

Report

Interreg post 2027 stakeholders' consultation meeting

Subject of consultation

Shape of the post 2027 Interreg programme on the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian borderlands

Objectives of consultation

1. Identify and analyse the key spheres and problems in the region that need solutions and can be addressed by Interreg post 2027 programme;
2. Assess conditions and locate points for cooperation;
3. Collect opinions, propositions and define probable directions of Interreg post 2027 for the region.

Note: The required timing of the meeting is 2-3 hours

Administration

Region	Lviv Oblast, Ukraine
Conducted by (entity)	Lviv Branch Office of Joint Secretariat
Place/venue/address	Lviv Oblast State Administration, 18 Vynnychenka St., Lviv
Date	18 September 2024

Part 1.

Information about respondents

Number of participants	37 persons 26 entities represented
Categories of participants, structure and share of participation	<p>Note: Please register participants in the list that will be further attached to the report (List should obligatory contain name, surname, function, name of entity represented, type of entity, signature).</p> <p>The following groups of stakeholders shall be invited and represented in the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Regional, urban, local government authorities; 2.) Healthcare institutions; 3.) Education institutions (schools, universities, academies), training or research centres; 4.) Cultural institutions (such as museums, galleries etc.); 5.) Organizations responsible for nature/environment protection; 6.) Bodies in charge of disaster and emergency risk management; 7.) Economic/social partners, associations, SMEs; 8.) NGOs (indicating a sphere of activity); 9.) Other type (what exactly)

	<p>Please provide the division of the audience into each of the type. Example: Healthcare institutions – 30% (3 entities) NGO`s – 20% (2 entities) Education institutions – 50% (5 entities) Etc.</p> <p>Regional, urban, local government authorities - 3 (12%) Healthcare institutions – 4 (15%) Education institutions (schools, universities, academies), training or research centers – 3 (12%) Cultural institutions (such as museums, galleries etc.) – 5 (19%) Organizations responsible for nature/environment protection - 2 (8%) Bodies in charge of disaster and emergency risk management - 2 (8%) Economic/social partners, associations, SMEs - 2 (8%) NGOs (local development, tourism, charity) - 5 (19%)</p>
<p>The level of awareness of the audience about the Poland-(Belarus)-Ukraine / Interreg and EU/Donor funded projects</p>	<p>Please assess the audience according to the level of awareness/involvement of the organisation in the EU funded projects in the region and specify what is the quantity and % share of each group in the total quantity of participants (it is best to cover that in the registration):</p> <p>Low – heard of EU-funded projects without knowing details on the financing conditions, priorities, objectives etc.;</p> <p>Medium – aware of the EU-funded projects with basic knowledge on conditions, examples of projects in the region or indirectly involved in the implementation;</p> <p>High – directly involved in the Programme/projects implementation as a Monitoring Committee member or beneficiary of current or previous Poland-(Belarus)-Ukraine programme edition.</p> <p>5 Low 18 Medium 14 High</p>

Part 2.

What is Interreg

The audience should be informed about the basic data on the Programme (PL-UA/PBU) - financing structure, area, cross-border cooperation frame, successful projects in the region. The information should be adapted to the participants' awareness on the issue – if it is medium-high – please communicate rather the analysis of the previous programmes (challenges, resolutions, lessons learnt etc.). Highly informed participants may assist in sharing the basic information for enriching the discussion.

As the majority of participants had high or medium level of awareness about the Programme, only general information about the Programme background was provided (programme periods,

statistics of the supported projects, current Programme priorities, and future activities in the Programme.

Experience of the region

Please indicate which PBU/PL-UA projects (or other CBC projects) implemented in the region proved most successful in the stakeholders' opinion, brought strongest results, had highest impact etc.

Rosettes - united multiple players for the promotion of Carpathian culture, gave a strong incentive to local communities development
 SecinCARP - coordinated response to disasters in mountainous areas
 PLUARoztoce - created a trend on veto tourism in the protected areas
 BugUnitesUs - started a totally new kind of leisure activity (kayaking) on the Bug river, with is now rapidly developing, is in great demand among the people undergoing rehabilitation after war-caused trauma (both adults and children), gave an impetus for local community development (multiple new initiatives)
 HSC - high-end micro-surgery operations in Lviv regional children's hospital, which became one of few places in Ukraine such surgeries are possible,
 SODR project targeted at safety in Lviv, including the security system and new premises of Police service, which now also the headquarters of centralized security center in the Western region
 2007-2013 projects – there was the project focused on collection and processing of electric waste in Lviv (batteries and bulbs), the first mercury bulbs processing plant was built
 Veterinary medicine clinic and ambulance for animals by Lviv University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies

Part 3.

Analysis of feedback and input on key questions

Note: After introductory input and familiarization with the audience please initiate further joint discussion and exchange of opinions of the stakeholders on each of below key questions.

1. Is location next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?	<p>As a summary of opinions of stakeholders please put the jointly outlined general answer whether the location next to a border is more opportunity or disadvantage and explain what key arguments state for the chosen answer.</p>
	<p>Most participants agreed that cross-border location is an opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proximity to Europe and being the doorway to the country is an advantage; - It fosters incoming tourism, as Lviv has always been a priority destination for Polish tourists and one of the three top cities to visit in Ukraine, - Proximity to Europe and affordable medical services create conditions for medical tourism (in particular, spa places like Truskavets); - many cultural links and common heritage with Poland;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being the first in the implementation of EU requirements and practices (e.g. environmental). <p>The disadvantages mentioned included the risk of labour migration from these areas</p>
2. Where is the biggest potential for territorial cooperation in your area?	<p>Please work on the joint identification of the region's most actual fields to be addressed in frames of Interreg orientation.</p> <p>Please list maximum 5 from below and arrange the list from the most to less actual. If other arise please add to the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint cultural heritage; - Health services and healthy lifestyle promotion; - Protection of environment; - Responding to natural and human related threats and hazards - Cooperation between research / science / academic centres - Promotion of entrepreneurship - Facilitations for SME cross-border operability - Easy employment in the neighbouring country - Tourism development - Networking research and enterprises to innovate - Joint sport events - Border security - Road infrastructure - Public transport crossing the border - Social integration - Strengthening local identity - New technologies / innovativeness development and promotion - Other – what exactly?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint cultural heritage; 2. Health services and healthy lifestyle promotion; 3. Protection of environment; 4. Tourism development 5. Responding to natural and human-related threats and hazards <p>Other fields suggested by the respondents, included education/training, cybersecurity, inclusion, and improvement of border crossing procedures.</p>
3. What currently works well in this cooperation and should be either preserved or reinforced?	<p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise maximum 5 positive points agreed in the audience.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Creation of joint natural park areas;</p> <p>Shared health services;</p> <p>Jointly coordinated security/emergency services - fire-fighters operations across the border, etc.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good communication on the level of Program institutions, flexibility 2. The opportunity to establish contacts, network, cooperate with institutions from the other country 3. The possibility of implementing infrastructural projects
<p>4. What currently does not work well in this cooperation and should be improved?</p>	<p>Please discuss the aspect of cooperation and summarise a maximum 5 negative issues agreed in the audience.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Nature preservation practices in a shared river basin are not unified;</p> <p>Exchanges of practical experience between places facing the same issues are complicated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Tourism or Heritage priority in the current Program period 2. Some aspects of Ukrainian legislation have not been taken into account in program regulations 3. State Audit Service as a controller in the Programme 4. Border crossing became even more time-consuming and complicated, which hampers the smooth implementation of projects
<p>5. What are major obstacles for a good cross-border cooperation in your area?</p>	<p>On the issues summarized above please provide the major obstacles that interfere these issues to be duly solved.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Low and uneven economic development;</p> <p>Little knowledge of the programme and/or partner country language;</p> <p>Uneven competence and salary level of local authorities personnel, etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insufficient Programme funding 2. Many actors (e.g. local authorities) focus on their urgent needs and short-term goals rather than on sustainable solutions 3. Border crossing time (sometimes up to 16 hours) and procedures, poor connectivity 4. Communication barrier 5. Insufficient project experience of Ukrainian institutions (applicants)
<p>6. Are there things you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why?</p>	<p>Please collect probable measures/goals and reasons.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Involvement of SME as partners to strengthen financial and operational capability cannot be done to regulative limitations of programme rules;</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivate project staff (civil servants) working in the projects with a higher salary 2. Generate income by providing paid services Support regular cultural events (e.g. festivals) 3. Adapt academic/ educational programs
7. What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future Interreg?	Please put the propositions that are new to the programme.
	Centralized control system by the Program or independent auditors, immunity from controls by other Ukrainian control bodies
8. Is there a need for some infrastructure projects?	Please collect opinions/propositions of joint infrastructure projects may be established in the region in cooperation with adjacent region of the partner country.
	Yes, especially the adaptation of public spaces for people with disabilities (victims of war), restoration of heritage buildings, border crossing and road infrastructure
9. What should be done to facilitate the work with your counterparts in another country (governance)?	Please list measures on governance that would be applicable for improvement of the cooperation between bordering countries/regions.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-introduce Tourism or Heritage as a priority 2. Less interference of state control bodies 3. Improve the border crossing procedures, and make border crossings smoother 4. Increase Programme financing 5. Take into account Ukrainian laws/regulations in programming

Part 4.

Conclusions, other topics of discussion

Please put here everything that was not covered above, but raised/expressed during the discussion.
N/a

Overall assessment of the meeting by the organizer

Were the objectives of the consultation achieved? Please refer to each objective and describe the level of engagement of the stakeholders into the discussion.
All categories of stakeholders were represented at the meeting. The largest number of participants were the representatives of different departments of Lviv Oblast State Administration, including healthcare, environment, international relations, etc. A large share of participants were either the beneficiaries of the current or past Programme periods or had other interactions with the Programme. The majority of the attendees also demonstrated knowledge about other donor institutions and instruments. Thus, the discussion focused

mostly on technical aspects that can be improved in the Programme rather than on general cross-border cooperation issues.

As Lviv Oblast is considered the major doorway to Europe with multiple border crossings, a major tourist destination and there are strong links with Poland in all spheres, the border is perceived as an opportunity. For the same reasons, tourism, heritage, and culture are seen as the most crucial direction for development. Health services and environment, response to natural and human-related threats and hazards are other priorities highlighted by the participants. Another strong need as identified by the group is the adaptation of public spaces for people with disabilities (victims of war).

Local institutions are willing to cooperate in different fields. The factors, that, in their opinion, hamper successful cross-border cooperation, include Insufficient project experience and lack of vision of local entities, complicated border crossing, on the Programme level – complicated control procedures, and inconsistency of some Programme requirements with Ukrainian laws and practices. The respondents also agreed that the Programme budget is not sufficient to cover all the needs.

In the future, the Programme should focus on the aforementioned priorities including Tourism or Heritage, the programme requirements should be adjusted to take into account Ukrainian laws/regulations; the projects should be audited/controlled either by independent auditors or a control body created for international projects only. The latter recommendations came from the institutions, which started implementing the projects in the current programme period and are facing some challenges, or the beneficiaries of the projects in the previous programme period, who had extremely negative experiences with the State Audit Service of Ukraine,

Interesting quotes

Please collect interesting, important quotes from the participants on the matter of future post 27 programme.

Please put Name of participant, Quote in "".

This is the Programme that has a soul, it's about the interaction among the people, among the communities. - Olga Tabaka, Lviv Oblast State Administration

In the 2014-2020 Programme, some heritage buildings have been saved from ruination, it's extremely valuable help from the EU, and it would be good to continue it. - Markiyan Stefanyshyn, Caritas NGO

Tourism is mistakenly treated as entertainment, but it is so much more - development of communities, sustainability of historical sites, rehabilitation and recovery after trauma, formation of self-identity... It was a big mistake to cancel this priority.- Taras Lozynskyy, Department of Tourism, Lviv Oblast State Administration

Questionnaires

As a final point of the consultation – 10-15 minutes – please ask participants to fill the questionnaire for stakeholders on-line e.g. on their smartphones/laptops using the link (QR-code) to questionnaire for stakeholders (3 language versions available).

Participants that had already filled the survey before the meeting may share the experience and discuss whether consultation allow to improve replies given earlier.

QR code was distributed

Attachments:

1. Agenda.
2. List of Participants.