territorial impacts.

Based on the experiences made, the paper presents recommendations for strengthening synergies between Interreg and R&I project results in preparation of the 2021-2027 programming period.

KEY WORDS:

Coordination, synergies, capitalisation, project results, territorial impacts, research & innovation, regional development, transnational cooperation, Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE, Horizon 2020, Framework Programmes

1. FRAMEWORK, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS

The fourth call of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE (Interreg CE) Programme was prepared towards the end of the programming period, when most of the available funds were already allocated to projects. At this stage, the programme Monitoring Committee¹ decided to reserve the remaining funds (up to 8,5 million EUR ERDF) to a fourth experimental call through which to test a new approach to the capitalization of results also in view of the 2021-2027 EU programming period.

In this context, the Managing Authority (MA) and Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Interreg CE Programme and the Directorate General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission (DG RTD) through its Unit RTD.B6, Common data and knowledge management services, undertook a dialogue around the question:

HOW CAN RESULTS OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY INTERREG AND RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (R&I) PROGRAMMES BE JOINTLY EXPLOITED IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR IMPACTS IN THE EUROPEAN REGIONS?

This question stems from a challenge commonly observed during the implementation of Interreg and R&I Framework Programmes: that **the knowledge created by EU funded projects was not fully exploited on the ground**. One reason identified is that R&I results are often not reaching relevant stakeholders in EU regions. Missing communication, coordination, and cooperation between researchers and regional stakeholders fails to put R&I results into practice, and ultimately limits the exploitation of EU funded outputs and the impact of EU funding.

As an outcome of this dialogue, it was recognised that the most appropriate level for strengthening coordination between funds is the project level and that there is a clear potential for reaping synergies between R&I and Interreg project results. Excellence developed within R&I projects could ideally provide valuable inputs to further improve territorially based outputs and results developed by regional stakeholders within Interreg. Regions could therefore more easily exploit R&I results as a key source for addressing local challenges.

At policy level, the idea seemed to match an overarching objective of both Interreg and R&I Framework Programmes, which considered innovation as a pivotal vehicle for bringing Europe back on the path to growth. And crucially for Interreg CE, the conclusions also matched with needs of regional stakeholders in the central Europe area, who expressed their need for creating more synergies between Interreg and R&I programmes in a consultation launched by the programme (see following chapter 2).

On the basis of the above considerations and of the interest shown by stakeholders, the Interreg CE Monitoring Committee decided to launch the programme fourth call for proposals with the aim of **increasing the impact of transnational cooperation in central European regions, by testing a new way of coordination between different EU-funded projects on the ground**. Furthermore, the Interreg CE Monitoring Committee decided to enlarge coordination to all projects funded by EU programmes directly managed by the European Commission, however keeping a focus on R&I projects.

¹ The Interreg CE Monitoring Committee is the programme's main decision-making body and consists of representatives from the following nine Member States: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

In other words, the fourth call was meant to support cities and regions in the practical application of innovative solutions able to respond to their concrete challenges and needs on the ground. The Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy at the European Commission (DG REGIO) welcomed and supported this endeavour of strengthening impacts of Interreg CE through coordination with directly managed EU programmes.

This paper intends to illustrate the experience made so far with the Interreg CE fourth call.

2. NEEDS ANALYSIS: A SYNERGETIC APPROACH

While R&I Framework Programme beneficiaries are looking for ways to diffuse and scale up their research outputs, the Commission undertakes an internal commitment to support beneficiaries in this effort. This springs from a dedicated Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy for R&I results that the Commission is implementing to maximise the value stemming from the R&I Framework Programme and demonstrate its achieved impact. This strategy calls -among others- for synergies with other EU, national and regional R&I policies and initiatives.

In this context, a jointly conceptualised call with Interreg CE was seen as an opportunity to offer an alternative tool for R&I Programme beneficiaries to address potential uptake of results and form new partnerships with regional and inter-regional scope.

At the same time, as the Commission transitions towards a more evidence-based policy and decision making process, the knowledge produced through the R&I Framework Programmes, coupled with the 'acquis' of Interreg CE projects, was seen as an excellent candidate to support this objective at regional level. It would also offer additional input for improving future programming phases of the EU's R&I policy in highlighting ongoing challenges faced by the regions.

2.1 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

To establish the thematic framework for the experimental call in line with needs and challenges of the programme area and regional stakeholders, an analysis has been conducted in preparation of the Interreg CE fourth call. This analysis was aimed at:

- **Identifying the most promising topics** for exploitation;
- **Mapping the interest of Interreg CE beneficiaries** with regard to the exploitation potential of Interreg CE projects and projects funded by other EU instruments, in particular R&I projects funded by Horizon 2020 (H2020) and 7th Framework programme (FP7).

The analysis has been carried out in two steps and combined two methods.

In the first step, an internal desk analysis of the topics tackled by Interreg CE projects funded in previous calls was conducted, considering the following criteria:

- **Thematic relevance** to territorial challenges that are of high importance for central European regions;
- **Critical mass** and **potential for synergies** in order to identify strong thematic clusters of projects tackling a certain topic, often from various and complementary perspectives;
- **Demonstration effect**, considering that projects with investments leverage, pilot actions and policy formulation/innovation focus are more successful in political buy-in, and therefore more promising in terms of long-run sustainability;
- **Potential to uptake R&I results** in order to further enrich, develop and improve exploitation of Interreg CE projects results.

The analysis resulted in the identification of the following, thematically relevant clusters of Interreg CE projects with a potential to exploit R&I results:

- I. Industry 4.0/advanced manufacturing
- II. Social entrepreneurship
- III. Energy efficient renovation of public building in cities
- IV. Low carbon mobility and urban air quality
- V. Climate change adaptation and risk prevention
- VI. Cultural heritage (sites & buildings) at risk
- VII. Accessibility for peripheral and border regions to TEN-T CNC networks/nodes

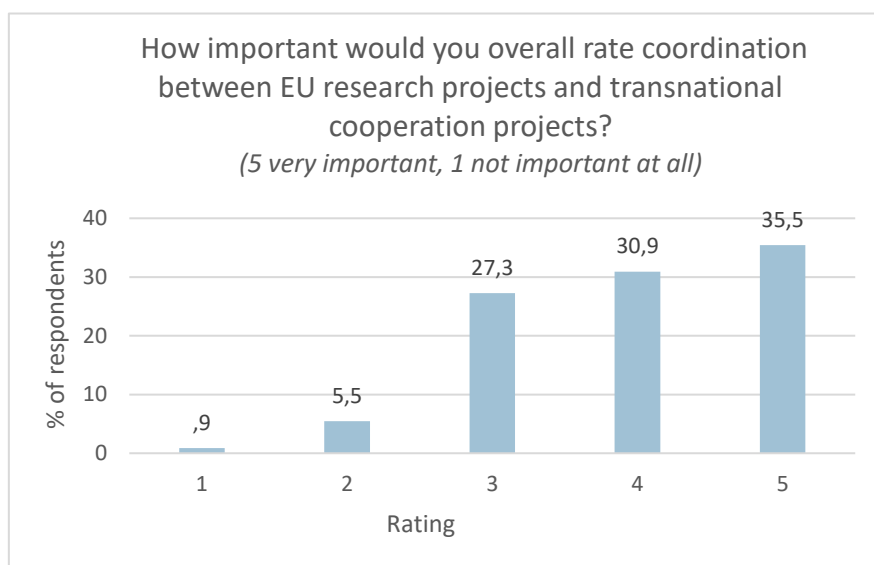
In the second step, an online survey on potentials for the exploitation of Interreg CE project outputs and results in coordination with R&I projects was launched among Interreg CE beneficiaries². The aim was to map the:

- Importance of exploiting own project outputs and results in coordination with R&I projects in views of Interreg CE beneficiaries;
- Involvement of Interreg CE beneficiaries in R&I projects and the existing level of research results uptake;
- Awareness on R&I results relevant for coordinated exploitation with Interreg CE outputs and results;
- Needs for support actions by the Interreg CE programme to facilitate the further coordinated exploitation of results.

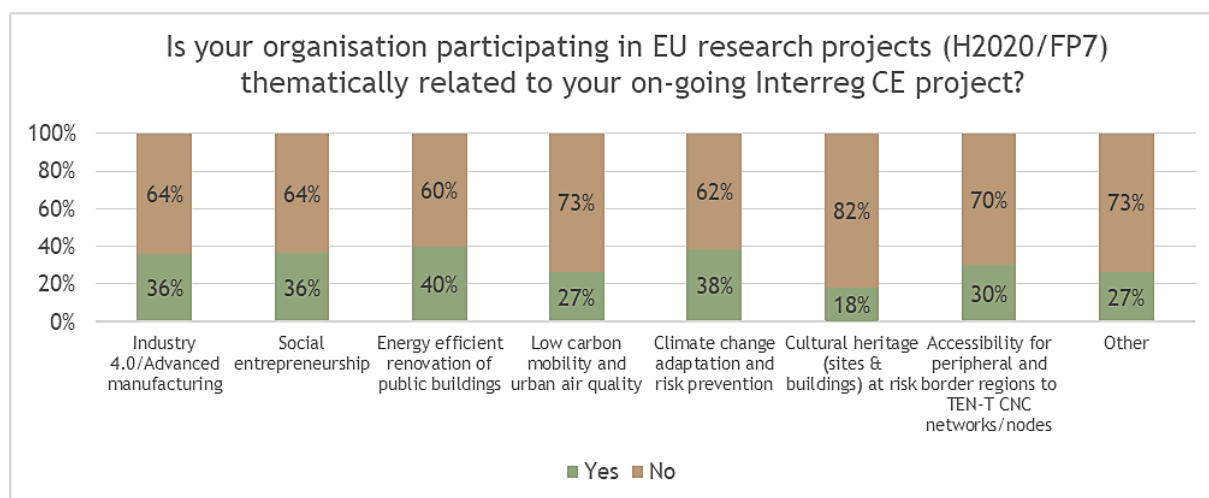
² The survey was disseminated among 860 organisations involved in the 85 projects funded in the first and second call. 110 answers were received, which represents a response rate of about 13 % at the individual level and 90 % response rate at the project level (the respondents represent 76 out of the 85 approved projects).

2.2 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE NEEDS ANALYSIS

More than two thirds of the respondents replied that coordination between EU funded research projects and Interreg transnational projects is important or very important. Further analysis shows that respondents interested in topics such as Industry 4.0/Advanced manufacturing, Social entrepreneurship and Cultural heritage at risk, rated the importance of coordinating with research the highest. It was also high for the topic of Energy efficient renovation of public buildings.

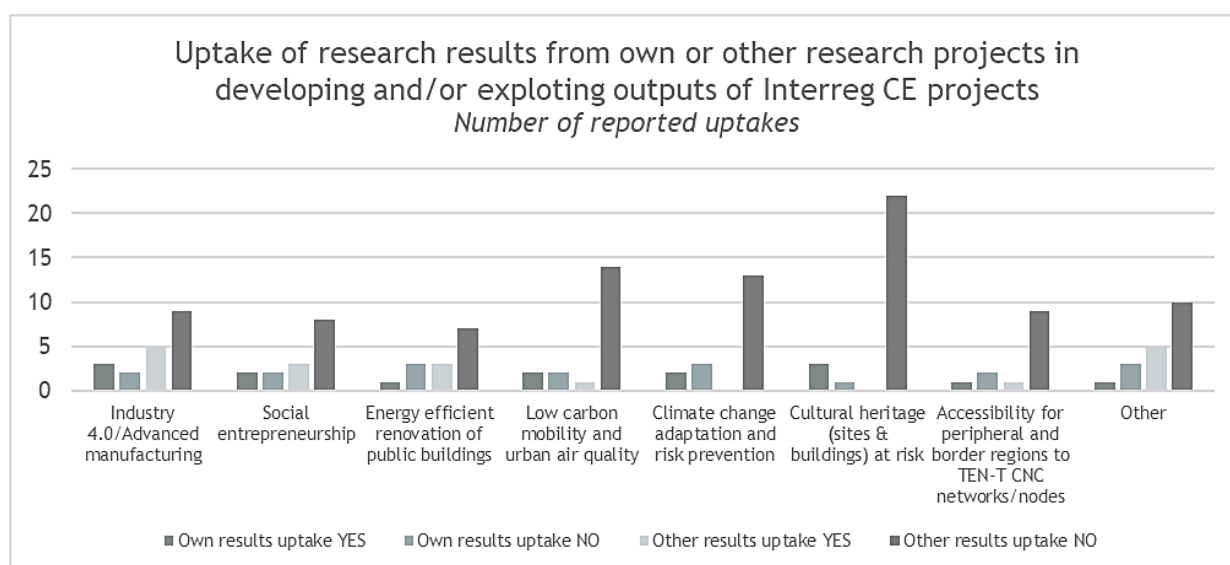


Despite the fact that most of the respondents find the coordination with research projects important, the majority of them work for organisations that are not involved in any H2020/FP7 research project thematically linked to their Interreg CE project.



Out of 33 respondents who work for organisations that are actually involved in H2020/FP7 research projects only 15 respondents reported that the research results were used when developing the Interreg CE project outputs and/or when implementing and exploiting them (i.e. 14 % of all respondents). Further, it was also investigated to what extent the Interreg CE beneficiaries built on research results from projects that their organisation is not involved in. Only 18 % of respondents reported that outputs and results from other H2020/FP7 projects in which their organisation was not participating were used in their Interreg CE projects.

A similar pattern could be observed for the uptake of research results regardless of whether the Interreg CE beneficiary was directly involved in such project or not, and the level remained negligible.



The awareness about other H2020/FP7 results to be taken on board to develop and/or exploit the outputs in running Interreg CE projects was rather low, with more than 70 % of all respondents not aware about relevant research results. However, some variation can be observed across thematic clusters. Particularly, respondents interested in Industry 4.0/Advanced manufacturing and Climate change adaptation and risk prevention topics were the best informed.

With regard to support actions to be taken by the Interreg CE programme to facilitate coordinated exploitation of projects outputs and results, a majority of respondents stressed the importance of the exchange between thematically related projects through cross-fertilisation meetings and events as well as thematic capitalisation activities. Suggestions addressed both the national and transnational level. Also the exchange with other instruments such as H2020 (e.g. in matchmaking events) was specifically highlighted.

Overall, outcomes of the survey suggested that **additional funding aimed at exploiting Interreg CE outputs and results jointly with other Interreg CE as well as H2020/FP7 projects would close the gap between the wish of Interreg CE beneficiaries to benefit of R&I results and the actual (limited) coordination between R&I and Interreg results.** The collected empirical evidence served as basis for designing the Interreg CE fourth call.

3. THE FOURTH CALL PILOT EXPERIENCE IN A NUTSHELL

3.1 APPROACH OF THE CALL AND REQUIREMENTS

Applicants were asked to submit in the fourth call transnational project ideas to exploit promising project outputs and results of already funded Interreg CE and projects funded by EU programmes directly managed by the European Commission, with a focus on R&I programmes. In order to be eligible, project proposals had to build on complementing results and outputs from at least three existing projects.

Project applications had to demonstrate how they will facilitate the exploitation of project outputs and results in order to increase their impacts in central European regions. **Exploitation was defined as any action that makes use of promising outputs and results already achieved by previously funded projects in central European regions**, going beyond a mere duplication of existing outputs and results..

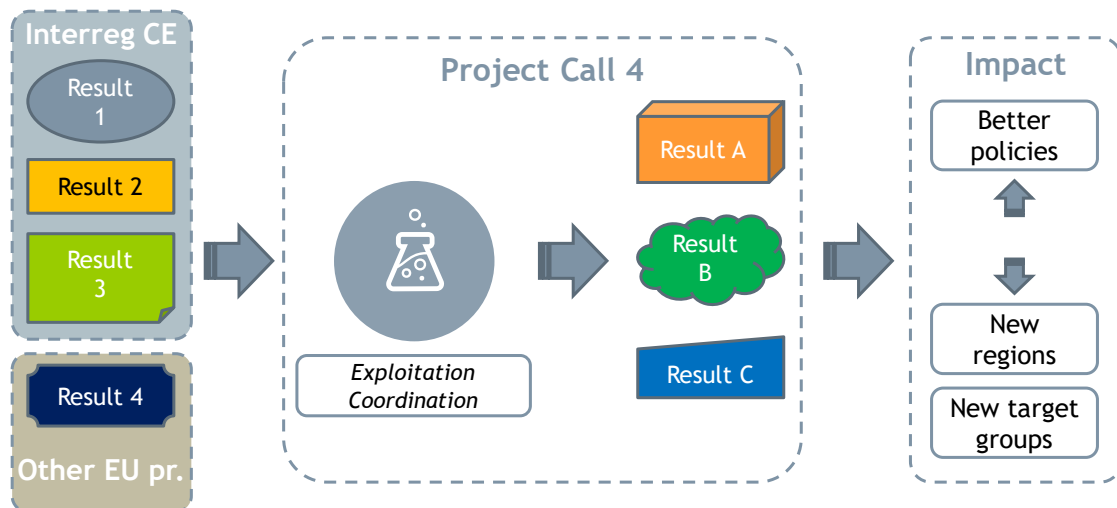
This could be done by following two different approaches:

- **Up-streaming:** Taking up outputs and results and tailor these in a way that they can be integrated into relevant territorial or thematic policies and strategies. This should happen at the most appropriate level, i.e. European, national, regional or local.
- **Down-streaming:** Tailoring outputs and results in a way that they can be further rolled-out at the national, regional or local level, thus reaching new end-users. Such roll-out of outputs and results could happen geographically, i.e. extending their use to other regions; or thematically i.e. extending their use in other sectors than those initially addressed.

Project applications had also to demonstrate that the exploitation of existing project outputs and results is done by **joining forces between projects funded by more EU funds**. They had to mobilise a critical mass to effectively influence policies or better roll out the results at the regional and local levels.

Projects funded within this call had to further develop, to improve and adapt existing outputs and results, to increase outreach, visibility and political attention as well as to improve existing networks, thus addressing the limiting factors for an effective exploitation of good outputs and results. Above all, fourth call projects were expected to **create synergies and add value beyond what was already achieved**.

The following chart illustrates the methodological approach to the fourth call:



Due to the limited funding available for the call, **the thematic focus had to be restricted** to the seven topics that are of high relevance for central European regions, have a critical mass of existing Interreg CE results and show the higher potential to coordinate with R&I results (see chapter 2.1). Furthermore, stringent **eligibility requirements** were set to ensure compliance with the experimental character of the call. Among others, proposals submitted within the fourth call had to:³

- Coordinate the exploitation of outputs and results obtained from at least two projects funded by the Interreg CE Programme and at least one thematically relevant project funded by a programme directly-managed by the European Commission;
- Be promoted by partnerships composed of at least 50 % of institutions involved in Interreg CE projects plus at least one partner from projects funded by the directly-managed EU programmes whose results are going to be exploited.

3.2 SUPPORT MEASURES AND TOOLS FOR MATCHMAKING BETWEEN INTERREG AND R&I STAKEHOLDERS

The support given by Interreg CE and DG RTD to applicants was aimed at inspiring transnational partnerships that include the desired mix of Interreg CE stakeholders, stakeholders from projects funded under directly-managed EU programmes as well as newcomers of relevance for the topics addressed (see chapter 3.1 above). To help applicants build these partnerships and meet call requirements, a number of targeted support measures were set in place.

³ The application manual for the fourth call, describing in detail the requirements set for the call, is available at: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/documents/Application-package-4th-call.zip>

CROSS-FERTILISATION AND MATCHMAKING WORKSHOPS

On 2-3 April 2019 in Vienna, internal Interreg CE workshops were held with participation of experts from DG RTD and the specific aim to identify potential synergies for exploitation of outputs and results in preparation of the fourth call. The workshops provided basic information about the call and increased awareness of exploitable results from other Interreg CE projects. The event encouraged initial matchmaking among projects as well as the discussion of ideas for project proposals. More information is available on the Interreg CE website: www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/apply/past-events.html

HORIZON 2020 AND INTERREG CE INFO DAY

Following up on the initial idea generation and matchmaking workshops in Vienna, DG RTD and Interreg CE jointly organised an Info Day in Brussels on 7 May 2019. This event was primarily aimed at facilitating the matchmaking between Interreg CE partners and partners from R&I projects. To achieve this, the event offered interested lead applicants to pitch their project ideas to the audience in order to create new contacts. In addition, side meetings among applicants occurred. More information is available on the Interreg CE website: www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/apply/past-events.html.

DIGITAL MATCHMAKING AND PARTNER SEARCH

The above matchmaking and partner search events were then complemented by digital measures.

One tool was the Interreg CE applicant community, on which project ideas could be presented and shared for attracting additional partners. In addition to this web community, a LinkedIn group for partner search offered support and networking opportunities. It had nearly 1 000 members and information on the call was regularly published. In this group, applicants could also discuss project ideas and exchange on these.

Another tool was designed specifically for this call by DG RTD and Interreg CE. Acknowledging the limitations that these information and physical events entailed, the co-designers of the call decided to set up an excel-based matchmaking tool. This tool offered potential applicants the possibility to access key information about H2020 and FP7 projects per thematic priority of the call. The list of projects was extracted with the support of the corporate Grant Management IT tools of the Commission, with direct links to CORDIS, the online public repository of Framework Programme projects and results. The matchmaking tool was made available on the Interreg CE website.

A **key challenge** was identified in this process in terms of data needs, as it was proven difficult to trace and extract clusters of exploitable results in an easy and structured way. At the time, this was only possible for certain categories of projects which had benefited from a specific support service (the so-called Common Dissemination & Exploitation Booster framework contract) or the CORDIS results packs, but which did not necessarily touch upon the thematic priorities of the call.

DIGITAL APPLICANT TRAINING

Building on positive experiences made in previous Interreg CE calls and the fact that the fourth call primarily addressed already experienced beneficiaries, training to applicants was shifted to digital to a large extent. Information on how to develop an application was thus available when applicants needed it the most.

The programme website offered comprehensive information on the call. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) were collected and answers updated regularly. All relevant documents were made available on www.interreg-central.eu/apply. To identify transnational cooperation results from running Interreg CE projects, applicants were also pointed to the programme output library. At www.interreg-central.eu/outputlibrary, all results of Interreg CE projects are gradually being published and made available for free.

Last but not least, hands-on tutorials were created and published on the Interreg CE YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnfEQzGh-PuWphBYmpQhZlojpHbFR5wvp>). The tutorials were distributed through other social media channels such as the LinkedIn partner search group mentioned above.

PERMANENT HELPDESK

The digital approach to building applicant capacities was complemented by individual support on the national and transnational level.

The Interreg CE network of National Contact Points provided support in national languages primarily on national application issues. On the transnational level, hundreds of enquiries were answered by an experienced helpdesk team that could be reached by phone or at info@interreg-central.eu. Questions submitted via social media were answered on the same channel by the helpdesk team.

COMPULSORY CONSULTATIONS

In the process of developing their proposals, lead applicants had to book compulsory consultations with the Interreg CE JS. The main aim of these consultations was to advise lead applicants on the relevance of their project ideas and to clarify technical questions on content, communication and finances.

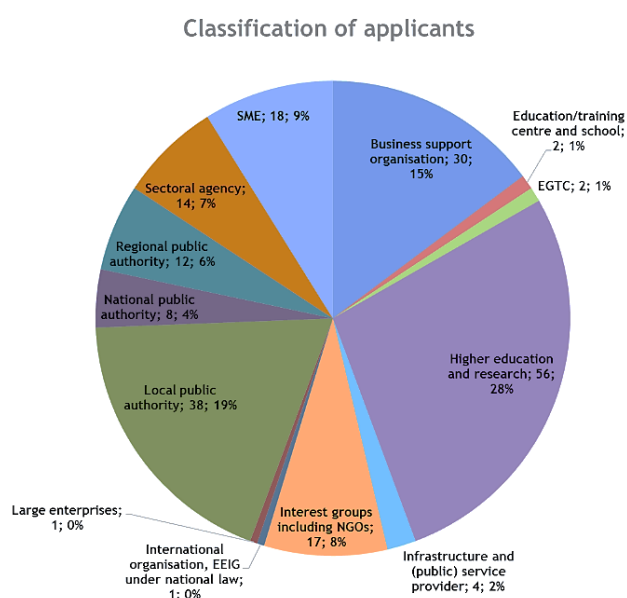
4. RESULTS OF THE FOURTH CALL PILOT EXPERIENCE

4.1 RESPONSE OF REGIONS TO THE CALL

4.1.1 PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

24 project proposals were submitted before the call closed. Out of these, 23 successfully passed the formal eligibility criteria set for the call (see chapter 3.1).

The 23 eligible proposals were developed by 203 partners, who requested about 22 mEUR of ERDF funding (i.e. ca. **2,6 times the 8,5 mEUR of ERDF available through the fourth call**). Applicants represent a wide range of national, regional and local organisations, as presented in the following chart:



The 23 eligible proposals planned to exploit outputs and results produced by 46 projects previously funded by Interreg CE, 49 projects previously funded by R&I framework programmes and 8 projects previously funded by other EU instruments directly managed by the EC⁴. This means that, on average, each submitted proposal plans to exploit outputs and results from two existing Interreg CE and two R&I projects.

When considering the stringent eligibility requirements set for the call and the low budget available, the response of central European stakeholders to the call is regarded as very good. Both Interreg CE and R&I

⁴ Namely: COSME, Erasmus+, LIFE, Copernicus, JPI/PHEP, IFISE, Creative Europe.

beneficiaries of previously funded projects managed to identify common needs and concrete solutions for the submission of joint proposals.

4.1.2 PERCEPTION OF APPLICANTS ON THE CALL

APPLICANT SURVEY

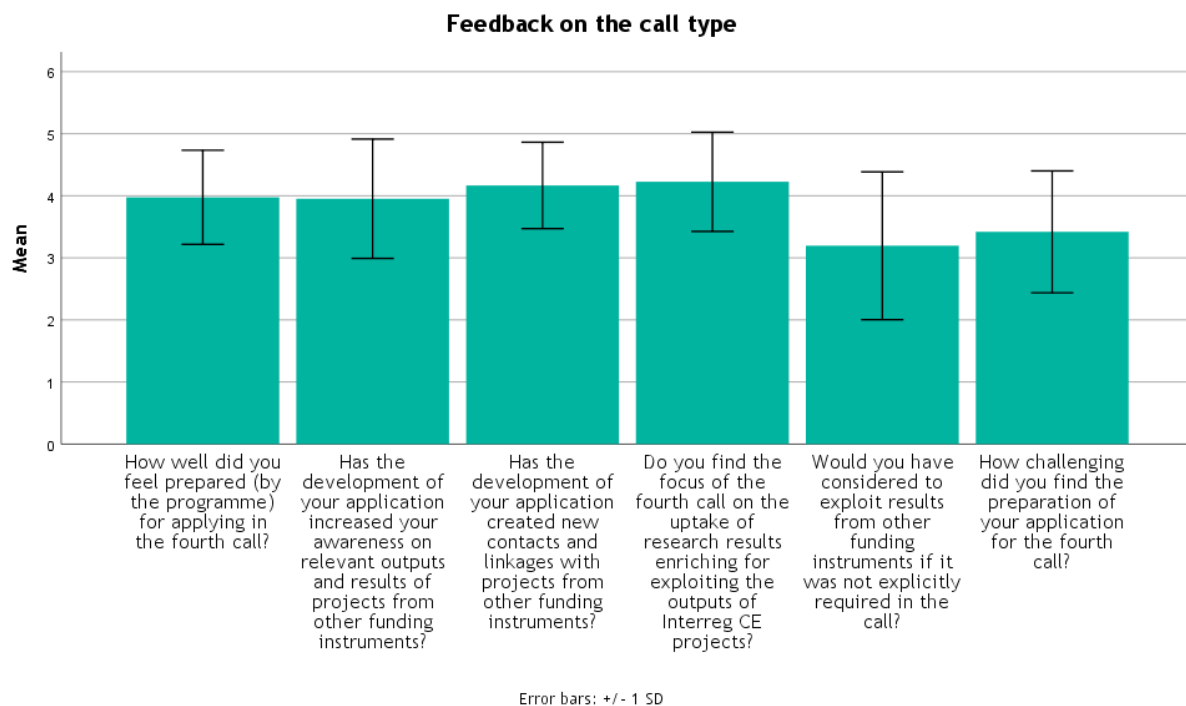
After call closure an applicant survey was launched in order to obtain feedback on the overall approach of the call, the programme support measures (events, tools and documents) as well as to learn more about the matchmaking process between Interreg CE and other EU stakeholders, with a focus on R&I. The survey was sent out to 216 persons in applicant organisations in October 2019, with 43 answers received by the deadline (20 % response rate).⁵

Results show that the experimental character of the call was perceived positively by applicants. They stated that developing the application for the fourth call helped them to increase their awareness on and knowledge about available results from projects funded by other funding schemes (average score 3.95 on a 5-point scale). The survey also confirmed that the call significantly contributed to creating new contacts and linkages among actors from projects funded by other funding instruments (average score 4.17 on a 5-point scale).

Despite the experimental capitalisation and coordination character of the call, applicants felt very well prepared to apply (average score 3.98) and found it rather easy to prepare their project proposals (average score 3.42 on a decreasing scale where 5 equals easy).

Overall, applicants revealed that the focus on the uptake of R&I results was very enriching (mean value 4.23). At the same time it became obvious that they would not have considered this kind of exploitation if it was not offered with the call (average score only 3.19 on a 5-point scale). This was primarily the case for SMEs, business support organisations, as well as interest groups and NGOs.

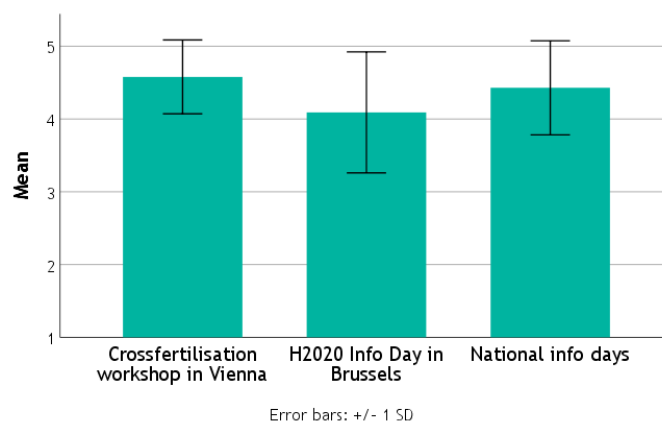
⁵ Despite the fact that the survey is statistically not fully representative (confidence interval above 13 p.p. at 95 % confidence level), it is an extremely valuable source of information on opinions and views of applicants. Most respondents represent higher education and research institutions (28 %) as well as local and regional public institutions (21 %).



The survey that was previously run among Interreg CE beneficiaries for shaping the fourth call (see chapter 2.2) suggested that the level of awareness on existing research results and the level of their uptake were quite low, despite general interest in the idea of joint exploitation of R&I and Interreg CE project results. The need for support measures was also clearly articulated. Building on these insights, applicant support events were organised, a matchmaking tool was developed and individual consultations for lead applicants were introduced (see also chapter 3.2).

Transnational events were organised in Vienna and Brussels, and national info days were organised in the Czech Republic and Italy. According to the survey, applicants were very satisfied with these events (all events scored above 4 on a 5-point scale).

How would you rate our supporting events? (on a scale from 5 = excellent to 1 = very poor)



The usability of the excel-based match-making tool aimed at nurturing the project partner search (see chapter 3.2) was rated as adequate by the applicants (average score 3 on the 5-point scale) but further room for improvement was seen, notably in view of the accessibility of contacts to research project coordinators.

To conclude, **the survey confirmed that applicants found the exploitation and coordination character of the call enriching as well as useful for gaining better insights into available R&I results and for creating new linkages**. A high share of respondents only considered joining forces with other projects for increasing the impact of their own project results because it was explicitly requested in the call. Applicant support measures played an important role in the process of match-making and the organised events were perceived very positively.

TARGETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO H2020/FP7 BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATING IN THE CALL

In order to get a better understanding of how the joint initiative was specifically perceived by the 45 applicants from previously funded R&I projects, a brief questionnaire was sent to these. The questionnaire invited them to:

- Provide their overall impression of the call;
- Reveal how they got in touch with other members of the applying consortium;
- Assess whether they consider this type of synergies with European Structural and Investment Funds useful for exploiting their R&I project results;
- Give further recommendations.

The overall response rate to this additional questionnaire was 20 % with nine replies received. All respondents confirmed their positive impression about this experimental call, acknowledging the importance of integrating *“experiences and results gained from different projects, financed through different sources”*. R&I applicants highlighted the necessity and added value of scaling up project results at national or local level after the end of their projects to ensure that “no information is lost”, empower “varied groups of stakeholders” and to allow for a “joint vision” and “better budget consistency”. One applicant mentioned that *“[...] synergies between projects of different programmes can increase the know-how at different levels of knowledge, from the development to the real application, from the research to the definition of the policies”*.

Most R&I applicants found out about the call through the Interreg CE website and the dedicated newsletter. Some mentioned the information events organised in Brussels and Vienna and exchanges with national or local contact points. A few indicated that they received news about the call from previous project partners. R&I applicants appear to have sparsely used the Excel-based matchmaking tool, which implies potential for improvement.

In terms of recommendations, one respondent acknowledged the need for longer project duration (beyond two years). Another suggested that, in the future, applicants should be allowed to participate simultaneously in more than one proposal. Finally, one R&I applicant mentioned the need of improving the uploading platform for proposals.

4.2 FUNDED PROJECTS

4.2.1 SELECTION PROCESS

Project proposals submitted to the fourth call were assessed according to the “Guiding principles for the selection of operations” (defined in the Interreg CE Cooperation Programme⁶) and the call-specific “Methodology for the assessment of proposals” approved by the Interreg CE Monitoring Committee. The quality of proposals was assessed based on the strategic criteria “*relevance*” and “*partnership*” as well as the operational criteria “*implementation*” and “*budget*”.⁷ In order to be technically recommended for funding, proposals had to reach 70 % of the maximum total assessment score.

14 project proposals out of the 23 eligible applications (all together requesting nearly 13,5 million EUR ERDF) were technically recommended for funding by the Interreg CE MA/JS, with a **success rate of 61 %**. This is more than twice the success rate of previous Interreg CE calls, which indicates that support measures successfully helped building the capacity of applicants. Overall, applicants showed a good understanding of the exploitation and coordination character of the call, as well as of the stringent call requirements.

4.2.2 SELECTED PROJECT PROPOSALS

Due to limited budget resources of the call (8,5 million EUR), only nine of the 14 technically recommended proposals were ultimately selected for funding by the Interreg CE Monitoring Committee. The selected proposals are:

Index No and acronym	ERDF budget (m EUR)	Topic No ⁸	Project description	Projects whose results are being capitalised
CE1644 Boost4BSO	0,8	I	Creating a comprehensive capacity building programme for Business Support Organisations by developing an Industry 4.0 competence pack covering the whole range of relevant topics for SME support: i.e. I4.0 related technologies, organizational change, business model development and product/service innovation	<u>2 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>THINGS+</i> , <i>InnoPeer AVM</i> <u>1 H2020 project:</u> <i>IoT4Industry</i>
CE1662 CEUP 2030	0,9	I	Generating stable innovation networks and improved knowledge on new technologies on Industry 4.0/Advanced Manufacturing leading to an upgraded framework for policy-making & implementation	<u>2 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>3DCentral</i> , <i>SYNERGY</i> <u>3 H2020 projects:</u> <i>SISCODE</i> , <i>SPIRIT</i> , <i>DIH2</i>

⁶ Adopted by the European Commission on 16.12.2014 (Implementing Decision C(2014) 10023) and amended in 2016 and 2019.

⁷ More information on the assessment criteria can be found in the application manual: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/documents/Application-package-4th-call.zip>

⁸ See chapter 2.1.

Index No and acronym	ERDF budget (m EUR)	Topic No ⁸	Project description	Projects whose results are being capitalised
CE1683 CERUSI	1,0	II	Building skills and capacities for social innovation and social entrepreneurship in rural areas by implementing a Rural Social Innovation (RSI) Lab Caravan and developing local RSI Action plans	<u>2 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>Social(i)Makers, SENTINEL</i> <u>1 H2020 project:</u> <i>LIVERUR</i>
CE1666 TARGET-CE	0,7	III	Developing a unique hub for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Source solutions in public buildings by capitalising innovative technical & non-technical solutions such as 3D energy management and visualization tools, financial and decision support tools, energy efficiency strategies, energy management plans and training courses	<u>4 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>BOOSTEE-CE, eCentral, FEEDSCHOOLS, ENERGY@SCHOOL</i> <u>2 H2020 projects:</u> <i>GreenSoul, PANEL 2050</i>
CE1671 Dynaxibility4CE	1,1	IV	Improving the capacities of public transport authorities for innovative low carbon mobility solutions in Functional Urban Areas in order to counterbalance negative effects of urbanisation processes and growing transport demand that generates greenhouse gas emissions and bad air quality	<u>4 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>LowCarb, SHAREPLACE, SOLEZ, AWAIR</i> <u>5 H2020 projects:</u> <i>Civitas Prosperity, CoEXist, Civitas Satellite, MaaS4EU, Civitas Sumps-Up</i>
CE1670 TEACHER-CE	1,1	V	Development of an integrated toolbox for boosting climate-proof management of water resources including floods/heavy rain/drought risk prevention, small water retention measures and protection of water resources through sustainable land-use management	<u>4 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>PROLINE-CE, SUSTREE, FramWat, RAINMAN</i> <u>1 H2020 project:</u> <i>Fairway</i> <u>1 LIFE project:</u> <i>LIFE LOCAL ADAPT</i>
CE1649 ForHeritage	0,7	VI	Integrated approach for a better protection and management of cultural heritage sites considering the various stages of planning, implementation and financing, and applying a wide ranging concept of risk from fires and earthquakes to management aspects	<u>2 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>Forget Heritage, RESTAURA</i> <u>1 H2020 project:</u> <i>CLIC</i> <u>1 FI COMPASS project:</u> <i>IFISE</i>
CE1665 STRENCH	1,1	VI	Improving capacities of the public and private sectors to mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on cultural heritage sites, structures and buildings at risk by applying ready-to-use solutions such as WebGIS tools, hazard maps, methodology for vulnerability ranking and strategies for disaster risk reduction	<u>4 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>ProteCHt2save, RUINS, HICAPS, BhENEFIT</i> <u>2 H2020 projects:</u> <i>HERACLES, SHELTER</i> <u>2 FP6 projects:</u> <i>Noah's Ark, Climate for Cultural DG EAC study: Safeguarding Cultural Heritage from Natural and Man-Made Disasters</i>
CE1658 RegiaMobil	1,4	VII	Supporting the uptake of smart mobility solutions such as real-time demand-responsive fleet management for public transport in peripheral regions affected by demographic change in order to better link them to TEN-T networks	<u>4 Interreg CE projects:</u> <i>RUMOBIL, CONNECT2CE, SubNodes, SHAREPLACE</i> <u>3 H2020 projects:</u> <i>MaaS4EU, MoTiV, SIAE SaaS</i>

The above table shows that the nine selected projects will exploit outputs and results of 24 projects funded by Interreg CE and 19 projects funded by H2020. Furthermore, some of the selected projects will also take up results of projects funded by other instruments directly managed by the European Commission, namely the LIFE Programme, the FI-COMPASS Instrument and DG EAC.

Further information on the selected projects is available on their project websites, hosted by the Interreg programme website (www.interreg-central.eu/projects).

4.2.3 EXAMPLES OF CONCRETE SYNERGIES BETWEEN R&I AND INTERREG CE PROJECT RESULTS

Index and title	CE1683 CERUSI <i>(Central European Rural Social Innovation-Implementing Central European Rural Social Innovation Lab Caravans to build skills and capacities in social innovation, social entrepreneurship and circular economy)</i>	
Topic	II.	Social entrepreneurship
Aim	The project aims at building skills and capacities for social innovation and social entrepreneurship in rural regions in central Europe since they often lack support structures to keep people in the region.	
Partnership	1.	GmbH ZSI – Centre for Social Innovation (AT)
	2.	Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH (AT)
	3.	Social Impact (DE)
	4.	Democenter-Sipe Foundation (IT)
	5.	Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities PRIZMA (SI)
	6.	EPIC non-profit (SK)
	7.	Cooperation Fund Foundation (PL)
	8.	Regional Development Agency of South Bohemia (CZ)
	9.	Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Modena (IT)
Description	CERUSI down-streams results and tools of two Interreg CE projects (Social(i)Makers, SENTINEL) and one H2020 project (LiveRuR). CERUSI adopts the innovative approach of Rural Social Innovation (RSI) Lab Caravans and will make use of the training courses and handbooks developed within the previous CE projects. They will address citizens, innovators and ongoing entrepreneurs with training modules on social innovation and social entrepreneurship. In addition, CERUSI will actively push the use of the RAIN-Business model, a concept elaborated in the H2020 project LiveRuR that integrates principles of circular economy and social inclusion with state-of-the-art business development models. These elements taken together and combined with the transnational exchange of knowledge and experience will help rural regions to valorise their potentials and create socially inclusive regional development. Although mainly focused on down-streaming ⁹ , the project has also has a component of up-streaming, notably through upscaling the concept of the RSI Lab Caravan to a transnational strategy and local action plans.	

⁹ For the definition of down-streaming and up-streaming in the context of the fourth call, please refer to chapter 3.1.

INDEX AND TITLE	CE1671 DYNAXIBILITY4CE (CAPACITIES FOR DYNAMIC AND FLEXIBLE PLANNING FOR LOW-CARBON MOBILITY TRENDS AND POLICIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE)
TOPIC	IV. Low carbon mobility and urban air quality
AIM	The project aims at increasing the capacity of public transport authorities to deal with new urban mobility trends that demand higher dynamic and flexible planning. It will develop strategies and tools for creating low-carbon & low-pollution mobility systems in seven Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) in central Europe.
PARTNERSHIP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leipzig Transport Company (DE) 2. Rupprecht Consult (DE) 3. Polis Network (BE) 4. Redmint Social Enterprise (IT) 5. Mobilissimus Ltd. (HU) 6. Center for Budapest Transport (HU) 7. Municipality of Parma (IT) 8. Regional Agency for Environment and Energy in Emilia-Romagna Region (IT) 9. Krakow Transport Authority (PL) 10. Stuttgart Region Association (DE) 11. AustriaTech - Federal Agency for Technological Measures Ltd. (AT) 12. City of Koprivnica (HR) 13. City of Graz (AT)
DESCRIPTION	<p>Dynaxibility4CE exploits the results of four Interreg CE projects (LowCarb, SHAREPLACE, SOLEZ, AWAIR) and five H2020 projects (Civitas Prosperity, CoEXist, Civitas Satellite, MaaS4EU, Civitas Sumps-Up).</p> <p>Strategies and tools developed in the H2020 projects will be adapted to the planning context of central European regions and combined with available results and tools from the Interreg CE projects (down-streaming¹⁰).</p> <p>For example, the project takes up results of the H2020 projects Civitas SUMPs-UP and PROSPERITY (with a focus on sustainable urban mobility planning - SUMP), complemented by the results of the projects MaaS4EU (dealing with new mobility solutions such as Mobility as a Service - MaaS) and CoEXist (dealing with Connected and automated driving - CAD).</p> <p>Furthermore, governance and regulations for mobility trends including Urban Vehicle Access Restrictions (UVAR) tackled within the H2020 project CIVITAS-SATELLITE are taken up.</p> <p>The seven FUAs involved in the project are fore-runners that will test the innovative mobility solutions and are ready to adopt new mobility trends in their mobility plans. In addition, the lessons learned from the pilot actions will be up-streamed to the policy level at regional/national and EU level (feeding into the SUMP 2.0 update process).</p>

¹⁰ Ditto.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The experience made so far with the fourth experimental call for proposals of the Interreg CE Programme, allows to draw the following preliminary conclusions.

1. Surveys carried out when designing the fourth call and when the call was closed, showed that there is a high interest of both, R&I and Interreg stakeholders, **to work together and combine results for strengthening their take up at the policy level as well as their roll-out to new target groups and territories**. The “capitalisation through coordination” approach set up with the fourth call has been assessed positively by applicants. In particular, the common framework for cooperation established by the fourth call allowed to establish concrete linkages between R&I and Interreg CE beneficiaries.
2. Results of the same surveys also suggest that **stakeholders seemingly need a deliberate “push”** to actively seek and make use of synergies across funds. Despite an expressed high interest in taking up results from projects in other funds (see above), such exploitation in coordination with new partners would in many cases not have happened according to the feedback of applicants. Reasons for this gap certainly deserve further investigation, however some actions to be taken appear in the following points 3 and 4. It has become clear that this call with concrete requirements to capitalise and coordinate across funds offered an important incentive to channel research results to the regions.
3. **Strengthening the impact of R&I and Interreg project results requires an active support to the project holders**. Capacity building measures (e.g. trainings, one-to-one consultations) and matchmaking opportunities (e.g. events, newsletters, digital fora, databases) set up by DG RTD and the Interreg CE Programme within the fourth call, **increased the knowledge of stakeholders about existing R&I and Interreg results** that could fit to specific needs of certain regions and target groups.
4. Even if support measures were effective in linking R&I and Interreg stakeholders and in increasing the knowledge about existing results, much more can be done in this respect. **The identification of R&I results suitable for exploitation in a territorial context is still very challenging** and even the tools set in place to this end showed their limits.
5. In the submitted project applications, R&I and Interreg CE stakeholders described very convincingly how existing outputs and results of their projects can be combined and further tailored to regional needs. This demonstrates that the approach proposed with the fourth call has been well understood by applicants and that an **increased impact of existing results is likely to happen after project end**. The actual impact of fourth call projects shall be further evaluated in 2022, once they will be finalised.

6. In addition to holders of existing R&I and Interreg CE project results, the fourth call managed to attract also other organisations that are interested in exploiting existing project results but they were not involved in their development. This **brings new knowledge and new connections to the existing partnerships**, thus further strengthening the exploitation of existing results.

Overall, it can be concluded that **the new “capitalisation through coordination” approach developed with the fourth call has a concrete potential to effectively strengthen coordination between Interreg programmes and R&I and other EU directly managed programmes**, by combining the excellence of project results developed at a wider EU level with territorially rooted project results developed under Interreg.

The approach tested with the fourth call is complementary to the “Seal of Excellence”¹¹ initiative set up by the European Commission. Addressing coordination among ESIF and R&I programmes at the level of project results, as done with the fourth call, would allow to strengthen synergies throughout the entire project lifecycle, i.e. from when a project proposal is conceived to when its actual results are achieved.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Synergies between EU directly managed programmes, including the R&I Framework programme, and Interreg at the level of results (sequential synergies) should be further strengthened in the 2021-2027 programming period. This in order to (i) accelerate knowledge diffusion, (ii) bring more innovative solutions to the regions, and (iii) address regional challenges more efficiently. The positive experience acquired through this call could be replicable to other parts of the territorial cooperation and the ESIF landscape.

To this end, it is recommended **to establish an informal inter-institutional working group where representatives of the European Commission and of Interreg programmes** (the latter could be jointly represented by INTERACT¹²) can define the necessary framework for enhanced coordination. This is important for addressing current challenges, such as fostering the availability, accessibility, integration and sharing of R&I and ESIF implementation data, and meeting policy needs at the regional and transnational level. The working group should among others explore the possibility to further strengthen coordination in the context of regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation, where public authorities, research institutes and innovation intermediaries (innovation agencies, technology transfer organisations) would play a significant role in strengthening coordination at the regional level.

¹¹ For further information on the Seal of Excellence, please see https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/seal-excellence_en.

¹² The INTERACT Programme is an European Territorial Cooperation programme which mission is to facilitate exchanges of experience in relation to the implementation of all Interreg programmes. Further information is available under <http://www.interact-eu.net/>.