

# ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

## Interreg V-A Euregio Meuse-Rhine

Reporting period: 2014-2015



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## 1 IDENTIFICATION

CCI	2014TC16RFCB001
Title	Interreg V-A Euregio Maas-Rijn
Version	2015.1
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	28.06.2016

## 2 OVERVIEW

Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

### **Start of programme**

Preparations for the programme already began in 2012. It was possible to build on the extensive experience gained in previous programmes. For the Interreg V programme, a task force was set up from the existing secretariat, and this held its first meeting with representatives of all the programme partners on 28 February. The initial steps were taken in cooperation with the partners. Public consultation on the programme document began on 24 November 2011. The aim was to involve as many organisations as possible within the programme area in drawing up the programme. This consultation was completed on 6 February 2015 and the results could then be incorporated into the programme document. This led to the Cooperation Programme being submitted on 5 June 2015.

After discussion of the programme with the European Commission and the necessary alterations, the programme was submitted to the Commission on 25 November 2015 for final approval. The European Commission approved the Cooperation Programme on 9 December 2015 and the decision was received shortly afterwards. It was also decided in 2015 that the Dutch Province of Limburg should be designated the Management Authority and Certification Authority, a decision that was formalised in 2016. On that occasion, the Central Government Audit Service of the Netherlands [Auditdienst Rijk] was also assigned the task of Audit Authority.

### **Interreg V programme documents**

During the year under review, a start was made on various programme documents, which were (or are being) finalised in 2016. The first meeting (i.e. the establishment meeting) of the Interreg V-A EMR Monitoring Committee took place on 4 March 2016. The Rules of Procedure were also adopted on that occasion. These comprise the agreed arrangements for the meetings and decisions of the Committee.

At a number of meetings in the first half of 2016, the Monitoring Committee approved the various documents necessary for sound management and control of the programme. This was reported on in the Annual Report for 2016.

#### ***E-desk and staffing of Joint Secretariat***

In view of the requirements for e-desks as set out in Article 122(3) of Regulation 1303/2013, a study was commenced in 2015 to determine what the options were for an e-desk for the Interreg V EMR programme. Ultimately (early 2016), the “electronic Monitoring System” (eMS) developed by Interact was selected. A licensing agreement for this system was signed on 28 December 2015. Preparation and development of the system for the EMR’s situation has now progressed to such an extent that it became accessible to beneficiaries and applicants before the opening of the programme’s second call on 25 July 2016.

In 2015 there was intensive consultation on the organisation of the programme. It was ultimately decided that the tasks of the MA should be undertaken by the Dutch Province of Limburg. In addition, it was agreed that the Joint Secretariat should be transferred to the Stichting Euregio Meuse-Rhine in Eupen, under the supervision of the MA. All this was fleshed out in the management structure that was approved by the Monitoring Committee on 28 June 2016. Staffing for the management structure (14.5 FTEs) will be worked out in the course of 2016.

#### ***Project calls and assessment***

In order to get off to a flying start with the new programme and to maintain continuity from Interreg IV, a call for project outlines was already launched issued in 2015. The deadline for submission was 30 June 2015. During the current programme period, the decision-making process involves two steps. First, limited project outlines must be submitted, which are then assessed. Subsequently, applicants submit a detailed application file.

A total of 23 project outlines were submitted for the first call. On 18 September and 19 October 2015 (written round), these were discussed at length and feedback was given to the project applicants. The procedure for the full-scale applications was then opened at the beginning of 2016, after which 13 applications from the original 23 outlines were submitted. A decision on these 13 applications needs to be taken by the Monitoring Committee on 28 June 2016.

When project proposals are assessed, detailed consideration is always given to their suitability for the cooperation programme and the correct application of the programme’s requirements. For this purpose, a set of assessment criteria has been established by the Monitoring Committee. In this way, the Committee wishes to select the projects which are best suited in terms of content to the priorities and the specific objectives. The system of project calls allows proposals to be assessed side by side, so that they can be easily compared.

***Initial results***

Given that the first Interreg V projects have yet to be approved (except for Technical Assistance, which was approved by the Monitoring Committee on 21 March 2016), there were no payment claims or certified expenditure during the year under review.

It is not therefore possible to provide information regarding implementation of priorities, because implementation can only start in the second half of 2016.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

#### 3.1. Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	Innovation 2020	
2	Economy 2020	
3	Social inclusion and education	
4	Territorial Development	
5	Technical Assistance	

### 3.2. Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

*Table 1: Result indicators*

Priority axis			1 - Innovation 2020							
Investment priority			1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies							
Specific objective			1.1 - Increase the percentage of SMEs that introduces innovations.							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI1	Percentage SMEs that introduces product or process innovations	Percentage	67,00	2013	70,00	0,00	0,00			
Specific objective			1.2 - Increase connections and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education.							
RI2	Proportion of innovative enterprises that cooperates with enterprises and knowledge institutions.	Percentage	45,00	2013	47,00	0,00	0,00			

Priority axis			2 - Economy 2020							
Investment priority			3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators							
Specific objective			2.1 - Strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs.							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI3	Percentage starting enterprises relative to total amount of enterprises	Percentage	9,61	2014	10,10	0,00	0,00			
Specific objective			2.2 - Increase resource efficiency of SMEs.							
RI4	Resource productivity	Euro's/kg	2,01	2014	2,10	0,00	0,00			

Priority axis			3 - Social inclusion and education							
Investment priority			9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services							
Specific objective			3.1 - Increase social integration of vulnerable groups.							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI5	Percentage people at risk of poverty or social exclusion	Percentage	20,00	2014	20,00	0,00	0,00			



<b>Priority axis</b>			<b>3 - Social inclusion and education</b>							
Investment priority			10b - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes (ETC-CB)							
<b>Specific objective</b>			<b>3.2 - Improve the connection of the cross-border educational system to the labour market</b>							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI6	Share of early school-leavers	Share	11,00	2014	10,00	0,00	0,00			

<b>Priority axis</b>			<b>4 - Territorial development</b>							
Investment priority			11b - Promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions (ETC-CB)							
<b>Specific objective</b>			<b>4.1 - Decrease border hindrance effects for residents and institutions.</b>							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI7	Percentage cross-border commuters	Percentage	39,00	2013	41,00	0,00	0,00			
<b>Specific objective</b>			<b>4.2 - Increase the number of visitors and tourists in the EMR and increase the duration of stay.</b>							
RI8	Number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments	Number	12.700.000,00	2014	13.000.000,00	0,00	0,00			

<b>Priority axis</b>			<b>5 - Technical Assistance</b>							
<b>Specific objective</b>			<b>TA - Responsible and efficient implementation of the Interreg V-A-programme Euregio Meuse-Rhine</b>							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total		Qualitative		Observations
						2014	2015	2014	2015	
RI9	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		Not applicable					

*Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators*

Priority Axis	1 - Innovation 2020
<b>Investment priority</b>	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	80,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	80,00	0,00	0,00	

F	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	170,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	170,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO06	Productive investment: Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants)	EUR	6.000.000,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO06	Productive investment: Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants)	EUR	6.000.000,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO27	Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects	EUR	5.625.000,00	0,00	0,00	

S	CO27	Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects	EUR	5.625.000,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO28	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO28	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO29	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO29	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO41	Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	

S	CO41	Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO42	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Organisations	20,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO42	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Organisations	20,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI10	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises and knowledge institutes	Number	40,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI10	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises and knowledge institutes	Number	40,00			

F	PSI9	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises	Number	20,00			
S	PSI9	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises	Number	20,00			

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>2 - Economy 2020</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	750,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	750,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-	Enterprises	500,00	0,00	0,00	

		financial support					
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	500,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	50,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	50,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO08	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	100,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO08	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	100,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI1	Number organised activities focussed on stimulating entrepreneurship	Number activities	150,00	0,00	0,00	



S	PSI1	Number organised activities focussed on stimulating entrepreneurship	Number activities	150,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI2	Number of developed business cases	Number business cases	10,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI2	Number of developed business cases	Number business cases	10,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI3	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	990,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI3	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	990,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI4	Number of SMEs receiving grants	Number	245,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI4	Number of SMEs receiving grants	Number	245,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI5	Employment growth in supported SMEs	Fte	99,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI5	Employment growth in supported SMEs	Fte	99,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI6	Number of supported projects focussed on efficient use of natural and	Number	3,00	0,00	0,00	

		material resources in (SME) enterprises					
S	PSI6	Number of supported projects focussed on efficient use of natural and material resources in (SME) enterprises	Number	3,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI7	Number of supported projects focussed on increasing energy independence in (SME) enterprises	Number	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI7	Number of supported projects focussed on increasing energy independence in (SME) enterprises	Number	2,00	0,00	0,00	

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>3 - Social inclusion and labour market</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	9a - Investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	CO44	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training	Persons	300,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO44	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training	Persons	300,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO45	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders	Persons	300,00	0,00	0,00	

S	CO45	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in projects promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders	Persons	30,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO46	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO46	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	

		education across borders					
F	PSI19	Number of projects focussed on disadvantaged youth, elderly and vulnerable population	Number of projects	5,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI19	Number of projects focussed on disadvantaged youth, elderly and vulnerable population	Number of projects	5,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI20	Number of people that make use of cross-border social services	Number of persons	1.000,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI20	Number of people that make use of cross-border social services	Number of persons	1.000,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI21	Number of supported projects focussed on strengthening the connection between education and labour	Number of persons	3,00	0,00	0,00	

		market					
S	PSI21	Number of supported projects focussed on strengthening the connection between education and labour market	Number of persons	3,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI22	Number of organizations that participate in supported cooperation focussed on cross-border functioning of the labour market	Number of organizations	10,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI22	Number of organizations that participate in supported cooperation focussed on cross-border functioning of the labour market	Number of organizations	10,00	0,00	0,00	

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>3 - Social inclusion and education</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	10b - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes (ETC-CB)

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	CO44	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training	Persons	300,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO44	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training	Persons	300,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO46	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	

		education across borders					
S	CO46	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	PSI21	Number of supported projects focussed on strengthening the connection between education and labour market	Number of persons	3,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI21	Number of supported projects focussed on strengthening the connection between education and labour market	Number of persons	3,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI22	Number of	Number of organizations	10,00	0,00	0,00	



		organizations that participate in supported cooperation focussed on cross-border functioning of the labour market					
S	PSI22	Number of organizations that participate in supported cooperation focussed on cross-border functioning of the labour market	Number of organizations	10,00	0,00	0,00	

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>4 – Territorial development</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	11b - Promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions (ETC-CB)

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	2.500,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	2.500,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	800.000,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	800.000,00	0,00	0,00	
F	CO43	Labour Market and Training: Number of	Persons	50,00	0,00	0,00	

		participants in cross-border mobility initiatives					
S	CO43	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in cross-border mobility initiatives	Persons	50,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI11	Number of projects focussed on reducing the mismatch between knowledge institutes and enterprises and/or government	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI11	Number of projects focussed on reducing the mismatch between knowledge institutes and enterprises and/or government	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI12	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning health	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI12	Number of projects	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	

		focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning health					
F	PSI14	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning safety	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI14	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning safety	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI15	Number of cross-border cooperation between public authorities	Number of cooperations	10,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI15	Number of cross-border cooperation between public authorities	Number of cooperations	10,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI16	Number of meeting-projects between residents of the EMR	Number of meeting-projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI16	Number of meeting-projects between residents of the EMR	Number of meeting-projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	

F	PSI17	Number of projects focussed on sustainable and intelligent mobility and/or new alternative means of transporting	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI17	Number of projects focussed on sustainable and intelligent mobility and/or new alternative means of transporting	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
F	PSI18	Number of projects focussed on strengthening the quality of cultural activities by cooperation between cultural organizations	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI18	Number of projects focussed on strengthening the quality of cultural activities by cooperation between cultural organizations	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	

<b>Priority Axis</b>	<b>5 – Technical Assistance</b>
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(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	Observations
F	PSI23	Number of promotion and publicity activities (focussed on promotion and publicity of the programme)	Number	20,00			
S	PSI23	Number of promotion and publicity activities (focussed on promotion and publicity of the programme)	Number	20.00			
F	PSI24	Number of research, studies and evaluations (on (sub)programme level for the purpose of effective functioning of the programme)	Number	4,00			
S	PSI24	Number of research, studies and evaluations (on	Number	4,00			

		(sub)programme level for the purpose of effective functioning of the programme)					
F	PSI25	Jobs involved in implementation (in fte)	fte	14,00			
S	PSI25	Jobs involved in implementation (in fte)	fte	14,00			
F	PSI30	Annual reports	Number	6,00			
S	PSI30	Annual reports	Number	6,00			

### 3.3. Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

*Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework*

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	2015 Final target (2023) total	2014	2015	Observations
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### 3.4. Financial data

*Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level*

Priority axis	Fund	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	Total	47.142.857,00	70,00	0,00	0,00 %	0,00	0,00	0,00%	0
2	ERDF	Total	28.571.430,00	70,00	0,00	0,00 %	0,00	0,00	0,00%	0
3	ERDF	Total	27.771.786,00	70,00	0,00	0,00 %	0,00	0,00	0,00%	0
4	ERDF	Total	25.428.572,00	70,00	0,00	0,00 %	0,00	0,00	0,00%	0
5	ERDF	Total	11.520.000,00	50,00	0,00	0,00 %	0,00	0,00	0,00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>		<b>140.434.645,00</b>	<b>68,36</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00 %</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>140.434.645,00</b>	<b>68,36</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00 %</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>0</b>

## 4 SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUTIONS

### ***Ex-ante evaluation***

In order to improve the design quality of the programme and to verify whether its objectives and targets can be achieved, the Interreg V EMR Operational Programme for 2014-2020 was subjected to an ex-ante evaluation. That evaluation was carried out by an external agency, with the results being presented on 5 June 2015.

The evaluator assessed the chosen thematic objectives and investment priorities and their differentiation according to specific objectives as relevant to the programme area. The programme enjoys broad support from the stakeholders in the various sub-regions of the Euregio. In general, the European guidelines for such cooperation programmes have been complied with. The measures and actions have also been assessed as from sufficient to positive.

A strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was also carried out in the framework of the ex-ante evaluation, with an EIR (Environmental Impact Report) being produced. This was in order to assess and evaluate, in a systematic and scientifically sound manner, the likely consequences of the programme for people and the environment, and reasonable alternatives to the programme or parts thereof. This EIA did not reveal any problems.

Drawing up the ex-ante evaluation was an interactive and iterative process, in consultation with the (external) editor of the Cooperation Programme. The partners referred to in Article 5 of EU Regulation 1303/2013 were also consulted on two separate occasions.

Title: Ex-ante evaluation of the Operational European Territorial Cooperation EMR Programme 2014–2020

Reference period: January 2014–December 2020

### ***Implementation-evaluation***

Given that no projects have yet been approved and that the procedure only began late, there was no point in carrying out an implementation-evaluation. That will certainly be done in the second half of 2016, when the results and procedure for the first call have been completed and the management structure is more clearly apparent.

## **5 ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN**

### **(a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken**

The complex regulatory environment is an important point of attention for the programme. In particular, such issues as state aid, public procurement, and eligibility for funding demand constant attention from both the programme managers and the project applicants/final beneficiaries. The MA is striving for further simplification within the rules of the programme and the European Commission, among other things as they appear in the Catalogue of Expenditure for the programme. Providing proper information for the project applicants/beneficiaries is also an important focus of attention, for which the necessary steps have been taken.

### **(b) An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.**

After the early start of preparations, the programme's transition to actual implementation has been somewhat delayed. To a large extent, this was due to decision-making on the content and organisation of the programme and the transition from management of Interreg IV by the Euregio Meuse-Rhine to the Dutch Province of Limburg for the current Interreg V programme. Structures and processes needed to be redesigned, naturally on the basis of positive past experience. Concurrently, however, work has been carried out to ensure a smooth start for project applicants, but time is needed to smoothly coordinate these management and project processes. At the beginning of 2016, a great deal of work was done on this and the intention is that everything is dealt with in the course of this year.

## **6 CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)**

The Interreg V EMR programme was officially approved on 9 December 2015. Its intention is to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the programme area covered by the Dutch Province of Limburg, Belgian Limburg, the Province of Liège, the Aachen region, and neighbouring areas of North Brabant, Flemish Brabant, North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate. The programme aims to promote innovation, to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs, and to improve social inclusion, education, and territorial cooperation. A total of more than EUR 140m is available for the programme.

After approval of the programme, a great deal of work has been done on putting it into operation. As the Management Authority, the Dutch Province of Limburg is responsible for effective management, and has now taken the necessary steps and drafted documents to that end. At the same time, potential project applicants have been given the opportunity to submit projects, first in the form of outlines and later detailed applications.

The provision of information to potential project applicants has been streamlined, with an important role being played by the Regional Antennas. The Joint Secretariat, based in Eupen, also contributes. A new website and project handbook are in preparation.

A first call for projects was issued in 2015 at the behest of the Monitoring Committee Interreg V-A Euregio Meuse-Rhine (in process of formation). A total of 23 outlines were received, 13 of which were worked out as full applications. At present, 34 potential applicants have submitted an outline for a second call. It is clear that the programme is gaining in popularity within the Euregio.

[This public summary will be uploaded as a separate appendix, as requested in the Commission's template for the annual report.]

## **7 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)**

Not applicable.

## **8 PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (Article 101(h) and Article 111(3) of Regulation (EU) N° 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) N° 1299/2013)**

### 8.1. Major projects

Not applicable.

### 8.2. Joint action plans

Not applicable.

## DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Interreg Euregio Maas-Rijn - Samenvatting jaarverslag 2014-2015	Citizens' summary	20-Jun-2015		Ares(2016)5931056	Interreg Euregio Maas-Rijn - Samenvatting jaarverslag 2014-2015	14-Oct-2016	npleesdi

## LATEST VALIDATION RESULTS

Severity	Code	Message
Info		Implementation report version has been validated