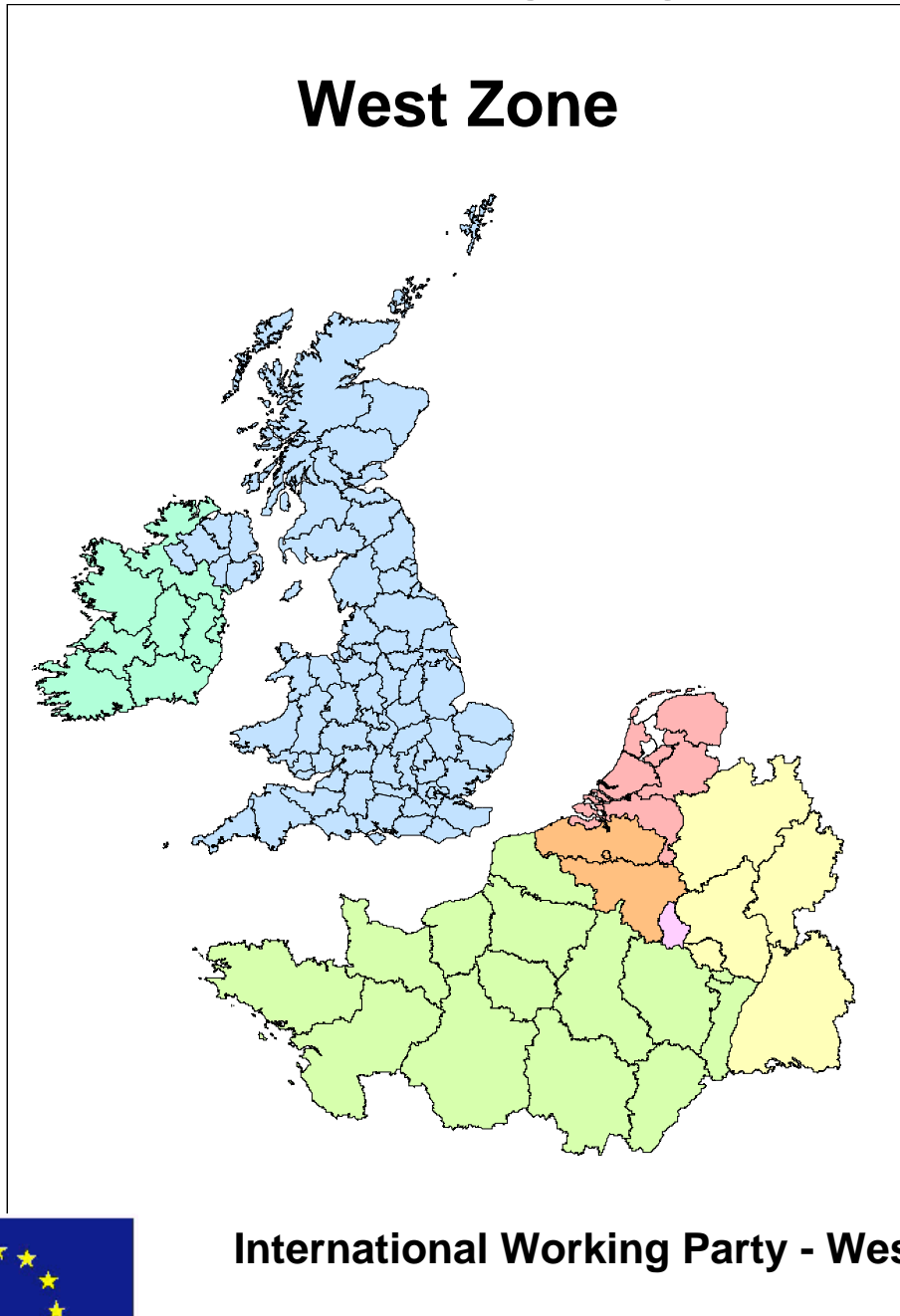


European Regional Development Fund 2000 - 2006

Community Initiative Programme

INTERREG III C

West Zone



International Working Party - West Zone

20 November 2001

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1. Introduction

The objective of the Community Initiative INTERREG is to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the Community by promoting cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation and balanced development of the Community territory. It focuses, therefore on improving cohesion – economic, social and territorial – by reducing the negative impact of borders on economic development and territorial integration. Whilst transborder co-operation within Europe has, for some years, been encouraged and supported by means of cross-border (INTERREG III A) and transnational co-operation (INTERREG III B), the new funding period introduced a new strand of INTERREG aiming at interregional co-operation: INTERREG III C.

With this new strand, the Community Initiative INTERREG is extended to a new type of intervention. For the first time this instrument is used to assist interregional Co-operation beyond the scope of the A- and B-strand. INTERREG III C is built on the experience collected under other instruments and the structural funds. Mainly the innovative action of ERDF, like RIS/RITTS; RISI, Recite, Ecos-Ouverture, etc., but also actions under the 5th research framework programme allowed for important experiences, which can now be exploited by INTERREG III C. INTERREG III C takes the idea of interregional co-operation further by applying the first time a programme approach to this type of co-operation.

The main approach of INTERREG III C is to make use of the stock of experiences collected in the context of implementation of structural funds programmes as well as related to national policies. Thus INTERREG III C can help non contiguous regions to get in contact and to develop the already existing networks of co-operation in terms of inclusion of as many European regions as possible, as well as in terms of the types of actors included. This should help in intensifying the co-operation all over Europe.

This programme is giving the information necessary to implement INTERREG III C in the North-West (in the following: West) Zone. The programme has been drafted on the legal basis given by:

- The Communication from the Commission to the Member States of 7 May 2001 “Interregional Co-operation” Strand C of the INTERREG III Community Initiative - Commission Communication C(2001) 1188 final (2001/C 141/02) - (in the following “INTERREG III C-Communication”)
- The Communication from the Commission to the Member States of 28 April 2000 laying down guidelines for a Community Initiative concerning trans-european co-operation

intended to encourage harmonious and balanced development of the European territory - INTERREG III (in the following referred to as "INTERREG-Communication")

- The Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds - (in the following "Structural Funds Regulation")
- The European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) Nr.1783/1999 of 12 July 1999 on the European Fund for Regional Development

A number of other legal provisions have also been taken into account:

- Commission Regulation (EC) No 438/2001 of 2 March 2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 as regards the management and control systems for assistance granted under the Structural Funds. (in the following "Control Regulation")
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1159/2000 of 30 May 2000 on information and publicity measures to be carried out by the Member States concerning assistance from the Structural Funds. (in the following "Publicity Regulation")
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1685/2000 of 28 July 2000 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260 as regards eligibility of expenditure of operations co-financed by the Structural Funds. (in the following "Eligibility Regulation")
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 448/2001 of 2 March 2001 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 as regards the procedure for making financial corrections to assistance granted under the Structural Funds
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 643/2000 of 28 March 2000 on arrangements for using the euro for the purposes of the budgetary management of the Structural Funds

Furthermore, the not legally binding working paper has proven to be very helpful:

- Working Paper: INTERREG III B and III C Member States Responsibility: Management and Control System, 23 April 2001, DG REGIO/B1/GD D (2000)

In relation to Belgium, the obligations and responsibilities of Member State authorities for INTERREG III C are carried out by the authorities designated for this purpose. This is the case whenever this document refers to the Member States or the national authorities.

2. Strategic Approach

This INTERREG III C-programme forms a general framework for interregional co-operation and promotion of exchanges of experience and best practice. By doing so, it intends to contribute to the improvement of European and national policies for the welfare of the European people. The way to achieve this is to exploit the experiences collected with different policy instruments and project approaches and on that basis to learn from each other - and to do so jointly by interregional exchange and co-operation.

This approach is based on the notion that a number of problems and tasks are confronting European regions not only nationally, but across Europe in a similar way. This is true for regions like cities and urban areas, rural areas, border regions, or declining regions to give only a few examples. Where problems and tasks are similar, an exchange on solutions, on the policy instruments applied and the projects developed is promising. An important field to collect experiences in tackling the regional demands have been the Structural Funds Programmes. This is why they form an important basis for the exchange of experiences under INTERREG III C. But also national or regional policy are expected to build the substance to start the exchange of experiences from.

2.1 Main goal

The objective of the interregional co-operation is to improve the effectiveness of policies and instruments for regional development and cohesion.¹ The effects will materialise both at national or regional and European level:

- The regional and other public authorities will gain a mean to enhance development through access to the experiences of others; this will enable them to better develop policies and projects to overcome problems and exploit potentials.

¹ This is coherent with the objectives given in the III C-Communication, point 5, and the Interreg-Communication point 17.

- The European policies will be boosted by added value through expanding the effects from individual structural funds interventions to different regions across Europe. Learning effects can be multiplied by disseminating experience interregionally.

The goal of improving the effectiveness of policies and instruments for regional development and cohesion may be achieved by:

- Changes on the level of projects by introducing new methods or approaches or by improving existing ones. The focus here is on improving the delivery of existing programmes and instruments of regional policy.
- Changes on the level of policies imply a more far-reaching change of political and institutional structures related to regional policy. Changes at this level occur when a policy instrument, programme, etc. is readjusted or reoriented, or if a new instrument is added.

This programme wants to contribute to and is clearly in line with the aim of overcoming the barriers that national borders impose on balanced development and the integration of the European territory (INTERREG-Communication, item 3). As part of the Structural Funds, INTERREG III C is in line with the efforts to promote harmonious, balanced and sustainable development all over Europe. With this aim, INTERREG III C is also contributing to the cross sector orientation towards a process of balanced and sustainable territorial development in Europe, which is the core of the European Spatial Development Perspective. This programme would like to see as wide a participation as possible of third countries, especially the candidate countries.

The eligible operations under this programme will build on one or – in the case of RFOs several of the five Topics for Co-operation and may take the form of one out of three Types of Co-operation. By choosing one of the five Topics every operation is defining the content or substance of co-operation. Each Topic is referring to a certain sector of Structural Funds Interventions:

Table 2.1 Topics of Co-operation

Topic	refers to....
Topic a)	Objective 1 and 2
Topic b)	Interregional Co-operation related to Interreg-programmes
Topic c)	Interregional Co-operation related to Urban development
Topic d)	Interregional Co-operation related innovative actions
Topic e)	other appropriate subjects

By deciding on one out of three Types of Co-operation, an operation is deciding on the form of organising its work.

Table 2.2 Types of Co-operation

Type of Operation	is organised as
Type a)	Regional Framework Operation
Type b)	Individual Co-operation Project
Type c)	Network

The following chapter(2.2) gives a description of the Topics and Types of Co-operation foreseen in accordance with the INTERREG III C guidelines. Furthermore this programme will also provide some co-ordination activities to be carried out for the benefit of all the four INTERREG III C programmes. This is in view of the urgency to ensure an efficient and co-ordinated implementation of these programmes before the INTERACT programme is approved

2.2 Topics for Co-operation

The stock of experience with regional, national and European policies designed to promote regional development is too broad to be visible at a glance. It offers a rich potential for the exchange of experience but simultaneously makes it necessary to find a track along which the co-operation can be organised. As the system of Structural Funds policy is spread and well known all over Europe it can serve to give a structure to the exchange of experiences. Accordingly, INTERREG III C should be seen as a vehicle for promoting European interregional co-operation on the types of activities supported under the new regional and cohesion policies², in Structural Funds Objective 1 and 2 and INTERREG programmes, as well as the URBAN Community Initiative and urban development activities and the Regional Innovative Actions programmes, thus contributing to their overall improvement and adding value to the European Union's regional policy as a whole.

Due to their importance, a number of other subjects could be addressed under INTERREG III C. These include maritime and coastal co-operation, spatial planning issues, co-operation on insular and ultra-peripheral issues, on solutions to natural or man-made catastrophes as well as on alleviating the economic effects of handicaps such as very low population density or mountainous conditions.

² See the Commission Communication "The Structural Funds and their Co-ordination with the Cohesion Fund - Guidelines For Programmes", COM 344 final, 1 July 1999.

Based on the types of activities under the European regional and cohesion policy, the topics for interregional co-operation under this programme are as follows:

2.2.1 Topic a) Exchange on Types of Activities supported under Objective 1 and 2 of the Structural Funds

94% of Structural Fund expenditure is targeted through the mainstream Objective programmes. However, this expenditure tends to be focused on the regional level and there are currently limited opportunities to exchange information and experience with other regions in Europe. This topic is intended to address this issue by promoting direct co-operation between public authorities or equivalent bodies across Europe on the types of projects supported in Objective 1 and 2 programmes.

Partners would not need to be located in Objective 1 or 2 regions, but would have to be involved, or be interested in becoming involved, in the types of activities supported under Objective 1 and 2 programmes.

2.2.2 Topic b) Exchange on Interregional co-operation linking public authorities or equivalent bodies involved in other INTERREG programmes

The aim of this topic is to enable exchanges of experience and networking among border areas and among transnational areas. Actions can cover co-operation on cross-border and transnational activities, where a wider degree of co-operation would be beneficial. Actions could also focus on the implementation dimension of INTERREG programmes (for example networking among several secretariats of INTERREG III A- or B-programmes to examine procedures and operational structures).

So, INTERREG III C is aiming at promoting exchange of experiences collected under INTERREG III A- and B-programmes. Given the improvement of policies by exchanging experiences as the main goal of INTERREG III C, the focus is to contribute to develop better project approaches or policies for cross-border and transnational co-operation. INTERREG III C will be built on exchange of experience with and co-operation on cross-border and transnational projects or programmes. INTERREG III C-projects take the experiences collected with cross-border and transnational co-operation as the starting point to work on development of project and policy approaches – as long as this element is missing, a project can not be assisted under INTERREG III C.

This topic is limited to public authorities or equivalent bodies involved in current or previous INTERREG programmes.

2.2.3 Topic c) Exchange on interregional co-operation in the field of urban development

Urban development is currently one of the key regional policy issues in Europe. In addition to the targeted actions supported under the URBAN Community Initiative and the mainstream objective programmes, wider co-operation actions related to urban development issues should be encouraged.

This topic is open to all cities and urban areas, including small and medium-sized towns. Nevertheless, priority should be given to those proposals which contain at least one city or urban area receiving funding from Structural Funds programmes.

2.2.4 Topic d) Exchange on interregional co-operation linking regions³ involved under the three themes of the regional innovative actions for 2000-2006

The three priorities of the innovative actions for 2000-2006 are:

- regional economy based on knowledge and technological innovation;
- e-EuropeRegio: the information society and regional development;
- regional identity and sustainable development.

Each regional innovative actions programme will contain a strategy agreed between the different regional players for defining innovative measures. This strategy will constitute the framework for the implementation of individual projects, the transfer of results to programmes under Objectives 1 or 2 co-financed by the ERDF in the regions concerned and the exchange of experiences between regions. The strategy may be based on one of the three priorities, or on a combination of these priorities, in order to meet the needs of each region as fully as possible. Building on the contents of their individual innovative action programmes, regions may propose co-operation actions in order to transfer and implement successful project ideas to other regions.

³ As defined in the draft Commission communication on Innovative Actions (SEC(2000)1870).

As networking actions can be supported through the Regional Innovative Action programmes and through the programme "Promotion of innovation and encouragement of SME participation"⁴, INTERREG III C cannot support networking as described below under this topic.

2.2.5 Topic e) Exchange on other subjects appropriate to interregional co-operation

Additionally to the already mentioned Topics of Structural Funds activities, a number of other subjects appropriate for interregional co-operation could be addressed. These include maritime and coastal co-operation, spatial planning issues, co-operation on insular and ultra-peripheral issues, on solutions to natural or man-made catastrophes as well as on alleviating the economic effects of handicaps such as very low population density or mountainous conditions.

2.2.6 Strand C - co-ordination actions

On the initiative of the European Commission this programme includes a special priority on co-ordination between the four INTERREG III C zones, especially for the initial implementation phase and until the INTERACT programme has come into operation.

The activities required to coordinate the four III C zones have already been discussed with the Commission. It is planned to have them carried out in cooperation between the secretariats of different zones. The secretariat of the West Zone will mainly deal with the following:

- Organising coordination meetings between the Secretariats;
- Organising an INTERREG III C info-day;
- Organising a first Partner Search Forum.

⁴ The "Promotion of innovation and encouragement of SME participation" programme supports networking of regions which are developing regional innovation strategies. These activities are carried out in

Other actions considered appropriate by the INTERREG III C secretariats for an efficient and co-ordinated start-up of the programmes may also be considered for co-financing after consultation with the Commission.

Activities under this priority will be concentrated in 2001 and 2002. On a Commission proposal the activities will be co-financed at 90% and the resources from the ERDF will be allocated to the programme from the allocation under par.53 of the INTERREG guidelines.

2.3 Types of Operations

The co-operation under the five Topics may be organised along one of the following three types of operations. This chapter gives the definition and summary description of the three types. Important information on the definition of partners and the management processes for each of the types of operations is given later.

2.3.1 Operation Type (a) Regional Framework Operations

A regional framework operation (RFO) is aimed at exchanging experience on methodology and project-based activities among a group of regions. The goal is to produce a clear strategic approach to interregional co-operation for the participants, which will allow them to develop a process of exchange and learning, which can grow over the long-term.

The RFO is based on an interregional co-operation strategy covering the participating regions. Within the frame given with this programme, the RFO's strategy is forming a self-standing strategic framework which is kind of a "mini-programme". Each regional framework operation should address a limited range of subjects relevant to the regions participating, thus ensuring that interregional co-operation activity is better integrated into the economic and social development of the participating areas. In line with its strategy, a regional framework operation should cover a limited number of smaller projects.

The selection of RFO-internal projects is the responsibility of the regional partners co-operating in the RFO. They will form a "steering Committee" at RFO-level for the purpose of project selection. Each regional framework operation should be prepared by a group of regional authorities or equivalent regional bodies in a number of regions from a minimum of three countries of which at least two must be Member States. RFO-internal projects in

turn should involve participants from different countries. A regional framework operation under this programme can only be submitted by a lead partner that is located in the programme area. The other partners need not to be located in the programme area. Each participating competent authority should be supported by a regional partnership. The regional partnership would consist of the authorities and organisations in each region with a role to play in the regional framework operation.

A Regional Framework Operation is based on a detailed interregional co-operation strategy which is focused on a limited number of subjects and includes a detailed work-plan and forms the basis for project development and selection. The Strategy needs to give sound information on the management and implementation structures of the RFO. The strategy will indicate the expected concrete results that can be evaluated and disseminated. A detailed list of requirements for a regional framework operation is set out in Annex A.

As the Regional Framework Operation is a new type of co-operation, no region should participate in more than 2 such operations under INTERREG III C until the mid term review of the programme has been completed.

The total ERDF contribution for a regional framework operation may normally be between €500,000 and € 5 million. Regional framework operations can cover all the topics described in chapter 2.2. An indicative share of 50% to 80% of the funding under this programme should be allocated to RFOs.

Regions eligible to present a Regional Framework Operation are listed in Annex C. Of course a regional authority at a geographically lower level can present the Regional Framework Operation to the Managing Authority, as long as it is on behalf of the region defined in the annex.

2.3.2 Operation Type (b) Individual interregional co-operation project:

Individual interregional co-operation projects aim at exchanging experience on methodology and project-based activities. The goal is not merely a transfer of knowledge, but genuine co-operation on the realisation of various parts of the project, with a significant added value to the project participants. The implantation of project results from one region into another with a clear impact in the recipient region would be one concrete effect of such a project.

The Individual Co-operation Project is based on a detailed work programme, defining the expected outcome and concrete results and allowing for evaluation and dissemination of achievements.

Projects should involve partners from a minimum of three countries of which at least two must be Member States. Not more than 40% of the overall funding can go to the lead partner and the total ERDF contribution may normally be between €200,000 and €1,000,000.

Individual interregional co-operation projects can cover all the topics described in chapter 2.2. An indicative share of 10 to 30% of the funding under this programme should go to individual co-operation projects.

2.3.3 Operation Type (c) Networks:

Networks aim to link the various regions inside and outside the European Union on project implementation methods and development.

Only costs related to actions such as seminars, study trips and exchange of staff, all in order to exchange experience and pass on expertise, might be considered. However, networking should lead to concrete results, which can be evaluated and disseminated. All networking actions should have detailed work programmes, indicating the tasks to be carried out and the expected outcomes.

A network must have partners from at least 5 countries of which at least three must be Member States. The ERDF contribution may normally be between € 200,000 and € 1 million. All the aid will be paid to and managed by the lead partner of the network.

Networking can cover all the topics described in chapter 2.2 above with the exception of those related to Topic (d) which, as indicated, can be covered elsewhere. An indicative share of 10% to 20% of the funding under this programme should go to networks.

2.4 The logic of Co-operation

The three types of operations vary in the intensity of co-operation. Whilst a network is mainly organising the exchange of experience, the individual co-operation projects go further by co-operating in the realisation of a concrete project. The RFOs in turn add an element by integrating the co-operation into a self-standing strategic framework, which

forms the basis for the selection of projects within the RFO. Whilst intensity of co-operation is focussing on the process of co-operation within an INTERREG III C-project, it is also the quality of tangible output of the co-operation which is characteristic for INTERREG III C. Aiming at development of project approaches or policies, a certain innovation is required.

2.4.1 Intensity of Co-operation

The intensity of co-operation varies from exchange of experience, which is information and knowledge focused, to the development of concrete approaches, which emphasises the materialisation of ideas in tangible projects or new instruments. The different intensities of co-operation can be defined in relation to the overall goal of the intervention:

- Exchange and dissemination of experience enhances the capacity of the partners involved, but do not lead directly to changes in policy instruments or to new projects.
- Transfer of instruments or projects means the transfer of an existing element from one region to another. Under the overall aim of improving the effectiveness of policies and instruments for regional development, transfer may be located either at the level of projects or the level of policies.
- Development of new approaches can be a result of co-operation if something new is developed that goes beyond the knowledge and policy previously available in the region. Again this can happen at the level of projects or the level of policies.
- Joint Development of new approaches may it be at policy or at project level, involves a closer co-operation than the development of new approaches that can be done separately.

Depending on the Intensity of Co-operation the type of output that can be expected varies. In the case of exchange or dissemination of experience the gain in knowledge, the transfer of good ideas may be an output of the co-operation. A translation from the sphere of knowledge to action-oriented consequences, like e. g. a new type of project is not necessarily achieved. Therefore the most important product may be a document that proves the transfer of experience but rather has the status of a working document (e.g. a protocol, a report, a publication, etc.). In the case of transfer or development of instruments or projects, the drafting or implementation of the new element would be the product. That means that the product will materialise beyond the working and preparation stage. Changes on the level of a real project or a real programme or instrument are the

output. The following table gives an overview of the intensities of co-operation their definition and the output that can be expected.

Table 2.3 Intensity of Co-operation

Intensity	Definition	Output
1) Exchange and Dissemination of experience	The exchange of experiences enhances the capacity of the partner involved, but does not lead directly to changes in policy instruments or new projects	new Knowledge, Ability: learning
2) Transfer of instruments/projects	An instrument/project is transferred from one region to another	new Instrument, Project
3) development of new approaches (separately)	The co-operation results in the development of new approaches that are not only transferred within the operation, but create something new in at least one region involved	Innovative instrument, project
4) joint development of new approaches	The co-operation results in the joint development of a new instrument or approach. This is done by several regions involved together.	Innovative instrument, project

The three types of operations require different minimum levels concerning the intensity of co-operation:⁵

- A regional framework operation should reach at least the level of transferring instruments or projects. This requires that under the joint strategic approach, the projects of the RFO are carefully targeted to be as productive as possible in working together.
- Individual co-operation projects should reach the same intensity of co-operation. The difference to the RFOs is not only the size – in terms of partners involved and budget - , but rather the fact that individual co-operation projects are not embedded in a comparable strategic framework.
- As to networks, they do not need to work as intensively together to reach transfer or even the new development. It is sufficient to make clear that exchange and dissemination have been achieved.

2.4.2 Innovation

By assisting interregional co-operation, this programme aims at producing a specific quality of products. By aiming at improvement of the effectiveness of policies, the

⁵ The following gives the minimum requirements that should be achieved as output of the project. As the effects of co-operation are not limited to the output level, the impact might reach a higher intensity.

programme points to the necessity of developing existing policies, programmes and projects, beyond the status quo for allowing to better meet the regional needs.

In the best case, the regions participating profit from the changes in projects and programmes by enhancing their ability to solve regional problems. This gain in effectiveness of regional policies is reached by a certain amount of “innovativeness” of the newly developed projects and instruments that allow for a development beyond the status quo. This is why innovation is a crucial category to grasp the core logic of the programme.

For the purposes of this programme, innovation is defined on regional level: the product that derives from the co-operation should be something new compared to the already existing instruments and projects in the region.

2.5 Eligible Area and rate of assistance

Applications for projects can only be submitted by lead partners from the areas listed in annex B.

Non Member States can participate in Interreg III C programmes provided that they sign a corresponding letter of commitment specifying which zone they want to adhere to for the overall programme period. They will have the option to act as “functional lead partner” in that zone. This means that they can perform the tasks of a lead partner for a project. However, as ERDF funds cannot be administered by a Non Member State, the functional lead partner will need a “financial lead partner” from a Member State of the same zone who will be responsible for the use of the ERDF funds. There has to be a close cooperation between the functional and the financial lead partner. As this makes the administration of the project rather difficult, functional lead partners should be the exception rather than the rule. This does not prevent Non Member States from participating as project partners throughout all zones. Financing for partners from third countries can nonetheless not be provided under this programme, but needs to be taken from their own resources or relevant European Union funding sources (e.g. Phare, Tacis, Meda, etc.) in line with the funding rules for each source. Although the difficulties of joint financing with this sources are well known, it can be expected that the development of the next years, as described e.g. in the Phare Review will allow for a better co-ordination even before the candidates formally join the EU. To ease the co-operation as much as possible, travel and subsistence expenses of partners from outside the EU can be eligible costs for an operation when the meeting takes place in the EU and is part of an approved operation.

Under this programme ERDF Funds will finance up to 50%(in the case of partners coming from objective 1-regions up to 75%) of total eligible cost. The rate of assistance of 75% can be used by partners from objective 1-regions. In the technical assistance, ERDF will finance 50%.

The applications will indicate the share of budget going to objective 1-partners. The Calculation of the budget of a Network or Individual Co-operation project will be indicating which partners of the overall working programme will fall under the 75%-assistance. In the case of RFOs, the application will have to include a detailed calculation including binding figures giving the maximum amount of money to be used by partners from objective 1-regions.

2.6 Target Groups

For regional framework operations, the partners must be regional authorities or equivalent regional bodies with the capacity to take the full responsibility for the administration and spending of public funds within the RFO. Regional authorities include for example public administration on regional level or equivalent bodies. A definition of the territorial units understood as region in this context is given in Annex C.

For individual co-operation projects, networks and projects funded within a regional framework operation, the partners must be public authorities or equivalent bodies with the requisite capacity for administration and financial management of public funds. Examples include regional and local authorities, city authorities, (particularly for the urban development topic) or regional development agencies competent to manage public funds. Private participants can also participate in projects funded within a regional framework operation where the public authority concerned provides the necessary guarantees to ensure the proper management of public funds. Private participants and the above-mentioned equivalent bodies have to present a bank guarantee or a security of equivalent value showing the amount of funds from ERDF they are applying for. A fundamental condition for private resources to be part of national co-financing is that no claims are linked to the funding. Another condition is that private resources always must be connected with public funding.

As mentioned so far, each Type of Operation has to fulfil some specific criteria as summed up in the next table:

Table 2.4 Criteria for Applications – per Type of Operation

	OPERATIONS – Type of Application
--	----------------------------------

	Regional Framework Operations	Individual Projects	Networking
Minimum No of partner from Member States	regions from a minimum of three countries, of which at least 2 must be Member States	partners from a minimum of three countries, of which at least two must be Member States	partners from at least 5 countries, of which at least 3 must be Member States
Type of partners/participants	Regional authorities or equivalent regional bodies, on project level: public authorities or equivalent participant, private participant with public guarantee	Public authorities or equivalent bodies	Public authorities or equivalent bodies
Minimum intensity of Co-operation	Transfer	Transfer	dissemination, Exchange
ERDF contribution	€ 500.000 to € 5 million	€ 200.000 to € 1.000.000	€ 200.000 to € 1.000.000

Furthermore, the description of the strategic approach of this programme introduced a number of important issues that need to be covered by applications:

- Definition of a limited number of goals;
- Description of a clear, transparent work plan, describing the intensity of co-operation, the operation is aiming at;
- Description of the expected product of co-operation on level of project approaches or policy
- Description of the expected influence on the regions involved

A comprehensive list of issues to be dealt with in the application can be taken from the Annex A for the RFOs. More detailed information for applications will be provided under the Strand C co-ordination actions (2.2.6).

3. Provisions for Implementing the programme

The following sections describe the provisions for the implementation of the programme. Whilst chapter 3.1 gives the general information on the bodies involved in the management of the programme (tasks, list of members, etc.), chapter 3.2 gives a description of different processes that are necessary in the implementation.

3.1 The organisational Framework: Bodies for the implementation and management:

The management of this programme follows the management structure applicable for a Structural Funds Programme and will thus comprise:

- a Managing Authority,
- a Paying Authority,
- a Monitoring Committee,
- a Steering Committee,
- a Joint Technical Secretariat.

Chapter 3.1 is naming the bodies acting as Managing Authority, Paying Authority and Secretariats and defines the tasks of each of the bodies involved as well as of the Monitoring and Steering Committee. The next chapter 3.2 is describing the interplay between the different bodies in the different processes necessary for programme implementation.

3.1.1 The Managing Authority

Managing Authority of this programme is the

Conseil Regional Nord-Pas de Calais
Hôtel de Région
F-59 555 LILLE Cedex

The bank account of the Paying Authority is:

Domiciliation : **Siège Social**

40031	00001	0000249823W	33
<i>Banque</i>	<i>Guichet</i>	<i>Compte</i>	<i>Clé RIB</i>

FR81 4003 1000 0100 0024 9823 W33
<i>Identifiant Norme Internationale (IBAN)</i>

CDCG FR PP
Adresse SWIFT

According to Article 34 of the Structural Funds Regulation, the Managing Authority, assisted by the Joint Technical Secretariat will be responsible for efficient and correct management and implementation of the programme, in particular for:

- a) collection and transmission of reliable financial and statistical information on the implementation of the programme, including the monitoring and evaluation indicators of Annex F;
- b) preparation of the Annual and Final Implementation Report, presentation of the report to the Monitoring Committee for approval before final submission to the European Commission;
- c) organisation of the Mid-term Evaluation in co-operation with the Commission and the Member States;
- d) adjusting the programme at the request of the Monitoring Committee without changing the total amount of the contribution from ERDF;
- e) ensuring that all bodies involved in the management and implementation will be installing a separate accounting system or adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to ERDF assistance;
- f) ensuring the correctness/legality of operational payments and Technical Assistance budget, including the implementation of internal controls and corrective measures in line with a sound financial management as described in chapter 3.2.4;
- g) ensuring compliance with Community regulations
- h) promotion and presentation of the programme within and outside the West Zone
- i) information and publicity relating to measures
- j) liaison with the implementing authorities and other interested partners, as appropriate

- k) liaison with the European Commission, including forwarding of financial and implementation data, annual meetings (examination of results of the previous year) and implementation of any Commission recommendations for changes in monitoring and management procedures

3.1.2 The Paying Authority

The Paying Authority of this programme is the `Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations` (Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Directorate based in Lille). The paying authority is responsible for the payment of ERDF assistance, which includes in particular:

- a) drawing up and submitting payment applications to the European Commission;
- b) receiving payments from the Commission;
- c) payments to the beneficiaries;
- d) certifying the accuracy of declarations of expenditure presented to the Commission, in line with the procedures for the financial control as given in section 3.2.4
- e) receiving payments from the Member States for their share of the Technical Assistance budget

A single bank account held by the Paying Authority will be opened to receive and effect all necessary payments.

3.1.3 The Monitoring Committee

Within three months of official approval of the CIP by the European Commission, a Programme Monitoring Committee will be set up to supervise the programme. The Monitoring Committee will draw up its own rules of procedure. The Monitoring Committee will supervise the programme and satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the programme, and to this end it will:

- a) review annually the progress made towards achieving the specific objectives of the assistance;
- b) examine the results of implementation, particularly achievement of the targets set for the different measures and the mid-term evaluation;

- c) consider and approve the Annual and Final Implementation Report before they are sent to the Commission;
- d) consider and approve any proposal to amend the contents of the Commission decision on the contribution of the Funds;
- e) propose adjustments of the assistance to improve the goal-attainment or the management of the assistance, including in respect of financial management;
- f) approve of publicity measures, based on the outline of the publicity strategy in chapter 5;
- g) approve and if necessary adjust of the Terms of Reference for Calls for Project Proposals;
- h) re-orient of the project development process, if necessary to ensure that the strategic objectives are met;
- i) decide on the use of Technical Assistance.

The Monitoring Committee will be made of representatives of the National and Regional Authorities of the participating Member States. The involvement of the economic and social partners and non-governmental organisations (especially in the fields of equal opportunities and environment) will be organised according to the requirements of Article 8 of the general Regulation and specified in the Rules of Procedure. A representative of the European Commission, the Paying Authority, the European Investment Bank will participate in an advisory capacity.

3.1.4 The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be set up by the Member States. It will draw up its own rules of procedure and agree them with the Monitoring Committee. The Steering Committee will take the following tasks:

- a) decision on selection of projects;
- b) following of programme implementation.

The project selection will be in compliance with the selection procedure and criteria given in section 3.2.2 and Programme Complement.

The Steering Committee will be made of representatives of the National and Regional Authorities of the participating Member States. The involvement of the economic and social partners and non-governmental organisations (especially in the fields of equal opportunities and environment) will be organised according to the same principles as for the Monitoring Committee and specified in the Rules of Procedure. A representative of the European Commission, the Paying Authority, the European Investment Bank will participate in an advisory capacity.

3.1.5 The Programme Secretariat

The Secretariat will undertake the day-to-day implementation of the programme. It will assist the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee in the implementation of their tasks and responsibilities. Its work-plan will be approved by the Monitoring Committee. The Secretariat of this zone is:

West Zone INTERREG III C Secretariat
24, Boulevard Carnot
F – 59800 Lille

The secretariat will be entrusted with the proper preparation and/or execution of all tasks of the Managing Authority (Chapter 3.1.1, items a) to k). In addition to this the Secretariat will be responsible for the following:

- a) organising the preparation of decisions to be taken by the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee
- b) implementation and follow-up of all decisions made by the Monitoring and Steering Committees;
- c) implementing the publicity strategy;
- d) facilitating and initiating the development of III C-projects by using the publicity strategy and advising potential applicants, including on financial and technical issues. this task includes to keep contact with the responsible bodies of interested third countries to invite them to participate where possible;
- e) providing application forms, information packages, manuals, model contracts, etc. for the purpose of assisting potential project application, as far as this is not done by Interact;

- f) ensure the reception, examination and assessment of application for financing
- g) assistance to lead partners during the course of project implementation;
- h) implementation of Technical Assistance measures adopted by the Monitoring Committee;
- i) keeping contact with the secretariats of the other three III C-programming zones and the activities under Interact and taking care of a proper exchange of experience;
- j) co-operation with the other secretariats on the tasks described in 3.4
- k) keeping the responsible bodies in third countries informed about the approved project applications as far as they demonstrated their interest.

Further tasks may be added by the Monitoring Committee.

3.2 Management Structures:

Based on the experience with transnational co-operation in programme management collected under INTERREG II C and III B, a clear and transparent programme management system will be created. It consists of different distinct processes that are described in the following sections.

3.2.1 Project Development

As INTERREG III C opens the funding by ERDF to a new field of activity one can not rely to the same degree as in already established programmes on project promoters experience with the development of applications. Instead it is likely to be necessary to provide for assistance and support to those developing projects. The support under this programme comprises the following elements:⁶

- All Member States participating in this programme are taking care of spreading the information on the funding to potential applicants. They already started doing this in the course of programming and will continue to do so. The secretariat will do the same as

⁶ Please note that some basic information can be taken from this programme.

soon as it starts working. All activities of this kind will be integrated in the Plan for Information and Publicity (Chapter 5)

- Advise to lead partner on how to draft their project application will be given by the secretariat.

Member States as well as the Secretariat will take care of keeping the responsible authorities of interested third countries informed about project development and opportunities to join developing projects. Other assistance to project partners and secretariats will come from the Interact programme, this will include amongst others:

- organising exchange on information and application documents to guarantee that all potential applicants and project partner get the same information wherever they might be located.
- assisting the establishment of partnerships by helping to find interested actors, e.g. by means of a database or events.
- providing technical assistance to projects in form of model-contracts

3.2.2 Project Selection:

The project application and selection process can be split up in the following steps:

1. The Monitoring Committee initiates a Call for proposal. The Call is drafted by the Management Authority assisted by the Secretariat in close co-ordination in terms of timing and selection criteria with the other three programming zones of INTERREG III C.
2. The project application is submitted by the lead partner to the Secretariat. Applications under this programme can only be submitted by lead partners located in the area of this zone - irrespective of the fact that projects may include partner from the whole eligible area. The application has to follow the rules concerning the Target Groups (2.6) Given the Topics for Co-operation and Types of Operations, each application has to indicate the Type of Operation and the Topic covered. As a rule, one application will cover exactly one topic and comprise on type of operation, only a RFO may cover more than one Topic as long as it deals with a limited range of subjects.

In the course of the next steps in the selection process, two different sets of criteria are applied to come to the decision of approving an application. A first set consists of the

rather formal criteria for eligibility – it gives the minimum requirements that an application has to meet. In this step projects which do not fulfil the eligibility criteria are sorted out. The next filter consists of criteria for selection of applications. These criteria form the basis for an assessment of the application with the aim of bringing the projects in a certain order for selection. So the next steps are:

4. Having received an application, the Secretariat will check the eligibility according to the criteria set out in the Programme Complement. Each application will be checked against 1) the core-eligibility criteria that apply for all projects, 2) the topic-specific criteria and 3) the operation specific criteria. Applications that do not fulfil the eligibility criteria are sorted out on a separate list together with the written reasons for doing so. Both the list with eligible and the list with the not eligible applications are handed over to the steering committee.

5. In a next step the Secretariat will organise a ranking of eligible applications based on the selection criteria given in the Programme Complement. The ranking will be done by a point-system.

6. Based on the ranking provided by the Secretariat, the Steering Committee will finally decide at its sessions on the admission of the applications. It will give written reasons if it decides to deviate from the list prepared during the ranking process.

3.2.3 Description of the Monitoring and Evaluation-System

Monitoring

The Monitoring of this programme will provide information on the implementation at any given time. It will cover financial issues as well as information on the achievement and goal-attainment at project level. The Monitoring will ensure the quality and effectiveness of implementation by assessing the progress of the projects against the goals of the programme. The Monitoring will make use of the regular reports from the lead partners of the projects. In terms of content, it will concentrate on the products that will be output of the co-operation and exchange and will aim at grasping the effects of the broader use of innovative ideas and instruments that has been achieved by disseminating the elements through interregional co-operation.

The monitoring system will provide the information as required in Annex IV of the Regulation on the Management and Control Systems (EC No.438/2001). It will include the classification of operations and the information. Furthermore and according to annex B of

the Interreg III C Communication, as soon as a sufficient number of applications have been approved, the monitoring system will include additional quantified indicators to cover programme-specific aspects. The Programme Complement will give a minimum core for monitoring and evaluation indicators. These indicators will i.a. cover the cross-cut fields of equal opportunities and environmental/sustainable development and will form the basis for the monitoring system. In the course of the programme, the list of indicators may be completed by the Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority may take the initiative to propose additional indicators.

The lead partners of the projects will be obliged to report regularly on the effects achieved. The secretariat will collect and compile the data stemming from these reports in order to allow for conclusions on the programme level. The Managing Authority will use this documentation to draft – together with additional information on the financial implementation – the Annual and Final Implementation Reports and submit them to the Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee will assess the Monitoring information on the basis of a yearly report on the status of the Monitoring System. The Monitoring information will form one important basis for the mid-term evaluation.

The information made available to the Commission will be presented in a database format in line with the Annex IV of the Regulation on Management and Control Systems. It will be transmitted in a format following the technical specifications of Annex V of the same regulation. The Monitoring Committee will define, on the basis of a proposal of the Managing Authority, the concrete database structure and transfer specifications. The Managing Authority will take care to implement the system.

Annual Implementation Report

The Managing Authority will, by June 30 of each year following a full calendar year of implementation, submit to the Commission an annual implementation report. The annual reports will be drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the Monitoring Committee before they are sent to the Commission.

The yearly implementation report will be based on the information provided by the Monitoring system as outlined above. It will go beyond the scope of the monitoring by including, according to annex B of the Interreg III C communication, also information on the additional evaluation indicators. Therefore the annual implementation reports will form an important basis for the evaluation of the programme.

Within six months after the final date of eligibility, a Final Implementation Report will be submitted to the Commission following the same rules like the Annual Implementation Reports.

Evaluation

The programme will be subject of a mid-term evaluation in accordance with Article 42 of the Structural Funds Regulation. An independent expert will be appointed to examine the implementation of the programme against its rationale, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The mid-term evaluation will start with taking stock of the initial results of the programme, their relevance and the extent to which these results are in line with the Programme objectives. It will assess the adequacy of the system for the financial management and administration. The evaluation will provide recommendations for the remainder of the programme. Furthermore, the evaluation will i.a. take account of the cross-cut fields of equal opportunities and environment/sustainable development.

The Secretariat will provide the evaluator with the required information and make sure that he can use all available information, e.g. from the monitoring and Annual Implementation Reports. The results of the evaluation will be forwarded to all members of the co-operation structure and the Commission. The Monitoring Committee will discuss and comment all recommendations of the evaluator. It will decide on the necessity of reprogramming, including reallocation of funding.

Having in mind the fact that the eligible area is the same for all four INTERREG III C-programmes, there is a strong argument that a good co-ordination of the evaluations makes sense. The Monitoring Committee will be responsible to try to co-ordinate its evaluation efforts, in terms of terms of reference, etc. as good as possible with the other zones. It will especially check the possibility to carry out the evaluations together for the four zones or at least to charge the same evaluator as in other zones.

In Compliance with Art.43 of the Structural Funds Regulation, the ex-post evaluation is the responsibility of the Commission together with the Member States and the Managing Authority. It will also be carried out by an independent evaluator.

3.2.4 Description of the system for Payment, Financial Management and Control

Concerning the financial flows, their administration and control, the programme has to provide for the management of the relation between the programme and the Commission on the one hand, and the programme and the beneficiaries on the other. The System for payment, financial management, and control has been designed in line with the Commissions Regulation on “detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No.1260/1999 as regards the management and control systems for assistance granted under the Structural Funds”. The system applied under this programme consists of the following elements:

- 1) a system ruling the conditions for payment of grants a) from the Commission to the Paying Authority and b) from the Paying Authority to the projects.
- 2) a system of financial control consisting of an independent certification of expenditure (according to Article 9 of the Management and Control Regulation) and sample checks on operations (Article 10 to 14 of the same regulation).

One of the central preconditions for a sound and transparent financial management is a clear-cut overview of the location of relevant information. This forms the basis for all payment and control purposes as well as the communication with the Commission. The information management has to make sure that the requirements of Article 18 of the Management and Control Regulation are met. The following should make transparent where the necessary information is located and how it is reported within the management system of the programme.

3.2.4.1 Financial Management of the Programme in relation to the Operations

The main difficulty in financial management of the programme stems from the fact that each project consists of partners from several Member States. This complicates the checking of eligibility of costs or defining the value of accounting documents due to the differences of national systems. A consequence is that this programme is strictly trying to locate the responsibility for systematic checks at the most appropriate level, which is in general:

- the level of the managing authority to organise the detailed rules for the checks on the project level as regards the correctness, legality, and eligibility of expenditure, whilst the main responsibility lies with the lead partners;

- the lead partners to check the reality of the service carried out and the expenditure declared. But the lead partner normally is not competent to fulfil a full check of the expenditure as far as the eligibility of costs (according to national provisions) and the value of documents submitted as proof of payment are concerned.

As a general rule the financial control system should involve checks done by external auditors where appropriate. This should be done at least always when a separated part of an operation is finished. So the external audit will be a rule when 1) a project within a RFO is finished, 2) when an individual co-operation project is finished, 3) when a Network operation is finished. Whether the auditing can be done by one auditor for the whole project or by several for the different national parts of it, is up to the responsible Lead Partner (regional lead partner in case of RFO).

Every single operation has to submit a report on the progress of its work, including information on the financial expenditure, a register of the supporting documents and their location, the functioning of the internal control and financial administration system, as well as information on the monitoring and evaluation indicators to the Paying Authority, the Managing Authority and the Secretariat at least every six months.

The three possible types of operation differ in the structure of financial management and control. Whilst for example the RFO grants are paid to the lead partner, but finally spent by the other partners, the network grants are spent by the lead partner directly. The financial management and control is described below separately for each type of operations.

The financial management systems are described below. Other systems that are in accordance with the Commission regulation 438/2001, particularly annex 1 of that regulation can be adopted with the agreement of all member states and the Commission.

a) Financial Management of a RFO

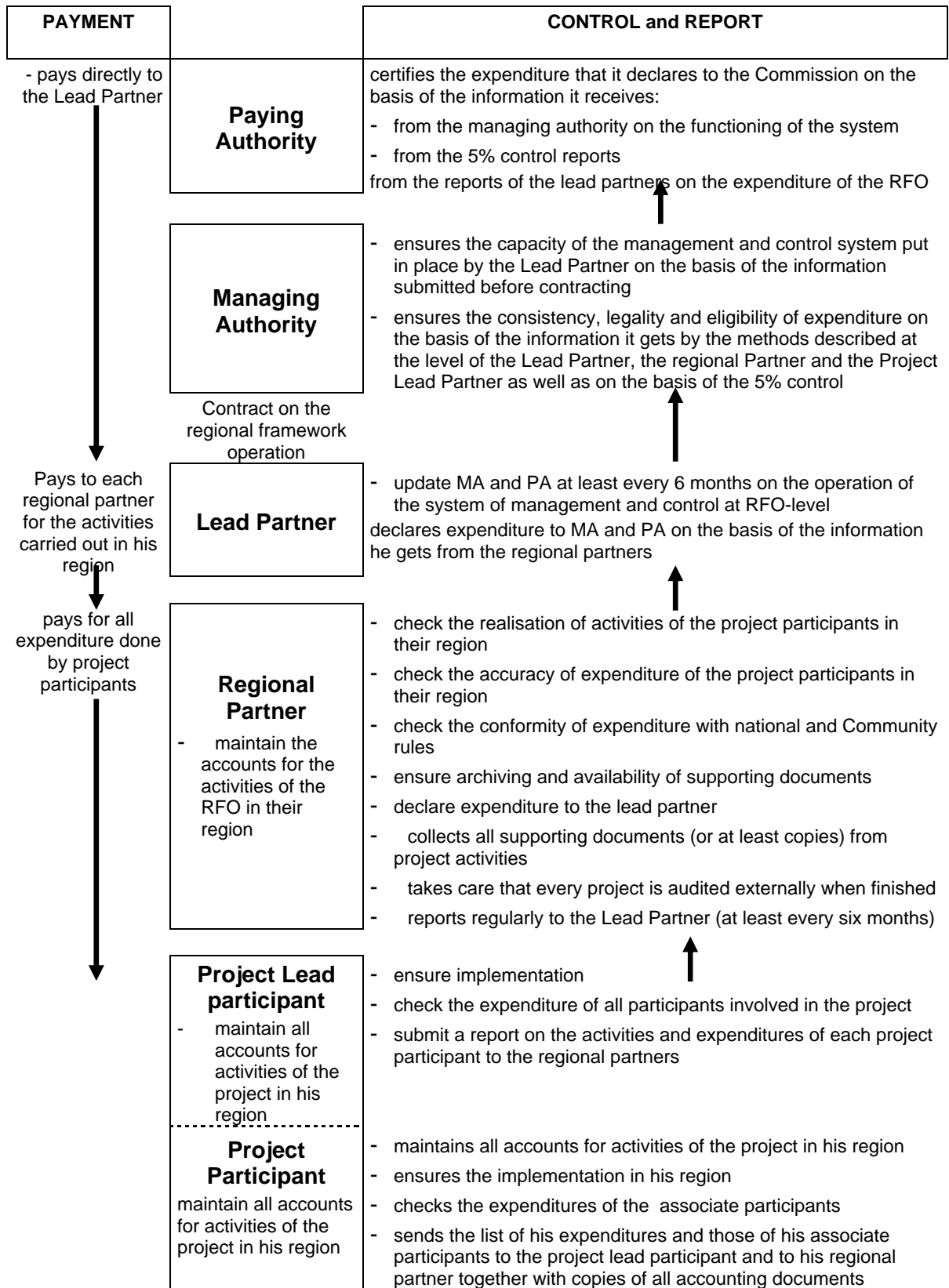
The Management Authority concludes a contract on the regional framework operation with the regional lead partner. The Managing Authority ensures the capacity of the management and control system put in place by the lead partner to ensure the reality of the work done and of declared expenditure, in particular on the basis of the information submitted before the signature of the contract. A description of the management and control system put in place at the lead partners office and his partners offices, including the control and checking procedures, should be included in the documents accompanying the contract. The activity reports submitted by the lead partner must provide regular

updates on the operation of the system. The Managing Authority also ensures the consistency, legality and the eligibility of expenditure on the basis of the methods described below as well as the reports on project controls representing 5% of their expenditure.

The Paying Authority of the programme pays ERDF appropriations only directly to the lead partner. The agreements between the Member States concerned will reserve the Paying Authority the right to request all additional information and checking from the Managing Authority which would be necessary for the fulfilment of its responsibilities.

A RFO will consist of a lead partner and several regional partners, each of which is supported by a regional network of other actors involved. Within this RFO single projects will be implemented. The regional partners are responsible to the lead partner for all projects or parts of projects carried out in their regional network, this includes checking the realisation of activities and the expenditure and declaring the expenditure to the lead partner. On the level of the single project within a RFO in turn the responsibility for checking the realisation and expenditure lies with the project lead participant who reports to the regional partner. The system of payment and control of a RFO is cascade-like and stretches from the programme level to the single project:

Table 3.1 Financial Management of a RFO





- submits a report on the activities done in his area to the project lead participant






b) Financial Management of Individual Co-operation Projects

The Paying Authority is transferring payments only to the lead partner, who in turn is responsible for payments to the project partners. The Paying Authority is including the expenditure declared to it by the lead partner in the regular reports in its certified declarations of expenditure to the Commission.

The Managing Authority is concluding a contract with the lead partner, including a description of the management and control system for financial transfer and expenditure established in the project. The contract obliges the lead partner to ensure the expenditures are in accordance with national rules, which is if needed to be confirmed by an independent auditor. On the basis of the contract and on the basis of the activity reports, the MA is ensuring the reality of work carried out and expenditure.

The Lead partner receives the funds and is responsible for the correct use within the project. The Lead Partner assures that the project is carried out in accordance with the contract. Each partner is submitting regularly his contribution to the activity report and the certificate of expenditure to the lead partner, who is compiling the regular report on activity and expenditure to the PA and MA.

Table 3.2 Financial Management of Individual Co-operation Projects

PAYMENT		CONTROL and REPORT
<p>- pays directly to the Lead Partner</p> 	<p>Paying Authority</p>	<p>certifies the expenditure that it declares to the Commission on the basis of the information it receives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from the managing authority on the functioning of the system - from the 5% control reports - from the reports of the lead partners on the expenditure of the individual co-operation project 
	<p>Managing Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asks the lead partner to ensure that the expenditure declared has been in accordance with the national rules - ensures the capacity of the management and control system put in place by the Lead Partner on the basis of the information submitted before contracting - ensures the consistency, legality and eligibility of expenditure on the basis of the information it gets by the methods described at the level of the Lead Partner as well as on the basis of the 5% control 
<p>Pays to the partners for the activities carried out in their region.</p> 	<p>Contract on the regional individual co-operation project</p> <p>Lead Partner keeps the accounts for the whole project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensures that the project is carried out as agreed by contract - ensures that all expenditure relates to the project and is correct - submits reports of activity and expenditure to the MA and PA every 6 months, including audit certificates from an independent auditor, if necessary - takes care that every partner's expenditure is audited externally when finished - collects at least copies of all supporting documents 
	<p>Partner maintain the accounts for the activities individual co-operation project in their region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keeps the accounts for all expenditure made by him and other participants in the project in his zone - assures archiving and availability of supporting documents - sends 6monthly his contribution to the activity report and the certificate of expenditure to the Lead partner

c) Financial Management of Networks

All aid will be paid by the PA to the responsible organisation of the networks (in accordance with Paragraph 37 of the INTERREG III C guidelines). The responsible organisation of the network will pay the costs of the network directly to the participants. The responsible organisation of the network should be regarded as the sole beneficiary of

the grant. It carries out all the payments in compliance with national rules. It organises and ensures the management and control of all activities of the network.

The responsible organisation is the only interlocutor to MA and PA. The checks on financial matters will be carried out according to the rules of the Member State where the responsible organisation is located. The Managing Authority may ask the responsible organisations to submit - together with the activity report, the certification of expenditure which is supported by copies of audit certificates from an independent body.

Table 3.3 Financial Management of Networks

PAYMENT	CONTROL and REPORT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pays to the responsible organisation of the network 	<p>Paying Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> certifies the expenditure that it declares to the Commission on the basis of the information it receives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from the 5% control reports - from the reports of the responsible organisation on the activities and expenditure of the network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pays all costs directly 	<p>Managing Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organises and ensures the management and control of all activities in the network - submits reports of activity and certification of expenditure to the MA and PA, if necessary complemented by the copy of and audit certificate - ensures filing and availability of all documentary evidence - takes care that the network activities are audited externally at least when finished

3.2.4.2 Financial management of the programme in relation to the Commission

All payments by the Commission are transferred to the account of the Paying Authority. Once the payment on account according to Article 32 of the Structural Funds Regulation is done, all following payments (interim payments and final balance) are done on the basis of the expenditure actually paid out and work completed. It is the Paying Authority who undertakes it to draw and submit payment applications to the Commission. The Paying Authority will take care of organising the certification of expenditure according to Art.9 of the Management and Control Regulation and of giving the statement of expenditure. The basis for certifying the expenditure is different for the three types of operations:

Table 3.4 Basis for certifying expenditure

Regional Framework Operations	Individual Co-operation Projects	Networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reports from the lead partner on the expenditure - information from the management authority on the functioning of the system for financial control at the level of the RFO - 5% project control reports (see beyond) - external audit on project level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - report from the lead partner on the expenditure - information from the management authority on the functioning of the systems for financial control at the level of ICP - 5% project control reports - external audit on project level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reports of the responsible organisation on the activities and expenditure of the network - 5% project control reports - external audit on project level

According to point 31 of the INTERREG III C-Communication, each Member state shall nominate a body responsible for the financial control of partners located in his country, who are participating in a III C-operation under any of the four III C-programmes. For the Member States of this programme, the bodies responsible for the financial control are given in Annex D. The Member States will take care that III C-projects are audited in line with the same standards as applicable in Single Programming Documents and Operational Programmes in the Member States. The Managing Authority of this programme will take care of informing all bodies responsible for financial control about the details of those partners financed under this programme that are located in their area.

The Member States responsible for this programme will ensure that sample checks covering at least 5% of the total eligible expenditure under this programme are carried out. The method for selecting projects for sample checks will be described in more detail in a special agreement between the 15 Member States. They will take care that the selection of this checks will be representative for the mix of types and sizes of operations under this programme. They will also take into account risk factors identified as well as concentration of operations under certain bodies when selecting the sample to be checked. The Member States will furthermore assure that the checks are distributed over the funding period. The reports on the checks and if necessary on the up-dating of the system for financial control will be submitted to the Commission by 30 June each year.

In the case that day-to-day management or 5%-checks discover serious errors, which lead to cancelling all or part of the Community contribution, the MA and PA will cancel or reallocate the funds and simultaneously account for the cancelled or recovered funds vis-à-vis the Commission. In the case the MA or PA are not able to recover the unjustified funding from the lead partner, the responsibility rests with the Member State concerned. In the case of a net correction by a Commission decision on the basis of Art.39, paragraph 3 of regulation 1260/1999, responsibility of the Member States is limited to the errors and expenditure irregularities committed by partners and associated participants located on

their national territory. Each Member States bears the possible financial consequences of irregularities committed by the partners and associated participants located on its national territory, even for the partners of projects financed by Interreg III C programmes for which it has no responsibility⁷.

The Member States are responsible to declare the programme closure vis-à-vis the Commission. The closure declaration is prepared by an independent person or service from the Member State where the MA or PA is located.

3.3 Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance will be spent on activities necessary for the effective and smooth management and implementation of the programme. An important element for this is a competent and efficient day-to-day work that holds together the flow of information between the bodies involved, prepares the decision making properly, oversees the information collected and its use in the programme management. To fulfil this tasks, a highly skilled and professional secretariat is inevitable.

As III C-introduces a new approach, special emphasis will be given to the assistance and advise in the development of projects. Technical assistance will be invested in the promotion of the programme, awareness rising, pro-active project search and interactive development. The strategy will be built on broad involvement of multiple actors on national and European level and is aiming in activating them.

Besides the information and advise given to potential applicants, a broader dissemination of the achievement of this programme is foreseen under the Plan for information and publicity. Activities necessary to do so are also part of TA.

External advise may be needed to assist gathering and processing of data, implementing a computerised management system, and so on. Additional advise may be necessary on specific questions of managing a programme to assist international co-operation,

⁷ Concerning financial liability, the Member States responsible for this programme favour the solution described here. They are aware that the precondition for this solution is that the other Zones adopt the same approach. At the time this programme is being submitted to the Commission, the other Zones did not yet confirm the solution proposed here.

Also the UK did not yet agree to this proposal on liability. UK is aware of the need to find a quick solution and will resolve the issue within the next days (after 14 November 2001).

concerning e.g. the development of projects and drafting of the legal documents that form the basis for the organisational framework of the co-operation projects.

Another element that will need spending of TA is the tasks of evaluation.

According to rule 11 of the annex of the Eligibility Regulation, TA is calculated separately for the expenditure directly related to administration, implementation, monitoring, and control of the programme on the one hand, and other expenditure (e.g. studies, evaluations, information, seminars, etc.) on the other. The TA under this programme will only fund activities directly related to the programme, whereas the Strand C co-ordination activities (2.2.6) will be designed to co-ordinate the activities of all four zones. All activities falling under Strand C co-ordination activities will be excluded from the TA budget of this programme and funded from the budget for the strand C co-ordination activities. In relation to these tasks, the TA budget will only cover the adaptation and specification for this zones needs, if necessary.

The ERDF contribution to this programme`s TA budget will be 50%. The technical assistance under this programme will be supplemented by the activities under the Interact-programme.

3.4 Interplay with other programme-zones

The eligibility of projects with partners from all over Europe leads to projects that overlap different programming zones. A minimum co-ordination on programme level is inevitable and needs to be foreseen concerning selection criteria, financial control, rate of assistance, eligibility, monitoring and evaluation.

4. Coherence with EU policies

The activities of INTERREG III C focus on issues being part of other structural fund programmes. This coherence with structural funds is a core element of this programme and guarantees that the activities are in line with EU-policies in content (as given in item 25 of the III C-communication). It will be one of the central tasks of the evaluations of this programme to analyse the value-added in terms of the EU-policies, including the horizontal policies like environment and equal opportunities.

Although the programme is mainly targeted to public authorities, private actors may form part, but this must clearly be the minority. Nonetheless, If the involvement of private actors

includes enterprises, the rules of competition policy and the obligation for notification will certainly be respected. The Member States confirm that any state aid that might be provided under this programme will either be in conformity with the de minimis rule or with aid schemes implemented under one of the block exemption regulations or other exemption regulations or will be notified to the Commission in accordance with notification rules. Especially the following regulations will be observed: Commission regulation (EC) No.68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Art. 87 and 88 of the EC treaty to training aid, Commission regulation (EC) No. 69/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Art. 87 and 88 of the EC treaty to de minimis aid, Commission regulation (EC) No. 70/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Art. 87 and 88 of the EC treaty to aid to small and medium sized enterprises, all of them published in the Official Journal L 10, 13.1.2001.

To avoid double funding of measures, which could be eligible under the INTERREG as well as under the LEADER+ or the rural development scheme, the same institutions should be involved for advising and approving project applications. In case of any support of projects falling in the scope of agriculture the Common Agricultural Policy, in particular the Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999 has to be respected. Also the Community Guidelines for State Aid in the Agricultural Sector (2000/C28/02) do apply, meaning that only projects in the frame of approved state aids could be supported. New state aids have to be notified and approved by the Commission. The above mentioned Community Guidelines do not apply for projects concerning diversification of agricultural activities pursuant to article 33 of Regulation (EC) No. 1257/1999, which are not related to "Annex 1 of the Treaty", like projects concerning rural tourism or creation of craft activities. These projects are supported only in the frame of the "de minimis rule" block exemption regulation.

To be eligible for funding, projects under this programme must take into account equal opportunities for men and women, must contribute towards sustainable development and be coherent with the objectives of protection and improvement of the environment foreseen by the Treaty and EU legislation. The Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that this requirement is fulfilled.

5. Plan for information and publicity

This programme and the results it produces will be subject to a comprehensive information and publicity strategy aiming at the widest possible degree of participation and information of public and private actors, as well as the dissemination of the results. The strategy will make use of all available channels of communication to disseminate the information. Specific emphasis will lie in the opportunities offered by electronic media:

homepages, mailing lists, etc. will form integral part of the overall strategy. The overall strategy consists of two parts:

1. As far as the publicity activities are aiming at the potential involvement of actors in projects, they are described in chapter 3.2.1. In this field of informing and involving the public, this programme and the Interact-activities will mutually reinforce each other. The activities include the publication of the central approach of the programme, the distribution of documents for information, as well as the information on the progress of implementation. The Publication strategy will undertake efforts explicitly oriented at the information of potential project partners from third countries and will be co-ordinated with the responsible authorities of third countries interested in the programme.
2. Besides this a broader public will be informed about progress of the programme and its results. The distribution of the output of the programme contributes to the dissemination of newly developed approaches and allows for additional potential of effects of the programme.

The publication measures are part of the responsibility of the Managing Authority. The Managing authority will develop a detailed communication plan to implement this strategy and will submit the detailed plan within three months after the approval of the programme. As the co-ordination with Interact is crucial, the communication plan will be submitted with delay, in the case that the Interact programme is not yet finished. The co-ordination may lead to the need to revise this chapter of the programme.

6. Indicative Financial table

Each Member State is contributing its share of INTERREG III C money to this programme. In the case of Germany and France, which are participating in more than one INTERREG III C zone, those Member States decided themselves how to distribute the money to the programmes. The sum of all single national shares of ERDF money is the overall ERDF contribution available under this programme.

Due to the opportunity offered to give partner from objective 1-regions an assistance rate of 75%, the national contribution is somewhat difficult to calculate. The reason for the difficulties is that one can not know in advance how many projects will involve partner or participants from objective 1-regions. It depends on the project applications to show how frequently a co-operation with objective 1-partners is planned. So to calculate the financial tables, one can only assume an effective average rate of assistance, which is in case of this programme expected to be 60%.

- The contribution from the ERDF is calculated in relation to the total eligible cost.

As concerns the private participation, one has to keep in mind that INTERREG III C is mainly oriented to public actors. The opportunities for private contribution are therefore very limited and the financial calculation is assuming a 5% share of financial contribution from private actors.

For TA purposes, a share of 5% has been foreseen. The following table gives the indicative breakdown of the TA-budget according to rule 11 of the Eligibility Regulation.

Table 6.1 Breakdown of TA budget

Tabelle 6.2

	% ERDF	ERDF	National	Total
TOTAL TA budget	4,88%	4.587.688	4.587.688	9.175.376
Expenditure for Management, Implementation, Monitoring and Control (rule 11, 2)	4,50%	4.230.450	4.230.450	8.460.900
other Expenditure, including seminars, studies, evaluation, information, etc (rule 11, 3)	0,38%	357.238	357.238	714.476

Table 6.3 Financial Table – West Zone Interreg III C
Tabelle 6.4

Financial Table – West Zone INTERREG III C						
	Public Expenditure					Third Countries
	Total Costs	Total public	ERDF	National	Private*	
Operations	149.037.190	146.056.446	89.422.314	56.634.132	2.980.744	7.434.067
2001	22.428.427	21.979.858	13.457.056	8.522.802	448.569	1.119.100
2002	25.451.318	24.942.292	15.270.791	9.671.501	509.026	1.269.596
2003	25.279.242	24.773.657	15.167.545	9.606.112	505.585	1.261.204
2004	25.332.085	24.825.443	15.199.251	9.626.192	506.642	1.264.054
2005	25.201.760	24.697.725	15.121.056	9.576.669	504.035	1.255.900
2006	25.344.358	24.837.471	15.206.615	9.630.856	506.887	1.264.213
Technical Assistance	9.175.376	9.175.376	4.587.688	4.587.688	0	0
2001	1.380.792	1.380.792	690.396	690.396	0	0
2002	1.566.894	1.566.894	783.447	783.447	0	0
2003	1.556.300	1.556.300	778.150	778.150	0	0
2004	1.559.552	1.559.552	779.776	779.776	0	0
2005	1.551.530	1.551.530	775.765	775.765	0	0
2006	1.560.308	1.560.308	780.154	780.154	0	0
Total	158.212.566	155.231.822	94.010.002	61.221.820	2.980.744	7.434.067
2001	23.809.219	23.360.650	14.147.452	9.213.198	448.569	1.119.100
2002	27.018.212	26.509.186	16.054.238	10.454.948	509.026	1.269.596
2003	26.835.542	26.329.957	15.945.695	10.384.262	505.585	1.261.204
2004	26.891.637	26.384.995	15.979.027	10.405.968	506.642	1.264.054
2005	26.753.290	26.249.255	15.896.821	10.352.434	504.035	1.255.900
2006	26.904.666	26.397.779	15.986.769	10.411.010	506.887	1.264.213
Additional priority (2.2.6), ERDF-Contribution financed under Art.53 of the INTERREG guidelines						
Strand C Co-ordination	1.111.111	1.111.111	1.000.000	111.111	0	0
2001	277.778	277.778	250.000	27.778	0	0
2002	833.333	833.333	750.000	83.333	0	0

* Although the participation of private actors under this programme is warmly welcome, their indicative financial contribution is hard to estimate in advance. If the indicative 5% private contribution is not realised, the Member States will guarantee the total national cofinancing from public resources.

Annexes:

- A: Information to be provided in proposals for a regional framework operation**
- B: Programming Area - West Zone**
- C Definition of Regions**
- D: Bodies responsible for the financial control of INTERREG III C-operations**

Annex A: Information to be provided in proposals for a regional framework operation

Regional framework operation proposals should contain the following information to help the Programme Steering Committee decide on a contribution from the ERDF budget for a regional framework operation. Proposals should not exceed 20-25 pages as a rule.

Introduction

A brief description of the regions, identifying their particular strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats to development.

Content

A description of the proposed operation, its scope (including geographic coverage), its specific aims, its duration and the composition of the partnership involved in preparing the regional framework operation proposal.

- Objectives and expected results (quantified if possible),
- a description of the interregional strategy to promote co-operation targeting a limited number of subjects,
- the subjects for co-operation,
- a description of the types of projects to be funded (studies, pilot projects, strategic planning, participation in networks, etc.),
- the number of partners and other participants,
- the division of financing among regions (not more than 40% for the lead partner) and the justification for the division and the total budget,
- a detailed workplan and timetable for the implementation of the operation,
- a description of the potential influence of the regional framework operation on other structural funds programmes co-financed by the ERDF,
- compatibility and synergy with other Community policies,
- indicative project selection criteria,
- procedures and conditions for applications by potential beneficiaries,

- main target groups.

Management and implementation

This section should include arrangements for co-operation between the regional authorities responsible for the preparation and implementation of the proposal and the managing authorities for other structural funds programmes co-financed by the ERDF.

- Lead partner to be designated by the partners as the managing body for the operation,
- the composition of the Steering Committee which oversees the implementation and monitoring of the operation, including the selection of projects,
- a description of the implementation system,
- a description of the financial system,
- a description of the control system,
- practical arrangements for exchange of information and co-operation between the partners,
- monitoring and evaluation provisions.

Financing plan

- Total cost: the ERDF contribution and public and private contributions broken down by the subjects to be covered by the operation,
- rate(s) of assistance envisaged for actions (broken down by Objective 1, Objective 2 and non-objective areas where different rates of assistance are used).

Partnership

- Description of the consultation procedure at the operation drafting stage.

Information and promotion

- A description of publicity and information activities to promote the operation.

Annex B: Programming Area - West Zone

Member State	Eligible areas
France	Nord-Pas de Calais, Picardie, Haute-Normandie, Île de France, Basse-Normandie, Centre, Champagne-Ardennes, Lorraine, Bourgogne, Alsace, Franche-Comté, Bretagne, Pays de la Loire
Belgium	Whole country
Netherlands	Whole country
Luxembourg	Whole country
Germany	Nordrhein-Westfalen, Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg
United Kingdom	Whole country (except Gibraltar)
Ireland	Whole country

Annex C: Definition of Regions

The list given here comprises the definition of territorial units forming a region eligible to take part as lead partner or partner in a Regional Framework Operation (RFO) under this programme. Regional authorities at a geographically lower level can be either lead partner or partner in a Regional Framework Operation on behalf of the region defined in the following list⁹. This list includes not only the countries of this programme, but all Member States.

Table C.1 Definition of Regions participating in the West Zone

Country	Name	NUTS level	Objective (including phasing out)
BE	BELGIQUE-BELGIË	P000	
BE1	REG. BRUXELLES-CAP. / BRUSSELS HFDST. GEW.	0123	02
BE2	VLAAMS GEWEST	0100	02
BE3	RÉGION WALLONNE	0100	01 and 02
DE	DEUTSCHLAND	P000	
DE1	BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG	0100	02
DE7	HESSEN	0100	02
DE8	MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN	0120	01
DEA	NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN	0100	02
DEB	RHEINLAND-PFALZ	0100	02
FR	FRANCE	P000	
FR1	ÎLE DE FRANCE	0120	02
FR21	CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE	0020	02
FR22	PICARDIE	0020	02
FR23	HAUTE-NORMANDIE	0020	02
FR24	CENTRE	0020	02
FR25	BASSE-NORMANDIE	0020	02
FR26	BOURGOGNE	0020	02
FR3	NORD - PAS-DE-CALAIS	0120	01 and 02
FR41	LORRAINE	0020	02
FR42	ALSACE	0020	02
FR43	FRANCHE-COMTÉ	0020	02
FR51	PAYS DE LA LOIRE	0020	02
IE	IRLAND	P000	
IE01	BORDER, MIDLAND AND WESTERN	0020	01
IE02	SOUTHERN AND EASTERN	0020	01
LU	LUXEMBOURG (GRAND-DUCHÉ)	P123	02
NL	NEDERLAND	P000	
NL11	GRONINGEN	0020	02
NL12	FRIESLAND	0020	02

⁹ Given that a region before the midterm review should only participate in two RFO's, a regional authority at a geographically lower level can be lead partner or partner in a RFO only with the acceptance of the whole region.

NL13	DRENTHE	0020	02
NL21	OVERIJSEL	0020	02
NL22	GELDERLAND	0020	02
NL23	FLEVOLAND	0023	01
NL31	UTRECHT	0023	02
NL32	NOORD-HOLLAND	0020	02
NL33	ZUID-HOLLAND	0020	02
NL34	ZEELAND	0020	02
NL41	NOORD-BRABANT	0020	02
NL42	LIMBURG (NL)	0020	02
UK	UNITED KINGDOM	P000	
UKC	NORTH EAST	0100	02
UKD	NORTH WEST (INC. MERSEYSIDE)	0100	01 and 02
UKE	YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER	0100	01 and 02
UKF	EAST MIDLANDS	0100	02
UKG	WEST MIDLANDS	0100	02
UKH	EASTERN	0100	02
UKI	LONDON	0100	02
UKJ	SOUTH EAST	0100	02
UKK	SOUTH WEST	0100	01 and 02
UKL	WALES	0100	01 and 02
UKM	SCOTLAND	0100	01 and 02
UKN	NORTHERN IRLAND	0120	01

Table C.2 Definition of Regions not participating in the West Zone

Country	Name	NUTS level	Objective (including phasing out)
UK	UNITED KINGDOM	P000	
UK	GIBRALTAR		02
DE	DEUTSCHLAND	P000	
DE2	BAYERN	0100	02
DE3	BERLIN	0120	01 and 02
DE4	BRANDENBURG	0120	01
DE5	BREMEN	0120	02
DE6	HAMBURG	0123	02
DE8	MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN	0120	01
DE9	NIEDERSACHSEN	0100	02
DED	SACHSEN	0100	01
DEE	SACHSEN-ANHALT	0100	01
DEF	SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN	0120	02
DEG	THÜRINGEN	0120	01
FR	FRANCE	P000	
FR52	BRETAGNE	0020	02
FR53	POITOU-CHARENTES	0020	02
FR61	AQUITAINE	0020	02
FR62	MIDI-PYRÉNÉES	0020	02
FR63	LIMOUSIN	0020	02

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FR71	RHÔNE-ALPES	0020	02
FR72	AUVERGNE	0020	02
FR81	LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON	0020	02
FR82	PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR	0020	02
FR83	CORSE	0020	01
FR91	GUADELOUPE	0023	01
FR92	MARTINIQUE	0023	01
FR93	GUYANE	0023	01
FR94	RÉUNION	0023	01
DK	DENMARK		
DK1	Jylland-Fyn		
DK2	Hovedstadsregionen		
DK3	Vestsjællands, Storstroms og Bornholms Amter		
GR	ELLADA	P000	
GR11	ANATOLIKI MAKEDONIA, THRAKI	0020	01
GR12	KENTRIKI MAKEDONIA	0020	01
GR13	DYTIKI MAKEDONIA	0020	01
GR14	THESSALIA	0020	01
GR21	IPEIROS	0020	01
GR22	IONIA NISIA	0020	01
GR23	DYTIKI ELLADA	0020	01
GR24	STEREA ELLADA	0020	01
GR25	PELOPONNISOS	0020	01
GR3	ATTIKI	0123	01
GR41	VOREIO AIGAIO	0020	01
GR42	NOTIO AIGAIO	0020	01
GR43	KRITI	0020	01
ES	ESPAÑA	P000	
ES11	GALICIA	0020	01
ES12	PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS	0023	01
ES13	CANTABRIA	0023	01
ES21	PAIS VASCO	0020	02
ES22	COMUNIDAD FORAL DE NAVARRA	0023	02
ES23	LA RIOJA	0023	02
ES24	ARAGÓN	0020	02
ES3	COMUNIDAD DE MADRID	0123	02
ES41	CASTILLA Y LEÓN	0020	01
ES42	CASTILLA-LA MANCHA	0020	01
ES43	EXTREMADURA	0020	01
ES51	CATALUÑA	0020	02
ES52	COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA	0020	01
ES53	ISLAS BALEARES	0023	02
ES61	ANDALUCÍA	0020	01
ES62	REGIÓN DE MURCIA	0023	01
ES63	CEUTA	0020	01
	MELILLA	0020	01
ES7	CANARIAS	0120	01

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IT	ITALIA	P000	
IT11	PIEMONTE	0020	02
IT12	VALLE D'AOSTA	0023	02
IT13	LIGURIA	0020	02
IT2	LOMBARDIA	0120	02
IT31	TRENTINO-	0020	02
IT31	ALTO ADIGE	0020	02
IT32	VENETO	0020	02
IT33	FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA	0020	02
IT4	EMILIA-ROMAGNA	0120	02
IT51	TOSCANA	0020	02
IT52	UMBRIA	0020	02
IT53	MARCHE	0020	02
IT6	LAZIO	0120	02
IT71	ABRUZZO	0020	02
IT72	MOLISE	0020	01
IT8	CAMPANIA	0120	01
IT91	PUGLIA	0020	01
IT92	BASILICATA	0020	01
IT93	CALABRIA	0020	01
ITA	SICILIA	0120	01
ITB	SARDEGNA	0120	01
AT	ÖSTERREICH	P000	
AT11	BURGENLAND	0020	01
AT12	NIEDERÖSTERREICH	0020	02
AT13	WIEN	0023	02
AT21	KÄRNTEN	0020	02
AT22	STEIERMARK	0020	02
AT31	OBERÖSTERREICH	0020	02
AT32	SALZBURG	0020	02
AT33	TIROL	0020	02
AT34	VORARLBERG	0020	02
PT	PORTUGAL	P000	
PT11	NORTE	0020	01
PT12	CENTRO (P)	0020	01
PT13	LISBOA E VALE DO TEJO	0020	01
PT14	ALENTEJO	0020	01
PT15	ALGARVE	0023	01
PT2	AÇORES	0123	01
PT3	MADEIRA	0123	01
FI	SUOMI/FINLAND	P000	
FI13	ITÄ-SUOMI	0020	01 and 02
FI14	LÄNSI-SUOMI	0020	01 and 02
FI15	POHJOIS-SUOMI	0020	01 and 02
FI17	ETELÄ-SUOMI	0020	02
FI2	AHVENANMAA/ÅLAND	0123	02
SE	SVERIGE	P100	

SE01	STOCKHOLM	0020	02
SE02	ÖSTRA MELLANSVERIGE	0020	02
SE04	SYDSVERIGE	0020	02
SE06	NORRA MELLANSVERIGE	0020	01 and 02
SE07	MELLERSTA NORRLAND	0020	01 and 02
SE08	ÖVRE NORRLAND	0020	01 and 02
SE09	SMÅLAND MED ÖARNA	0020	02
SE0A	VÄSTSVRIGE	0020	02

Annex D: Bodies responsible for the financial control of INTERREG III C-operations

The following bodies are nominated as responsible for the financial control of all III C-operations in the territory of the member state:

France: to be submitted later

Belgium:

Belgium / Wallonia : Inspection des Finances, cellule audit-fonds européens

Belgium / Flanders : Ministry of the Flemish Community

Belgium / Brussels-Capital Region : to be submitted later
Netherlands: Rijksplanologische Dienst/Directoraat Generaal Ruimtelijke Ordening – Ministerie van VROM

Luxembourg: Inspection Générale des Finances (IGF) – Ministère des Finances

Germany: Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle (to be confirmed)

United Kingdom: to be submitted later

Irland: to be submitted later

Denmark: Danish Agency for Trade and Industry

Finland: Ministry of Interior

Sweden: Swedish Business Development Agency

Austria: to be submitted later

Italy: to be submitted later

Greece: to be submitted later

Spain: to be submitted later

Portugal: to be submitted later

