Interreg Europe 2021-2027
3rd call for proposals

Project proposal concept note
Digital inclusion in Europe

Aim of Interreg Europe and basic features

The Interreg Europe programme is designed to support interregional learning among policy relevant organisations across Europe. The programme's objective is to enable public authorities and other relevant organisations to actively learn from the experience of other regions. This is a learning process which involves identifying, analysing and transferring good practices with the aim of improving regional development policy instruments and ultimately delivering solutions.

The Interreg Europe programme has an Interreg funds budget of EUR 394.5 million for the 2021-2027 period, out of which 347.6 million are dedicated to co-finance interregional cooperation projects.

Applications for the third call may be submitted **by the 7 June (12:00 CEST)**

For more information: https://www.interregeurope.eu/discover-the-programme#

Selected specific objective

'A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights (PO4) by

((iii) promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated actions, including housing and social services

Issue addressed and project's overall objective

The project aims at improving public policies and actions in the field of digital inclusion. Bordeaux Métropole and the rest of the partners wish to exchange on good practice to improve their actions against digital inequality. Bordeaux Métropole has approved a digital inclusion strategy, and wishes to improve the outreach of its Metropolitan Observatory for Digital Inclusion.

Digital inclusion, often overlooked, is a multifaceted challenge that permeates through various sectors. While technological advancements and innovation take the forefront in digital policies, digital matters sometimes take a backseat in social policies.

But the reality is that digital exclusion is a deep, complex challenge that affects a large part of the European population. A third of Europeans lack the basic skills to navigate the digital world, and up to 80% struggle using digital technologies to varying degrees. Unlike previous technological revolutions, this one is much more complex: it comes with a cost, widens the gap, and weakens our social fabric.

Digital inequality is a new way of exclusion. Action against digital inequality paves the way for effective equal access to fundamental rights such as employment, housing, health protection, justice, education, family and children protection.

As put by the European Parliament, digitalization is at the root of a number of social differences, with a new digital divide emerging, not only between well-connected urban areas and rural and remote areas, but also between those people who can fully benefit from an enriched, accessible and secure digital space with a wide range of services, and those who cannot do so.

The project will allow to share best practices related to digital inclusion, ex: measuring the digital divide at local level, better address the people in need of digital help with on the ground actions, make connectivity in the public space (wifi) more usable for those who need them the most...

Project approach

Project activities are implemented in two phases over **four years** (with an additional three months to close the project).

Core phase – 'interregional learning'
The core phase is dedicated to the exchange of experience among project partners and to the integration of the lessons learnt from the cooperation activities into the regional development policy instruments addressed by the project.

The core phase lasts **three years.** The experience gained in the previous programming periods shows that three years is a realistic duration for interregional cooperation projects. It gives sufficient time to develop an exchange of experience process for/between practitioners, which can lead to improving the policy instruments addressed by the project.

Follow-up phase – monitoring the effects of the policy improvements
In order to better assess the results of interregional cooperation, the follow-up phase will primarily be dedicated to monitoring the first effects of the policy improvements and monitoring whether additional policy improvements are being or have been achieved. The duration of the follow-up phase is **one year**. This additional year will allow the projects to continue monitoring the results of their cooperation activities while wrapping up the exchange of experience process.

Partnership

The following bodies are eligible to receive Interreg or Norwegian funds and can therefore participate as 'partners' in Interreg Europe projects:

- Public authorities: 80% cofinancing rate, except for Norway and Switzerland
- Public law bodies (bodies governed by public law): 80% cofinancing rate, except for Norway and Switzerland
- Private non-profit bodies: 70% cofinancing rate, except for Norway and Switzerland

Each partner state is responsible for confirming the legal status of partners located on its territory. If there is any doubt in this respect, applicants should contact their partner state representative directly. Partner state contact details are available on the programme's website (www.interregeurope.eu/in-my-country).

Lead partner: Bordeaux Métropole (body governed by public law)

Proposed number of partners: from 5 to 8 covering all geographical areas

Please note that each partner must identify **one main policy instrument** (even if a regional development issue can often be addressed through several policy instruments). At least one of the policy instruments in the project needs to be an Investment for Jobs and Growth goal programme.

A **policy instrument** refers to any strategy, programme, or law developed by public authorities and implemented to improve a specific territorial situation. In most cases, financial resources are allocated to a policy instrument. However, an instrument can also refer to a strategy or legislative framework with no specific funding (e.g., a Smart Specialisation Strategy). Other examples of policy instruments are: integrated territorial strategies, economic social and development strategies, development plans, regional laws, territorial master plans, thematic programmes or strategies, etc.

The potential partner is invited also to think about good practices they would like to share of benefit from in the field of Digital Inclusion and fight against Digital Divide. In addition, every potential partner is invited to indicate which aspects need improvement in the policy instrument. All these elements will be the basis for exchange and mutual learning.

In addition, a **stakeholder group** must be created for each of the policy instruments addressed by the project. This group should be constituted of organisations from the 'region' with a stake in the policy issue addressed. By actively involving these organisations in the cooperation work, the project should also contribute to increasing their capacity.

The stakeholder organisations do not receive funding from the programme. However, the travel and accommodation costs incurred by stakeholder group members for participating in project activities are eligible if they are paid for by the partners who are directly funded by the programme.