

Cross-Border Impact Assessment 2019

Dossier 4: 'Governance' under the new INTERREG Regulation 2021-2027



The Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM is the pivot of research, counselling, knowledge exchange and training activities with regard to cross-border mobility and cooperation.

Maastricht University

Cross-Border Impact Assessment 2019

Dossier 4: 'Governance' under the new INTERREG Regulation 2021-2027

Vera Hark
Martin Unfried
Dr. Mariska van der Giessen

The *Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross-border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM* is the pivot of scientific research, counselling, knowledge exchange, and training activities with regards to cross-border cooperation and mobility.

ITEM is an initiative of Maastricht University (UM), the Dutch Centre of Expertise on Demographic Changes (NEIMED), Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, the City of Maastricht, the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR), and the Dutch Province of Limburg.



provincie limburg
gesubsidieerd door de Provincie Limburg



Zuyd
Hogeschool **ZU**
YD



Contents

- Abbreviations 3
- 1. Introduction..... 4
- 2. Objectives and method 5
 - 2.1. Current or future effects: Ex ante analysis..... 5
 - 2.2. Investigated INTERREG programme areas 5
 - 2.3. The research themes, principles, benchmarks and indicators of the dossier 6
- 3. Comparing different approaches to the ‘Governance’ objective..... 8
 - 3.1. What is ‘Governance’? 9
 - 3.1.1. Varying understandings of the concept 10
 - 3.1.2. ‘Governance’ transformed into concrete actions 12
 - 3.2. ‘Governance’ in practice..... 13
 - 3.2.1. Ongoing and (possible) planned activities 13
 - 3.2.2. ‘Governance’ through project mode? 17
 - 3.3. Is the new ‘Governance’ rule helpful? 18
- 4. Conclusions and recommendations from a euregional perspective..... 20
 - 4.1 Assessment of the research themes 20
 - 4.2 Substantive conclusions 21
 - 4.3 Outlook and further research..... 22
- 5. Annex..... 24

Abbreviations

CB	Cross-border
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CP	Cooperation Programme
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EDR	Ems-Dollart Region
EMR	Euregio Meuse-Rhine
JS	Joint Secretariat
PS	Priority Axis
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SO	Specific Objective
TO	Thematic Objective

1. Introduction

In sight of the upcoming INTERREG VI-A period 2021-2027, programme areas across Europe are developing new Cooperation Programmes (CP), defining their respective strategies, goals and objectives. For this new programme period, the European Commission (EC) has developed and proposed a new regulation to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. This regulation introduces ‘Governance’ as an objective that is novel to the INTERREG programme:

“An additional 15% of the ERDF and, where applicable, of the external financing instruments of the Union allocations under priorities other than for technical assistance to each Interreg programme under components 1, 2 and 3, shall be allocated on the Interreg-specific objective of ‘a better Interreg governance’ or on the external Interreg-specific objective of ‘a safer and more secure Europe’.” (Article 15, Thematic Concentration)¹

The term ‘Governance’ can be understood and defined in multiple ways. It appears for the first time in an INTERREG regulation as a binding objective with mandatory budget share. How do different INTERREG programme areas understand this concept and how do they plan to realise it in their CP? This dossier investigates the different approaches to the ‘Governance’ objective of three INTERREG programme areas, namely the Germany-Netherlands programme², the Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme³ and the Greater Region programme⁴.

For this purpose, we conducted interviews with key stakeholders of these programme areas as well as a representative of the EC’s DG REGIO. The analysis of the interviews is organised along the following questions:

- What is ‘Governance’? How do stakeholders understand this concept in the context of INTERREG? (Chapter 3.1)
- Has ‘Governance’ already been part of INTERREG in previous years and especially the current programme period 2014-2020 without being officially required by a regulation? How will or can it be put into practice during the upcoming programme period 2021-2027 and which concrete activities will or may be connected to it? (Chapter 3.2.1)
- Will ‘Governance’ change the way in which INTERREG activities are organised? More precisely, will the budget be spent on projects – as usually – or do the stakeholders conceive a different mode of activities? (Chapter 3.2.2)
- Is the new ‘Governance’ rule helpful? Do the stakeholders regard it as something that will have a significant impact on cross-border cooperation (CBC)? Do they see a relevance of it for their border region? (Chapter 3.3)

The analysis leads to an assessment of the research themes *Euregional Cohesion* and *Socio-Economic Development*, before we draw general conclusions and recommendations from an Euregional

¹ European Commission: “Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments”, COM(2018) 374, Strasbourg, 29.05.2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-specific-provisions_en.pdf, p.30, last visited on 01 July 2019.

² INTERREG Deutschland-Niederland, <https://www.deutschland-niederland.eu/>, last visited on 01 July 2019.

³ INTERREG Euregio Meuse-Rhin, <https://www.interregemr.eu/home-de>, last visited on 01 July 2019.

⁴ INTERREG Grande Région/Großregion, <http://www.interreg-gr.eu/de/homepage-3-2>, last visited on 01 July 2019.

perspective. On this basis, we suggest ideas for an ex-post evaluation, including qualitative indicators for the assessment of the ‘Governance’ objective. It will become clear that the broad understanding of the term ‘Governance’ is shared by all interview partners, while their ideas of how to concretely put it into practice differs. Furthermore, the degree of impact expected from ‘Governance’ varies – while the EC, as initiator of the objective, has high hopes connected to its influence, some stakeholders from the programme areas express their neutrality or even scepticism towards it. Finally, a key debate of this dossier lies in the question whether the ‘Governance’ objective can and should be realised through projects or whether it requires innovative approaches to cooperation, which help to transition the programme to a more strategic ‘framework building’ for CBC.

2. Objectives and method

2.1. Current or future effects: Ex ante analysis

The upcoming INTERREG VI-A programme period 2021-2027 has not begun yet with the new regulation still being under negotiation. Meanwhile programme areas have started to work on their CPs. Hence, this dossier will focus on the estimated *ex ante* effects of the ‘Governance’ objective. In this line, the interviews analysed in Chapter 3 will be assessed in Chapter 4 along the two research themes *Euregional Cohesion* and *Socio-Economic Development*. These are proposed by the ITEM cross-border impact assessment approach. Yet, the question of *European Integration*, also described by the ITEM approach, is not relevant in the case of this dossier.

At the same time, the dossier includes information on whether and how stakeholders have already put in practice ‘Governance’ activities during the current INTERREG V-A programme period 2014-2020, without being officially regulated. We are therefore able – to a certain extent – to compare those experiences in an *ex post*-manner with activities planned for the future.

It lies in the nature of new political concepts inserted into regulations that the legislator expects positive results and a significant impact. Consequently, this *ex ante* impact assessment should be completed by an *ex post* assessment at the end of the upcoming INTERREG VI-A programme period (in 2027 or later) in order to evaluate its added value.

2.2. Investigated INTERREG programme areas

The proposed INTERREG Regulation specifies five components of the European territorial cooperation goal (INTERREG) it refers to, namely (1) cross-border cooperation, (2) transnational and maritime cooperation, (3) outermost regions’ cooperation, (4) interregional cooperation, and (5) the new interregional innovation investments. This dossier focuses exclusively on component (1):

*“(1) cross-border cooperation between adjacent regions to promote integrated regional development (component 1):
(a) internal cross-border cooperation between adjacent land border regions of two or more Member States, one Member State and one or more third countries listed in Article 4(3); [...]”⁵*

⁵ „Proposal for a Regulation [...]“, COM(2018) 374, Strasbourg, 29.05.2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-specific-provisions_en.pdf, p.23, last visited on 01 July 2019.

The ITEM Cross-Border Impact Assessment focuses primarily on cross-border regions along the Dutch, Belgian and German borders. Therefore, all of the INTERREG programme areas investigated in this dossier lie within this geographical zone. All of them have a border with Germany and are located in West-Northern Europe. Moreover, they are neighbours to each other and share multiple common points, such as the same languages. The cultural and economic circumstances as well as social levels seem comparable.

In the definition of this dossier, a border region equals an INTERREG programme area. They should not be confounded with 'Euregios', which are separate entities of a programme area. Even more confoundingly, the name 'Euregio Meuse-Rhine' (EMR) designates both a Euregio and a programme area – yet, the programme area covers a larger geographical area than the Euregio. The same goes for the Germany-Netherlands INTERREG programme area which covers four different Euregios, namely (from North to South) 'Ems-Dollart Region' (EDR), 'EUREGIO', 'Euregio Rhine-Waal', 'euregio rhine-maas-north'. As for the Greater Region INTERREG programme, it covers the Euregio 'SaarLorLux+' and the Eurodistrict 'Saar-Moselle'. However, its actual INTERREG programme area is larger than the Euregios named, stretching further into Germany, France, Luxemburg and Belgium.

INTERREG programme areas commonly develop CPs,⁶ in which they specify their objectives and goals for the upcoming programme period. These include a general strategy with an analysis of the programme area as well as the priority axes (PA), thematic objectives (TO), specific objectives (SO), and the financial planning that are set. Currently, all of the programme areas concerned in this dossier are developing new CPs for the period 2021-2027. At the time of writing, the working process has progressed to different degrees but is rather at a preliminary phase in all three cases. The approach and preparation of the CP differs from programme area to programme area, both timewise and in terms of the bodies responsible for writing it. Preparing a new CP means for each programme area to coordinate multiple requests and conceptions from various stakeholders and is therefore connected to a certain extent of 'insecurity' when interpreting the room for individual flexibility.

2.3. The research themes, principles, benchmarks and indicators of the dossier

As illustrated below (Table 1), this dossier mainly covers the research theme *Euregional Cohesion* since 'Governance' is connected to the structural collaboration across borders. It depends on the understanding of the term 'Governance' which type of private and/or public bodies and which type of collaboration it concerns, as will be discussed in chapter 3.1. In any way, its underlying principle is that cooperation within the border region should become stronger and the network should grow together as much as possible regardless national backgrounds.

Correspondingly, the basic question for the *ex ante* assessment of this dossier is whether the new proposed provision in the INTERREG Regulation (15% of the budget share spent on 'Governance') will lead to an improvement of different aspects of CBC. This could, in the future, be measured through the degree of *Euregional Cohesion* during the upcoming programme period 2021-2027 as compared to the degree of cohesion during the current programme period 2014-2020. It must be said that, currently, the evaluation of programme activities is today almost limited to quantitative indicators, which however do not give insights into backgrounds and reasons for the evolution of CBC.

⁶ For the CPs of the INTERREG V-A programme period 2014-2020, cf. the websites of the respective programme areas.

Table 1: Themes, principles, benchmarks and indicators of Dossier ‘Governance’ in the new INTERREG regulation

Theme	Principles	Benchmark	Indicators (for ex-post assessment)
Euregional cohesion	A functioning cross-border collaboration, strong cohesion, growing network	The functioning of cross-border cooperation compared to the situation during the last programme period	Qualitative: Opinion poll among public and private bodies as well as civil society and citizens regarding their view on the other country, the success of cooperation and the border Quantitative: Number of cross-border structures existing at the end of the programme period; number of projects within Thematic Objective 11
Socio-Economic Development	Cross-Border governance structures allow for the development of businesses and the economy and therefore for the creation of new jobs and social development	The development of cross-border businesses and cooperation The creation of stable and effective cross-border structures and institutions for the creation of jobs and the increase of the number of cross-border workers	Quantitative: Number of cross-border cooperations in business; number of new jobs created through cross-border business cooperation Qualitative: Survey among businesses (big companies as well as SMEs) within the region whether they are aware of the INTERREG support and whether they find it useful or not

As an indicator, a qualitative study could thus be a most helpful approach in order to measure *Euregional Cohesion* since it delivers in-depth insights into individual opinions and views: Stakeholders of different private and public bodies involved in CBC as well as civil society and citizens of border regions could be asked to express their view on the other country, on the success of CBC, the quality of cooperation and the impact of border-related issues. A possible question could be whether border obstacles have been increased or decreased and whether cooperation of public or private bodies have improved. Ultimately, the state of cross-border cohesions deals with the question whether with respect to the effects of the programme, the border is still rather regarded as an obstacle or as a linking line. Quantitatively, the number of cross-border cooperation structures with long-term financing that exist at the end of the upcoming programme period could be compared to their number at the end of the current programme period. Additionally, *Euregional Cohesion* could be measured by the number of INTERREG projects covered by Thematic Objective 11 (of the INTERREG V regulation): “Enhancing

institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.” (hereafter: TO11).⁷

When it comes to the research theme of *Sustainable and Socio-Economic Development*, it is covered by this dossier since ‘Governance’ allows for cross-border business structures to be created and therefore for the existence of stable and effective cross-border structures and institutions that help to create new jobs and social and sustainable development. Consequently, the development with respect to new cross-border structures and institutions in the sector of economy can serve as a benchmark. This can quantitatively be measured by the number of long-term CBC structures in business and the creation of cross-border stable networks. Qualitatively, a survey could be conducted among various companies within the region, ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs.⁸ They could be asked about their awareness and perception of cooperation structures and institutions in relation to INTERREG funds for businesses and whether they regard the programme as helpful with respect to the quality of cross-border cooperation.

It should however be noted that the research themes cannot sufficiently be analysed within this dossier, as we are limited to an *ex ante* assessment at the time of writing. Yet, this analysis can serve as a basis for an *ex post* analysis conducted at the end of the following programme period, i.e. in 2027.

3. Comparing different approaches to the ‘Governance’ objective

For this dossier, we conducted interviews with key stakeholders from the three selected INTERREG-A programme areas. In total, we held two interviews per cross-border region, whereby the interview partners came from both sides of the border. More precisely, for each cross-border region, we talked to stakeholders from at least two sub-regions which belong to different European States. While some interviews involved only one interviewee, others were held with several stakeholders at a time. For example, a meeting of the programme managers of the Germany-Netherlands programme was an opportunity to speak with all of them (four in total) at the same time. We interviewed the following stakeholders:

**a) European Commission (DG Regional and Urban Policy;
Unit D2 – Interreg, Cross-Border Cooperation, internal borders)**

Name of the interviewee	Professional Function
Nathalie Verschelde	Deputy Head of Unit

b) INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland

Name of the interviewee	Professional Function
Peter Paul Knol	Director of the JS
Ilona Heijen	Programme Manager
Sjoerd Zoete	Programme Manager
Ralf Runde	Programme Manager
Martijn Spaargaren	Programme Manager

⁷ European Commission: “Thematic Objectives”, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/t/thematic-objectives, last visited on 01 July 2019.

⁸ For a definition of ‘SME’, cf. European Commission: “What is an SME?”, https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en, last visited on 03 July 2019.

c) Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR) & INTERREG-EMR

Name of the interviewee	Professional Function
Michael Déjové	Managing Director of the EGTC
Jean-Philippe Odeurs	Senior Programme Manager
Mark Vos	Programme Coordinator

d) INTERREG Greater Region

Name of the interviewee	Professional Function
Christiane Fortuin	Managing Director of the EGTC
Christine Jung	Programme Partner (Saarland)

In the following, instead of specifying the name of each interview partner, we designate the stakeholders by their professional function for a better legibility.

For the guided interviews, we prepared a set of questions that we asked every interview partner.⁹ This set includes questions such as:

- The general understanding/definition of the concept 'Governance';
- How/If this concept is already put into practice during the current programme period;
- How it will be realised through the CP of the upcoming programme period; and
- If the stakeholders perceive the introduction of 'Governance' to the INTERREG Regulation as something positive/helpful and relevant for their border region.

The following comparison and analysis of the interviews is organised along the above listed questions.

3.1. What is 'Governance'?

The proposed INTERREG regulation holds the following details concerning 'Governance':

"Under components 1, 2, and 3, the ERDF and, where applicable, the external financing instruments of the Union may also support the Interreg-specific objective 'a better Interreg governance', in particular by the following actions:

(a) under component 1 and 2B Interreg programmes:

(i) enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders;

(ii) enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions;

(b) under component 1, 2 and 3 Interreg programmes: enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies; [...];"¹⁰

Thereby, 'Governance' is related to the following stakeholders: public authorities, citizens and institutions. Keywords named are: institutional capacity, efficient public administration, promoting

⁹ For a comprehensive list of the interview questions, cf. annex.

¹⁰ „Proposal for a Regulation [...]”, COM(2018) 374, Strasbourg, 29.05.2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-specific-provisions_en.pdf, p.28-29, last visited on 01 July 2019.

legal and administrative cooperation and resolving legal and other obstacles. Even though this is a first approach to the concept 'Governance' [within the framework of INTERREG], the definition is kept broad and can be filled with multiple further meanings and activities. In this line, the Joint Secretariat (JS) Director of the Germany-Netherlands programme emphasises that 'Governance' has popped up as a buzzword with a fuzzy meaning some years ago and is used more and more frequently, without having a concrete meaning.

3.1.1. Varying understandings of the concept

While the representative of the EC confirms the above described broad understanding of 'Governance' in our interview, many programme area representatives express their uncertainty in this regard. Being asked about their understanding of the term, a majority replies with approximations and 'first ideas'. As previously mentioned, none of the programme areas concerned has set up the next CP so far; this explains why they have not yet elaborated an internal 'definition' of 'Governance'. By contrast, other programme area representatives have concrete ideas about the concept. One idea appears commonly among the answers of all interview partners: **'Governance' is connected to the durability and sustainability of cross-border activities** as opposed to timely and financially limited activities that come to an end when financing stops. Further details vary across the answers.

The following table (see Table 2 below) compares the different views and approaches to 'Governance' of our interview partners. Additionally, it shows if the respective interview partners wish for more precision by the EC concerning this term or if they are rather satisfied with the information they have received so far.

As stated above, the EC's definition of 'Governance' remains relatively vague and open: The Deputy Head of Unit we interviewed explains that it is meant to strengthen the "institutional side of cooperation" in order to make it "more sustainable". Globally, the idea is to "improve the framework conditions in which CBC happens". All goals mentioned under TO11 of the current regulation would correspond to 'Governance' as well as everything that helps to realise the ideas of the 2017 communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions"¹¹ and is not theme-specific.

Moreover, 'Governance' means to work on CB obstacles along all borders of the EU, including administrative and legal practices that prevent good cooperation. Our interview partner from the EC names the following possible activities:

- The way in which a cross-border territory is jointly 'governed' by decision-makers
- The promotion of institutions as well as (formal and non-formal) mechanisms that allow to run the territory together
- The empowerment of (non-governmental) partners to operate more effectively together
- Knowledge and observation of the territory, collection and analysis of data about the CB territory.

¹¹ European Commission: Communication „Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions“, COM(2017) 534, Brussel, 20.09.2017, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/communications/2017/boosting-growth-and-cohesion-in-eu-border-regions, last visited on 01 July 2019.

Table 2: Overview of the interview partners' different views and approaches to 'Governance'

Institution	Interview Partner	Understanding of Governance in the context of INTERREG	More precision wanted?
European Commission (EC)	Deputy Head of Union (Unit D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening institutional side of cooperation - Creating a strong framework for CBC - All goals mentioned under TO 11 of the current regulation - All investments which are not theme-specific and related to communication "Boosting Growth (...)"¹² 	Not applicable
Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR) + INTERREG-EMR	Managing Director EGTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a suitable framework for structural cross-border practices - Exploration of unused cross-regional potential 	No, it is already clear
	Senior Programme Manager + Programme Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting durable structures such as EGTCs or cross-border info points - Promotion of long-term cooperation 	Yes, not clear enough
INTERREG Germany-Netherlands	Director JS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large term, buzz word, fuzzy meaning - Strong cross-border structures between public institutions, organisations and citizens - 'Automated' cooperation without public stimulation 	Consensus: No, diverse border regions need flexible regulations
	Programme Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Governance' is not related to specific topics but a way of conducting projects which puts an emphasis on their durability 	
INTERREG Greater Region	Managing Director EGTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding solutions to durable cross-border obstacles 	Yes, concerning modalities and degree of flexibility
	Programme Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficient cooperation between public authorities/administrations (and maybe civil society) 	Not necessarily, more concretisation would lead to less flexibility

A concrete example of how to put these activities into practice is to promote meetings between bodies that do not necessarily meet in order to discuss certain themes otherwise. More precisely, a programme could bring together the Ministries of Labour every x months in order to discuss issues related to CB labour. The list of possible projects can, according to the representative of the EC, be very long and depends on the needs and challenges of every border region. She adds that the line of DG REGIO is globally not to give too much guidance with regard to regulations in order to allow for the

¹² Cf. ib.

programmes to stay flexible and to adapt their CP on regional specific needs. Therefore, no further guidance will be issued to clarify the term, but it may be extensively discussed with those programmes who wish to. If a firm guiding was issued, the programmes would “use it as a rule” instead of adjusting it to their context.

3.1.2. 'Governance' transformed into concrete actions

None of the responses given by the interviewed programme area representatives conflicts with this broad framework sketched by the EC representative. However, they differ in their responses with regard to the realisation of concrete actions in this context.

As for the Managing Director of the EMR, he has firm ideas about ‘Governance’ and has been in touch with a representative of the EC (other than our interview partner from the EC) in this matter. According to the Managing Director, many actors in a border region are not necessarily aware of the potential of CBC. For example, big companies might focus on business partners in other continents even though the ideal partner is located some kilometres away across the border; others do not manage to write a project proposal because of linguistic and cultural challenges, even though they would be willing to cooperate. Hence, much potential remains unexplored. While this might sound like the ‘classic cross-border challenge’ and the actual right to exist for INTERREG, the Managing Directors sees much room for improvement on top of well-functioning structures and successful projects. In his eyes, it is the challenge of CBC to create a framework for private and public bodies either to *find* each other or/and to facilitate communication among them, e.g. through meeting platforms and translation services. This would lead to the creation of durable structures, such as EGTCs, which would then allow for more sustainable cooperation independent of INTERREG project funding. Asked about a concrete example, he refers to the creation of an Euregional Centre for Paediatric Surgery or meeting platforms for businesses.

The Senior Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator of the INTERREG-EMR area indicate a similar understanding of ‘Governance’, thinking of durable structures such as EGTCs and of the promotion of long-term cooperation. In addition to what the Managing Director of the EMR says, they state that promoting EGTC structures can only refer to the support of their creation but not to a structural funding, which would then be the responsibility of the respective local governments. While the Managing Director regards the information about the topic from the EC as sufficient, the other two interview partners of INTERREG-EMR would wish for more clarification and remain vaguer with their definition.

Interestingly, all interview partners from the Germany-Netherlands programme agree that a specification of the concept ‘Governance’ would not be helpful since it would reduce the flexibility of the very diverse European border regions and, as importantly, diverse sub-regions of the same programme areas. They also agree that ‘Governance’ is based on a strive for more durable cooperation. The Director of the JS defines it as strong cooperation structures between public institutions, organisations and citizens – ‘Governance’ would help them to work together in an “automated” way, that is to say without public stimulation and funding. This corresponds to the ideas of the Managing Director of the EMR but is formulated in a more general way. The Programme Managers add that ‘Governance’ should not be understood as a topic but as a way of conducting projects which, as mentioned before, puts a special emphasis on their durability.

While the Managing Director of the EGTC Greater Region generally agrees with this conception, she perceives a lack of precision concerning the concrete realisation of such ‘Governance’ activities. According to the information she got from the EC, she derives that these activities are related to overcoming key challenges of CBC on the level of institutional cooperation. In comparison, the Programme Partner from the Greater Region we interviewed has specific ideas about the realisation of ‘Governance’, namely the efficient cooperation of public authorities in the form of trust-building measures and similar activities. In her eyes, it is a fundamental problem that authorities often do not know what consequences their decisions have for people on the other side of the border or for cross-border workers. Therefore, strengthening the mutual understanding of public administrations through common conferences, trainings and similar activities could help to meet this challenge. Both stakeholders from the Greater Region agree that a high degree of flexibility concerning ‘Governance’ would be preferable in order to adjust it to the needs of their specific regional conditions. Yet, while the Managing Director wishes for more information – since ‘Governance’ is a broad term – the Programme Partner is satisfied with the amount of information she has received so far. Her interpretation of the concept would then be a possible way of realising it.

3.2. ‘Governance’ in practice

3.2.1. Ongoing and (possible) planned activities

Having described the basic understanding of ‘Governance’ of the interview partners, we will now look into the details of this concept. To this aim, we compare if and how ‘Governance’ is already put into practice during the current INTERREG programme period 2014-2020 as compared to the activities that are planned for the upcoming period 2021-2027. Central to this part of the analysis is, if and how practices will change with the introduction of the new regulation and what impact of it is expected.

Unsurprisingly, all stakeholders say that ‘Governance’ has not been an official element of their CP yet – it had not been part of the previous regulation – but some state that it is ‘naturally’ covered by all INTERREG activities, as they all strive for stronger cross-border links. Only few interview partners have very concrete opinions about how the concept will be realised since the respective CPs are still object of discussion within the border regions.

The following table (Table 3 below) is an overview of the different perceptions on ongoing and planned activities that are related to ‘Governance’:

Table 3: Overview of the interview partners' different perceptions on ongoing and planned activities that are related to 'Governance'

Institution	Interview Partner	Ongoing	(Possible) planned activities
European Commission (EC)	Deputy Head of Union (Unit D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exists already but not realised in every programme area across Europe - Often rather thematic work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Idea is to draw the attention to effective cooperation by introducing an obligatory objective
Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR) + INTERREG-EMR	Managing Director EGTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural cooperation is already a routine for some actors, e.g. in the domain of crime investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st step: development of a "cross-border political agenda" - 2nd step: identification of elements which are related to 'Governance' - 3rd step: creating framework for sustainable CBC structures, e.g. meeting platforms, financial support, intercultural/language trainings
	Senior Programme Manager + Programme Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Governance' is not explicitly mentioned in CP 2014-2020 - Topic generally covered by territorial development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of structural cooperation in domains such as transport, health, security; among others creation of more EGTCs - Promotion of durability of projects by advocating for long-term financing through public authorities
INTERREG Germany-Netherlands	Director JS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic has been covered since (and was an emphasis during) INTERREG I, but with decreasing attention over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st step: Structural analysis of programme area, its needs and challenges - 2nd step: Promotion of durable cooperation structures in domains such as public health, security, fire brigade, disaster control, education
	Programme Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept is already covered, but under another term - Not a new topic but a certain approach to cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could be realised through the initiation of more/better projects, mutual consultation between public funding programmes, more public consultations/network building for all actors, improved public relations
INTERREG Greater Region	Managing Director EGTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcoming cross-border obstacles is part of every project to a varying extent - TO11 is not covered in the current programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation of administrative and legal authorities: common conferences, thematic work groups - Also: commissioning research projects, conducting pilot projects
	Programme Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Governance' is not covered during the current programme period - TO11 is not covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidence-building measures and common trainings of public authorities and administrations - Creation of 'cross-border contact points' as consultancies for public authorities/administrations

As far as the representative of the EC is concerned, she underlines that 'Governance' is not new in CBC but has not been realised in every programme area across Europe yet. Often, the programmes would rather do thematic work, such as investing in business parks or environmental topics. Now, the idea is to connect this thematic work with a broader framework from the new cooperation period onwards. According to our EC interview partner, by introducing 'Governance' as an obligatory objective, the attention of the programmes would be drawn to the importance of effective and institutional cooperation. Basically, the EC wants programmes to take a look at how the CB territory can be better managed and integrated in addition to thematic projects.

As concrete as his definition of 'Governance' is, as concrete is the EMR Managing Director's conception of how it can be put into practice. From what he says, structural cooperation is already a routine for multiple actors within the EMR, he specially emphasises the domain of crime investigation with CB structures such as EPICC.¹³ In other domains, however, the introduction of the new 'Governance' regulation would make a considerable difference and would be linked to new practices. The Managing Director describes a threefold process for the new programme period, whereas a first step would consist in the development of a "Cross-Border Political Agenda". This agenda would be coordinated by a "Cross-Border Body" in every border region, in this case the EGTC Euregio Meuse-Rhine. In cooperation with local players, hence in a bottom-up way, cross-regional needs and challenges would be identified. In a second step, the agenda would be sorted according to the elements a) fundable by local authorities, b) to be realised through regular INTERREG projects and c) to be realised with the new 'Governance' budget. In a third step, a framework for the elements of category c would be created – that is, for building enduring CBC structures. As mentioned before, this would include meeting platforms, translations services, cultural trainings and similar activities aiming to foster CBC in sectors where it does not yet exist or where CBC requires special attention.

In comparison, the Senior Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator of INTERREG-EMR regard 'Governance' as something that is generally covered by territorial development by INTERREG in any way. During the upcoming programme period, it would be realised through the promotion of structural cooperation in domains such as transport, health and security. One point they also put an emphasis on is that 'Governance' would make activities more durable since it would be a way to advocate for long-term financing through public authorities instead of timely limited financing with INTERREG funds.

Similarly to the first approach described, the JS Director of the Germany-Netherlands Programme describes a model in several steps in order to realise 'Governance'. It would firstly include a structural analysis of the programme area, i.e. its needs and challenges. Secondly, on this basis, durable cooperation structures in domains such as public health, security and disaster control would be promoted. In the JS Director's view, INTERREG 1 had an emphasis on what he thinks 'Governance' refers to, but this focus decreased over time. Consequently, there is room for the extension of 'Governance' activities. The Programme Managers of the same area say that 'Governance' is already covered by the current CP but under another designation. They agree among each other that the concept is not a new topic for cooperation but a certain approach to cross-border activities with a focus on durability. When it comes to a way in which the concept can be put into practice during the

¹³ Euregionales Polizeiliches Informations- und Cooperations-Centrum (EPICC), <https://www.euregio-mr.info/euregio-mr-de/themen/sicherheit/epicc.php>, last visited 01 July 2019.

upcoming programme period, the Programme Managers have various ideas. 'Governance' might be realised through:

- The initiation of more/better projects in strategic goal areas¹⁴ which have more capacities (e.g. logistics),
- Mutual consultation between public funding programmes, as they often co-exist covering similar areas without any exchange amongst each other,
- More consultation among local politicians and authorities,
- More public consultations and network building for all (potential) actors, for instance by advertising the funding programme at fairs, and
- Improved public relations in a way that both politics and citizens know more about cross-border activities and their impacts/opportunities.

According to the Programme Managers, these are all activities which currently do not receive enough funding but could be extended with the 'Governance' budget.

Turning to the Greater Region, the Managing Director of its EGTC states that overcoming "cross-border obstacles" is part of every INTERREG project, to a varying extent. Both her and the Programme Partner of the Greater Region say that TO11 is not covered in the current programme, which would have represented 'Governance' in their eyes, even though the word itself appears twice in the CP in different contexts. Interestingly, according to the Programme Partner, the EC had advised the Greater Region not to cover TO11 when writing the CP 2014-2020. As a reason, the EC had stated that the Greater Region is an "old cooperation structure" and does not "need" this type of cooperation anymore.

Nonetheless, both interview partners from the Greater Region have a similar conception about how to realise 'Governance', namely through the cooperation of public authorities. The Managing Director mentions as example scientific studies commissioned by the INTERREG programme as well as administrative and legal cooperation. More precisely, she thinks of common conferences of administrative units and other thematic working groups. To give an example, the mutual recognition of diplomas could be a topic for this kind of meetings. In comparison, the Programme Partner regards 'Governance' as a means to connect public authorities in a general way and to increase their mutual understanding through the above-mentioned confidence-building measures, common trainings and similar activities. For example, administrative staff could be connected to counterparts on the other side of the border in order to know the contact persons responsible and to understand the respective processes.¹⁵ Also, local political hearings about topics such as the environment could include relevant persons from the neighbouring region since this topic "does not stop at the border". Finally, the Programme Partner names "European cross-border obstacles" as key challenge that could be tackled by the new 'Governance' element. Among others, she thinks of the creation of "Cross-border contact points" which could serve as a sort of consultancies for public authorities and administrations. This

¹⁴ The INTERREG Deutschland-Nederland programme has developed five strategic initiatives within its CP 2014-2020, cf. <https://www.deutschland-nederland.eu/ihr-interreg/strategische-initiativen/>, last visited on 01 July 2019.

¹⁵ The Programme Partner adds that there are first trials of putting in place such activities in the Greater Region, namely two-week internships of under-35-year-old administrative staff at the neighbouring administrative authority.

would be a “luxury”, as the Programme Partner names it, that could be realised with the newly introduced ‘Governance’-budget.

3.2.2. ‘Governance’ through project mode?

Will the ‘Governance’-requirement make a difference to the way in which the INTERREG-A programme is conducted? Having discussed the different conceptions of this term and possible ‘Governance’ activities, it has become clear that some stakeholders put the emphasis on a new form of cooperation – also as a means for rendering CBC activities more sustainable (e.g. the EMR Managing Director), while others rather think of an extension or variation of the INTERREG project activities as already practised (e.g. the Programme Managers of the Germany-Netherlands programme). Will the upcoming regulation therefore change something about the ‘project mode’ of INTERREG activities and introduce a new form of cooperation? Meanwhile, given the fact that INTERREG funding is limited in time and money (and that the inherent characteristic of every type of project is the limitation to time and money), can INTERREG produce anything else than temporary projects? Then again, is it not one of the main challenges (and criticisms) of INTERREG that activities often stop when the funding stops and therefore their long-term impact remains limited?

During a panel on the future of CBC,¹⁶ the Deputy Head of Unit of the EC we interviewed mentions that ‘Governance’ is supposed to make institutional cooperation more sustainable as opposed to the “ad hoc” and “project by project” mode of other INTERREG activities. During our interview, she elaborates further that ‘Governance’ is supposed to bring the world of “classic” INTERREG projects, that have been conducted for nearly 30 years, and the world of institutional cooperation together. According to her, programmes tend to be “conservative” and often proceed routinely in the “launching a call, choosing projects”-mode. The results in “ad-hoc and fragmented” activities. Yet, “nobody ever said this would be the only way to spend the money”. The EC representative suggests alternatives where the money is spent on activities that promote the cooperation of institutions, which could be done through contracting studies or platform-building and animation instead of projects. Still, programmes could perfectly decide how they want to spend the ‘Governance’-budget, be it through projects or in a different mode, as long as it serves to “pay attention to the bigger picture of cooperation” and to improve the framework for cooperation.

When discussing this question with the programme area representatives, some think that every activity connected to INTERREG can only be a project, while others expect a new kind of cooperation through ‘Governance’. The Programme Manager of the Greater Region underlines that ‘Governance’ seeks to have long-term effects but cannot overcome the timely-limited framework of INTERREG which it is still bound to. With this thought in mind, the Managing Director of the Germany-Netherlands Programme argues that creating positive effects with ‘Governance’ projects would result in an independent continuation of the cooperation, as it “often” happens for regular INTERREG projects as well. While the Programme Managers of the same area agree that INTERREG only works through the project mode, they add that with the introduction of ‘Governance’, one could think about new forms of INTERREG support, for example, through a longer lifetime of interventions which go beyond programme periods.

¹⁶ “Nathalie Verschelde (DG Regio): Vision on the future of cross-border cooperation.”, ESPON, 17.12.2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODER9uZ0tjg>, last visited on 01 July 2019.

The Managing Director of the Greater Region, who conceives 'Governance' as stronger cooperation between local authorities, regards the project mode as a topic to discuss in this context. In her experience, public authorities and administrations are often not willing to conduct INTERREG projects because of the enormous administrative efforts connected to them and because they will find other ways to meet if they are willing to cooperate. If 'Governance' would be connected to the classic project mode, she does not expect successful outcomes. Then again, if connecting local authorities would be limited to common conferences and meetings, therefore circumventing the project mode, the Managing Director does not see why the programme would have to spend 15% of the budget on this topic. She thus wonders about the concrete realisation of the concept and expects more information, as mentioned earlier. The Programme Partner of the same area, who imagines Governance in a comparable way, points to a similar problem but still thinks that motivating local authorities and administrations to cooperate within the framework of an INTERREG project could lead to success.

As for the Managing Director of the EMR, he states that the distinction between the regular project mode and a new form of 'Governance' activities is hard to trace and that neither the regulation nor the EC are very clear in this point. However, in his eyes, 'Governance' could still rather be a working mode for creating sustainable CBC structures as opposed to other project-based forms because it would be organised differently: As described earlier, with 'Governance', the programme could allow for potential partners to meet, it would facilitate their communication and their structural cooperation, for instance by helping to create an EGTC. In contrast to INTERREG projects, this form of cooperation would not be bound to output indicators and similar formalities but would rather be the stimulation of a process. When cooperation structures are built, they could possibly start INTERREG projects in a second step.

3.3. Is the new 'Governance' rule helpful?

All of this being said, what is the stance of the respective stakeholders towards the new 'Governance' regulation overall? Do they regard it as helpful for their programme area? Do they think it is relevant for their border region and will it have a significant and/or positive impact?

Of course, if the EC introduces new elements to the regulation, it does so because it expects positive impacts. At the same time, our interview partner from the DG REGIO actually does not expect *specific* benefits with regard to 'Governance', given the broad spectrum of possible activities in this field. Instead, she points to the fact that CBC must become more "strategic" since the INTERREG budget might be reduced because of Brexit and the general reduction of EU budget. She adds that DG REGIO's mission is to spend the EU budget as effectively as possible and 'Governance' is a way to do this. Also, she says that the 'Governance' objective is absolutely meant for all European border regions since all of them face obstacles of different natures and dimensions. This also concerns well developed border regions – "the more you cooperate with each other, the more obstacles appear". Consequently, the representative expresses "high expectations" which, however, are "tempered by the lukewarm reaction" from many programmes. This can be confirmed by the interviews we conducted with the respective programme area representatives – some are very positive about the 'Governance' regulation and perceive it as a valuable novelty; others do not see the necessity of it for their own border region or feel neutral about it as long as it is kept flexible.

The Managing Director of the Germany-Netherlands Programme could be included in this last group. He wonders if 'Governance' is meant for border regions which are less experienced with cooperation and therefore face more basic challenges. According to him, in the Germany-Netherlands Programme area and on the basis of 50 years of cooperation, there are already numerous structures that function independently. Yet, this does not mean that things could not be further improved or that some sub-regional structures would not work better than others. Also, if regions cooperate very closely, new challenges arise, for example through a bigger number of CB workers or a risen importance of mutual recognition of diplomas. Therefore, if the 'Governance' conditions are kept flexible, he sees good ways in which the budget could be spent in the Dutch-German programme area. The Programme Managers of the same programme area clearly agree among each other that this new budget element could be meant for other border regions, which do not cooperate across borders for such a long time yet. In their eyes, this new regulation objective feels like "taking a step back" and is "not ambitious enough" for their programme area. At the same time, the Programme Managers state that the money can be spent in a useful way anyhow if the conditions are kept flexible. The expected effects would not be enormous, as 'Governance' is already practised under other designations, but some new activities could be covered that have not been realised yet, such as the above mentioned improved public relations or connection of different funding programmes.

Similarly, the Managing Director of the Greater Region thinks that 'Governance' will not be a big step forward for her border region since it already exists under the current CP (with other designations) and is thematically covered. It would therefore rather be a "continuity". Moreover, she says that having the obligation to spend a certain amount of the budget for this programme element is not useful but rather restraining. This is especially the case because the activities she would relate 'Governance' with – such as more common conferences for public authorities – are not very expensive and therefore would not use up 15% of the whole INTERREG budget. In her eyes, too much money will be bound to 'Governance' which can hence not be spend for other useful projects. At the same time, she adds that the general idea of 'Governance' is something crucial, but not if it is obligatorily connected with this high percentage of the INTERREG budget. Spending the money for studies is only a good idea if their results can directly be put into practice. She agrees with the Programme Managers of the Germany-Netherlands area that the budget is probably meant for other border regions in new member states that are still confronted with more basic challenges. If the conditions are not kept flexible for the respective border regions and their conditions, she rather expects the 'Governance' regulation to be a "burden" instead of something helpful. The Programme Partner of the Greater Region feels, in a similar way, surprised about the introduction of the 'Governance' budget: previous consulting of the EC had advised their border region not to cover TO11 in the CP 2014-2020 since it would not be necessary for their border region anymore. At the same time, she points to the CP of the INTERREG *Oberrhein* programme area, which faces similar social and economic conditions and where TO11 is covered. Even though she had not expected this new element to the regulation, she thinks that it can be usefully realised and even says it is something very positive. In her eyes, the capacities to put such practices into action are currently not sufficient in the Greater Region and improving the cooperation between authorities could be very helpful and would not be worked upon otherwise. She thinks that tackling the topic without being thematically bound is helpful. In her opinion, the rule is relevant for all border regions in the European Union even though it will be realised differently, depending on the extent of cooperation that is already in place.

In a similar line, the Managing Director of the EMR has a very positive stance towards 'Governance'. He also thinks that some border regions are confronted with more profound challenges than others but says that it is relevant for all areas across Europe. The EMR as experienced cross-border region will highly benefit from this new element and be enabled to tackle its specific problems. For example, 'Governance' could be a good way to bring together economic players without bureaucratic conditions and indicators, as otherwise necessary for INTERREG projects. Furthermore, he argues that many potentials partners could be brought together in this way which are not reached in the usual way. In this line, the Senior Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator of the same area argue that INTERREG cannot solve structural problems in the usual project mode – reinforcing real cross-border structures through 'Governance' would therefore be a real improvement.

4. Conclusions and recommendations from a euregional perspective

4.1 Assessment of the research themes

As elaborated in Chapter 2.3, the research setup limits assessment options largely to an *ex ante* evaluation of the EC strategy and programme area responses, as in the following.

From the EC's viewpoint, the promotion of long-term cooperation structures and institutional cooperation is to contribute to sustainable declines of 'cross-border obstacles'. The latter may hinder working, studying or seeking medical care across the border. We stated that the fostering of 'Governance' activities can increase *Euregional Cohesion* and be a basis for *Socio-Economic Development* in the border regions by counteracting the mentioned CBC obstacles. One may even argue that the 'Governance' objective is to guide a substantial reform of the INTERREG programme, transitioning from its routine 'project mode' to a more strategic and long-term 'framework building' for CBC. Arguably, the project mode might have become outdated after almost 30 years of INTERREG cooperation, while some might reckon that the 'overarching objective' of structural CBC has gone out of sight. An innovative framework for structural cooperation guided by the 'Governance' objective could thus allow for more sustainable CBC processes. This would lead to a better *Euregional Cohesion* as well as the creation of jobs and economic opportunities, thus stimulating *Socio-Economic Development*. The fact that some programme areas provided optimistic feedback on the 'Governance' objective and named concrete ideas on its realisation in their context, underlines this point.

In contrast, several other programme area representatives stated scepticism about the relevance and effects of the new objective. In their conviction, the cooperation within their border region is already so advanced that the simple continuation of the current INTERREG activities will improve and manifest structural cooperation over the years automatically. Once a certain state of structural cooperation is reached in a border region, hopes are up that EC funding will not be required any longer for CBC. These stakeholders hence believe that the 'Governance' objective is rather oriented at 'less experienced' border regions, while they do not see the relevance for the border region that they are responsible for.

As a reaction to this, the Deputy Head of Unit we interviewed points to the EC's "Cross-Border Review".¹⁷ Issued in 2017, the review displays various examples of CB challenges still present in many border regions, including the ones which are at the centre of this dossier. Also, notably, current stakeholders involved in programme areas are – as admitted by some of the interview partners – usually sceptical towards novelties in INTERREG regulations. Additional communication is therefore necessary in order to clarify intentions and goals of the new objective and therefore to put it into practice as aimed for by the EC. This would consequently lead to higher expectations towards improvements on *Euregional Cohesion* and *Socio-Economic Development* through the 'Governance' objective.

The monitoring and *ex post* evaluation of the upcoming INTERREG period will show to what extent the hopes, expectations and preliminary plans of the various stakeholders materialise. An *ex post* analysis along the lines of this dossier would allow an evaluation of possible mindset changes and of the effects of the new objective at the end of the upcoming programme period, i.e. in 2027 or later. In our outlook (Chapter 4.3), we briefly discuss possible research setups for such an assessment.

4.2 Substantive conclusions

The analysis of the interviews shows a general consensus among INTERREG stakeholders on the interpretation of the 'Governance' objective: It is supposed to foster a more durable and sustainable CBC with structurally cooperating institutions (cf. Chapter 3.1). In this context, a key notion is the need to set up a 'framework' for improved CBC. Views differ, however, on the implementation approach for the 'Governance' objective (Chapter 3.2). Suggestions and plans range from meeting platforms for potential partners to common trainings for public administrations and improved public relations. This diversity in local realisation plans was anticipated by the EC, who formulated the objective broadly to account for the differing border region contexts across Europe and allow flexibility in implementation.

While it is reasonable for the EC to avoid strict requirements for the objective, several programme area representatives wished for more concrete guidance on implementation. From a third party's perspective, this situation requires additional communication efforts to emphasise the opportunities the new objective entails for programme areas and to discuss suitable implementation approaches. More topical exchange between representatives of the EC and the programme areas may avoid that the objective and the underlying concepts are misunderstood from the beginning on and increase the likelihood for DG REGIO's expectations to be fulfilled. Thanks to Interact,¹⁸ this type of exchange will be stimulated. Additionally, it is to be noted that the CPs will be formally negotiated with the EC before adoption. It is therefore to be seen, if programme area representatives will have clearer insights after such clarifications.

Moreover, it is debatable whether the 'Governance'-objective can and should be realised through the usual project mode or requires innovative approaches (cf. Chapter 3.2.2). The 'Governance'- objective puts a focus on the ubiquitous challenge of INTERREG and programmes with comparable funding

¹⁷ Cf. European Commission "Cross-Border Review", 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border/review/#1, last visited 15 July 2019.

¹⁸ Cf. European Commission: "Interact, Interreg.", https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/EN/atlas/programmes/2014-2020/europe/2014tc16rfir002, last visited on 15 July 2019.

structures. The nature of projects, being timely and financially limited, and the fact that successful projects are often not granted with follow-up and long-term financing by local authorities counteracts the sustainability aspirations. As suggested by several interview partners, one could consider administrating the funds differently to allow for a longer lifetime of the activities. Such considerations seem in line with the intention of the EC to strengthen institutional cooperation which would increase the chance of more sustainable financing models for cooperation activities.

4.3 Outlook and further research

The EC representative points out a general lack of data on the quality of CBC for 'Governance' structures and a need to find methods for the measurement of positive effects of 'Governance' cooperation. As only a small portion of the European Union's cohesion budget is allocated to INTERREG, no resources are dedicated to this type of data collection and evaluation. The "European Quality of Government Index 2017"¹⁹ as "the only measure of institutional quality available at the regional level in the European Union"²⁰ could serve as an example for a similar index in the context of CBC, which could for instance have the form of a scoreboard for CBC. Notably, the above-mentioned index does not include any aspects of CBC for now. In comparison, the assessment of CBC activities funded by INTERREG currently concentrates on quantitative indicators, which are not very meaningful for the 'Governance' objective. However, if it was connected to a list of qualitative indicators, which clarifies goals and targets, its implementation would be facilitated for programme representatives.

Furthermore, to understand the impact of INTERREG, additional research is needed to compare the situation of *Euregional Cohesion* and *Socio-Economic Development* in different border regions between the onset of the upcoming INTERREG programme period and its completion. Along with the creation of qualitative indicators, programmes could be encouraged to spend a fraction of their budget on studies investigating the effects of 'Governance' activities. This would facilitate the *ex post* evaluation of the impact of the 'Governance' objective and allow insights on whether it leads to substantial changes in the INTERREG programme as a whole.²¹ Research questions could refer to the perception of the border and its effects as well as the impact of the INTERREG funds when trying to reduce separating border effects. Examples of similar studies already exist, as for example commissioned by the Germany-Netherlands Programme in 2015.²²

Finally, the findings of this research motivate an analysis and comparison in other border regions, particularly such with significantly differing economic and geographic contexts. Several interview partners argued that 'Governance' will differ in meaning between border regions, largely depending

¹⁹ European Commission: "European Quality of Government Index 2017", 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/quality_of_governance, last visited on 01 July 2019.

²⁰ Cf. ib.

²¹ [Note from the editors:] To this end, even a mid-term review of the upcoming INTERREG programme period 2021-2027 could be considered to develop further the notion and meaning of 'Governance' in the context of long-term funding for CBC. This dossier shows how the idea of 'Governance' is not very much developed in the context of implementing INTERREG programmes. This is a case in point where academic research could prove valuable in future, by helping to analyse and cultivate the responsiveness of the INTERREG programme as a whole. One especially useful outcome of such research would be the development of qualitative indicators that help illuminate the quality of governance and CBC and, thereby, also help to identify best practices.

²² ERAC impact/Radboud University: „Nullmessung des Ergebnisindikators der Priorität 2: ‚Wahrnehmung der deutsch-niederländischen Grenze als Barriere“, 19.06.2015, https://www.deutschland-nederland.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/150619_Nullmessung_de.pdf, last visited on 01 July 2019.

on the state of CBC they have managed to reach as well as other contextual factors like economic development. Against this backdrop, particularly border regions of new EU Member States would be of high interest.

5. Annex

Interview Questions

- What is your understanding of the term 'Governance' in the context of INTERREG?
- Is 'Governance' already put into practice during the current INTERREG V-A programme period? If yes, was it covered by any PAs, TOs and SOs in the CP of the programme area you are working with?
- Did you already discuss among programme area representatives that 'Governance' is part of the EC's proposal for the new INTERREG regulation 2021-2027? If yes, how will it be covered in the CP you are working on? Will there be a difference to the CP of the current programme period?
- In your eyes, how will or should 'Governance' be put into practice during the upcoming programme period? Can you give examples of concrete activities related to it? // How would you personally realise 'Governance', independently of regulations and other stakeholders?
- Do you think 'Governance' is a useful/important/relevant novelty to the new INTERREG regulation?
- Do you think 'Governance' is relevant for your border region? Do you think all border regions concerned by the regulation will have a similar understanding of 'Governance' in the end?

ITEM is an initiative of Maastricht University (UM), the Dutch Centre of Expertise and Innovation on Demographic Changes (NEIMED), Zuyd Hogeschool, the city of Maastricht, the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (EMR) and the (Dutch) Province of Limburg.

Institute for Transnational and Euregional
cross border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM

Mailing address:

Postbus 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands

Visitors:

Bouillonstraat 1-3, 6211 LH Maastricht, The Netherlands

Avenue Céramique 50, 6221 KV Maastricht, The Netherlands

T: 0031 (0) 43 388 32 33

E: item@maastrichtuniversity.nl

www.twitter.com/ITEM_UM

ITEM Cross-Border Portal:

<https://itemcrossborderportal.maastrichtuniversity.nl/p/homepage>

