

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Interreg V-A Euregio Meuse-Rhine

Reporting period: 01.01.2017-31.12.2017



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1 IDENTIFICATION

CCI	2014TC16RFCB001
Title	Interreg V-A Euregio Maas-Rijn
Version	2017.0
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	24.05.2018

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.

The Interreg V-A EMR programme was approved by the European Commission on 9 December 2015. In line with the type of work carried out in 2016, the activities carried out at programme level continued to be split between the following categories:

1. Further detailing of the organisational structure of the programme;
2. Submission, assessment, and selection of project proposals.

Organisation

- Filling positions for JS
- Programme documents approved for the designation of authorities by the Commission

Projects

In 2016 the first call of the Programme was launched and finalized. The 2nd call of the Programme was launched in 2016, but finalized in 2017. In regards to the 2nd call, a total of 17 proposals were submitted but two were ultimately withdrawn. Consequently, the Monitoring Committee approved 12 proposals in the course of 2017 under the 2nd call.

In early 2017 another specific call that had been launched the previous year was finalized. This call was linked to projects on the cross-border reception of refugees and 2 new proposals were selected for implementation.

The 4th call for projects was prepared and launched in 2017. On 24 April 2017, the lead applicants (LAs) were invited to submit an outline of their proposals. The submission deadline for the outlines was May 22, 2017. The RAs/JS/MA analysed the outlines and issued a series of recommendations, allowing the LAs to prepare the application form. From 01 September until 16 October 2017, the LAs had the possibility to submit via the eMS system their revised draft proposals. In January 2018, the LAs were sent recommendation letters for the improvement of their draft application forms. The deadline for the submission of the final forms was March 5th, 2018 (16:00 CET). In May 2018 a decision will be made about the projects finally selected for funding under call 4.

Amounts committed and results achieved

In 2017, in the framework of calls 2 and 2a of the Interreg V-A EMR programme there have been 14 projects selected for funding under the 4 priority axes. The total ERDF committed to these 14 projects is EUR 21.928.059,43, which represents 50% of the overall project budgets. Out of the total ERDF budget of EUR 90.240.250 earmarked for supporting projects in the funding period 2014-2020, approximately 24,3% was attributed to projects selected in 2017. In the time interval 2016-2017 the total amount of ERDF funds allocated to selected projects under Interreg V-A EMR was EUR 44.893.592. As such, in this time interval 49,74% of the available ERDF funds for selected projects have been used up under calls 1, 2 and 2a.

Publicity

In line with the overall communication strategy approved in 2016, the promotion and dissemination of the programme documents continued to be carried out in 2017. An official programme website was launched in 2017, thus allowing a strong online presence also reinforced via social media (Facebook) and a YouTube channel. The programme documents, manuals, cost catalogues and factsheets are available online for further consultation by potential beneficiaries. All of these documents were drawn up and distributed in three languages (Dutch, German, and French) in order to reach more people within the region.

Two special events were organized in 2017 for project beneficiaries and those wishing to submit proposals in the framework of call 4. On 09.02.2017 a seminar was organized for the projects approved under call 1. This meeting allowed the programme bodies and the partners to get to know each other and discuss the manner in which the project implementation will occur. At the end of February 2017, a technical seminar was organized to explain the procedure linked to the launching call 4.

At European level the program was promoted at two broad public-oriented events, namely **Europe Around the Corner** (12.05.2017, Maastricht) and **European Week of Regions and Cities** (09-12.10.2017, Brussels).

One **High Level Meeting** was organized on 16.10.2017 allowing all politicians of the regional partners to get together and learn about the state of affairs regarding the program and the future cross-border cooperation.

Several press conferences have been organized to promote the projects funded in the framework of Interreg V-A EMR. **Two newsletters** were issued at programme level in 2017. One was designed for the members of the Monitoring Committee and the other ones for the beneficiaries of the projects supported by the programme.

Key points regarding organisation and publicity

A brief overview is given below of the main key points in this area:

- Number of meetings of the Monitoring Committee: 4
- Number of meetings of the Technical Working Group: 4
- Number of GO/NO GO meetings: 2
- Number of expert meetings: 1
- Number of newsletters: 2
- Number of broad-public events the programme was promoted in: 2

Collaboration of partners

The partners play an important role in the development and implementation of the programme. The partners include the representatives of the Member States and regions (provinces) that form part of the programme area. None of the Member States or regions are excluded and all have promised cooperation and recorded this in the cooperation agreement between the partners. There is regular consultation between officials representing the various programme authorities (MA, CA, JS, FLC, RAs) and the programme partners. The most important consultation platform is of course the Monitoring Committee, within which all the partners are represented, plus the European Commission and the EMR Foundation. The Monitoring Committee not only monitors the programme but also decides on the funding applications.

The social-economic partners are involved in the programme through the Stichting Euregio Maas-Rijn (the Foundation). Within the Foundation there are regular consultations with representatives of businesses and employees, with the Interreg programme also being discussed. Where relevant, the results of these consultations are discussed by the Monitoring Committee.

In 2017, 4 meetings of the Monitoring Committee have been organized. The first meeting was organized on 02 February 2017 and the Programme evaluation plan was approved. The MA was then delegated to submit it to the European Commission.

The chairmanship rotates between the partners each year; in 2017, the presidency passed from the Walloon government to the representatives of NRW, as announced at the 2nd MC meeting on 20.04.2017. The current system for consultation with the partners works well. During the same event, the new members of the MC were also introduced, namely the new programme coordinator and the new manager of the EMR Foundation.

There is open dialogue and many (official) contacts in order to properly align the processes and projects. Steps taken in 2017 were designed to increase the involvement of administrators in order to secure the future of Interreg EMR in the context of the next funding period regarding Structural Funds.

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	<p>It is for this priority that by far the largest amount has been requested. In total, 20 proposals were submitted during the two first calls for project proposals (11 proposals during the first call and 9 proposals during the second call).</p> <p>Out of the 9 project proposals submitted under the 2nd call, 4 proposals were selected by the MC for funding in 2017. The total ERDF contribution for the 4 projects amounted to EUR 7.216.982 and the overall budget was EUR 14.433.964. All 4 projects were submitted under specific objective 1.2. One project selected in 2017 under PA1 (Light Vehicle) is considered to have a positive impact on the environment, although the programme output indicators selected are not in any way related to pollution prevention. The project LightVehicle is centered on developing a dedicated automotive community in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion capable of pursuing CO2 reduction through material and process innovation. CO2 reduction all over the supply chain is the most important criterion for future competitiveness in the automotive sector. CO2 reduction translates into fuel saving and that requires weight reduction on all vehicles. First demo projects and the delivery of concrete prototypes are expected before 2020.</p>
2	Economy 2020	<p>In 2017, one project was selected for funding under specific objective 2.1. The overall project was EUR 3.529.553,40 of which the 50% ERDF contribution amounted to EUR 1.619.359,10.</p>
3	Social inclusion and education	<p>Under the 2nd call 4 projects were selected for PA3 in 2017. Two were submitted under SO 3.1 and 2 under SO 3.2. The overall budgets of all 4 projects amounted to EUR 11.620.539,69 of which the 50% ERDF contribution was EUR 5.740.823,93.</p> <p>Under call 2 a, two other projects were selected under the same priority axis in 2017. The overall budget for these two projects was EUR 4.219.944,96 of which the 50% ERDF contribution was EUR 2.109.972,48.</p> <p>In total for this priority an ERDF contribution of 7.850.796,408 was attributed.</p>
4	Territorial Development	<p>Under call 2, 3 projects were selected for this priority axis in 2017. Two of them were submitted under 4.1 and 1 project under 4.2. In total, the 3 projects amount to EUR 10.481.843,82 of which the 50% ERDF funding is EUR 5.240.921,91.</p>

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
5	Technical Assistance	<p>With regard to technical assistance, the focus was set on the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of the designation procedure The work started in 2016 on the description of the Monitoring and Control System and other documents necessary for the designation of authorities has been continued and finalized in December 2017. The long duration required for the finalisation of these tasks is explained by the lack of staffing at the level of the MA and JS which had to combine these tasks together with a short succession of call for projects. • The approval of the applications selected by the MC under the 3 first calls A important delay had to be recorded in the approval by the MA of the selected applications. The MA was only able to send out the first grant letters by the end of November 2016. By the end of 2017 not even half of the selected projects received a grant letter. Major efforts have been undertaken during the first half of 2018 in order to correct this situation. • The setup of a 4th call for projects with advising tasks towards beneficiaries. Although a first set of costs was certified by the CA before the end of the year no payment claim could be submitted to the European Commission as the programme authorities were not designated before the end of 2017.

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	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017
RI1	Percentage SMEs that introduces product or process innovations	Percentage	67,00	2013	70,00	0,00	0,00	58,00	58,00				The result indicator mentioned for 2013 seems to have been overestimated. The data analysed conducted to an overall EMR result indicator of 64%, instead of 67%. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data in the Eurostat and the Regional Innovation Scoreboard for these years were not available at the time the current report was prepared.

Specific objective			1.2 – Increase connections and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education.											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				Observations
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI2	Proportion of innovative enterprises that cooperates with enterprises and knowledge institutions.	Percentage	45,00	2013	47,00	0,00	0,00	44,00	62,00					The result indicator mentioned for 2013 seems to have been overestimated. The data analysed conducted to an overall EMR result indicator of 42%, instead of 45%. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data in the Eurostat and the Regional Innovation Scoreboard for these years were not available at the time the current report was prepared.

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				
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI3	Percentage starting enterprises relative to total amount of enterprises	Percentage	9,61	2014	10,10	0,00	0,00	10,00	11,00					The result indicator mentioned for 2014 seems to have been underestimated. The data analysed conducted to an overall EMR result indicator of 10.00%, instead of 9.61%. The values for 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data in the Eurostat, Bestat and regionalstatistik.de for this years were not available at the time the current report was prepared.
Specific objective			2.2 – Increase resource efficiency of SMEs.											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI4	Resource productivity	Euro's/kg	2,01	2014	2,10	0,00	0,00	2,65	2,65					According to the data investigated, the baseline for 2014 should have been 2.35 instead of 2.01. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data in the Eurostat, Bestat and regionalstatistik.de for these years were not available at the time the current report was prepared.

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
RI5	Percentage people at risk of poverty or social exclusion	Percentage	20,00	2014	20,00	0,00	0,00	17,00	17,00	2014	2015	2016	2017	According to the data investigated, the baseline for 2014 should have been 17% instead of 20%. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data in the Eurostat, Bestat and RegionalStatistik.de for these years were not available at the time the current report was prepared.

Priority axis			3 - Social inclusion and education											
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)											
Specific objective			3.2 – Improve the connection of the cross-border educational system to the labour market											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI6	Share of early school-leavers	Share	11,00	2014	10,00	0,00	0,00	9,75	9,19					According to the data investigated, the baseline for 2014 should have been 10,09 instead of 11,00. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data will have to be updated once population values are introduced for these reporting years in Bestat and RegionalStatistik.de.

Priority axis			4 – Territorial development											
Investment priority			11b - Promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions (ETC-CB)											
Specific objective			4.1 – Decrease border hindrance effects for residents and institutions.											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				Observations
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI7	Percentage cross-border commuters	Percentage	39,00	2013	41,00	0,00	0,00	45,50	44,72					According to the data investigated, the baseline for 2013 should have been 37,8% instead of 39%. The values for 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data will have to be updated once population values and RegionalStatistik.de are introduced for these reporting years
Specific objective			4.2 – Increase the number of visitors and tourists in the EMR and increase the duration of stay.											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				Observations
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	
RI8	Number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments	Number	12.700.000,00	2014	13.000.000,00	0,00	0,00	13.916.038	14.039.007					According to the data investigated, the baseline for 2014 should have been 12.879.123 instead of 12.700.000. The value for 2017 should be regarded as provisional, as the data will have to be updated once new values are introduced for this reporting

																	year in Bestat, CBS and Regionalstatistik. de.
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Priority axis			5 – Technical Assistance													
Specific objective			TA – Responsible and efficient implementation of the Interreg V-A-programme Euregio Meuse-Rhine													
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Total				Qualitative				Observations		
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017			
RI9	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable		Not applicable											

Table 2: Common and programme specific output 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								

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	546,00	506,00	
F	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	80,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	80,00	0,00	0,00	106,00	101,00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	170,00	0,00	0,00	514,00	985,00	
F	CO06	Productive investment: Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants)	EUR	6.000.000,00	0,00	0,00	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	5.000.000,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	120,00	490,00	

F	CO27	Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects	EUR	5.625.000,00	0,00	0,00	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	6.250.000,00	3.000.000,00	
F	CO28	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	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	209,00	396,00	
F	CO29	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products	Enterprises	30,00	0,00	0,00	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	0,00	92,00	
F	CO41	Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Enterprises	25,00	0,00	0,00	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	146,00	45,00	
F	CO42	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Organisations	20,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO42	Productive investment:	Organisations	20,00	0,00	0,00	51,00	103,00	

		Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects							
F	PSI10	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises and knowledge institutes	Number	40,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI10	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises and knowledge institutes	Number	40,00	0,00	0,00	25,00	646,00	
F	PSI9	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises	Number	20,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI9	Number of supported innovation-oriented cooperation projects between enterprises	Number	20,00	0,00	0,00	67,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls

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							

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
F	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	750,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	750,00	0,00	0,00	200,00	1,00	
F	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	250,00	0,00	0,00	40,00	40,00	
F	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	500,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	500,00	0,00	0,00	160,00	150,00	

F	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	50,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	50,00	0,00	0,00	15,00	180,00	
F	CO08	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO08	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	PSI1	Number organised activities focussed on stimulating entrepreneurship	Number activities	150,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI1	Number organised activities focussed on stimulating entrepreneurship	Number activities	150,00	0,00	0,00	55,00	161,00	
F	PSI2	Number of developed business cases	Number business cases	10,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI2	Number of developed business cases	Number business cases	10,00	0,00	0,00	27,00	230,00	
F	PSI3	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	990,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	

S	PSI3	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	990,00	0,00	0,00	200,00	175,00	
F	PSI4	Number of SMEs receiving grants	Number	245,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI4	Number of SMEs receiving grants	Number	245,00	0,00	0,00	40,00	18,00	
F	PSI5	Employment growth in supported SMEs	Fte	99,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI5	Employment growth in supported SMEs	Fte	99,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	PSI6	Number of supported projects focussed on efficient use of natural and material resources in (SME) enterprises	Number	3,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
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	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	PSI7	Number of supported projects focussed on increasing energy independence in (SME) enterprises	Number	2,00	0,00	0,00	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	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
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Priority Axis		3 - Social inclusion and labour market							
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							
(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	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	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	34,00	60,00	
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	0,00	0,00	
S	CO45	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in projects	Persons	30,00	0,00	0,00	6,240,00	5.415,00	

		promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion across borders							
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	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 education across borders	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	2.122,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
F	PSI19	Number of projects focussed on disadvantaged youth,	Number of projects	5,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	

		elderly and vulnerable population							
S	PSI19	Number of projects focussed on disadvantaged youth, elderly and vulnerable population	Number of projects	5,00	0,00	0,00	15,00	2.650,00	
F	PSI20	Number of people that make use of cross-border social services	Number of persons	1.000,00	0,00	0,00	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	6.000,00	6.040,00	
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	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	30,00	104,00	
F	PSI22	Number of organizations that participate in supported	Number of organizations	10,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	

		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	87,00	31,00	

Priority Axis		3 - Social inclusion and education							
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)							

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	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	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	34,00	60,00	
F	CO46	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment,	Persons	150,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	

		educational opportunities and higher and vocational 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	0,00	2.122,00	
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	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI21	Number of supported projects focussed on	Number of persons	3,00	0,00	0,00	30,00	104,00	

		strengthening the connection between education and labour market								
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	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	87,00	31,00		

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

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	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	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	0,00	660.000,00	
F	CO36	Health: Population covered by improved health services	Persons	800.000,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO36	Health: Population covered by	Persons	800.000,00	0,00	0,00	860.000,00	891.800,00	

		improved health services							
F	CO43	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in cross-border mobility initiatives	Persons	50,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	CO43	Labour Market and Training: Number of participants in cross-border mobility initiatives	Persons	50,00	0,00	0,00	112,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls
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	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	0,00	0,00	Approved projects were not concerned with this. Priority will be given to this in the following calls

F	PSI12	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning health	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
S	PSI12	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning health	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	46,00	44,00	
F	PSI14	Number of projects focussed on improving the cross-border cooperation concerning safety	Number of projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	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	1,00	2,00	
F	PSI15	Number of cross-border cooperation between public	Number of cooperations	10,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	

		authorities							
S	PSI15	Number of cross-border cooperation between public authorities	Number of cooperations	10,00	0,00	0,00	9,00	32,00	
F	PSI16	Number of meeting-projects between residents of the EMR	Number of meeting-projects	2,00	0,00	0,00	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	7,00	21,00	
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	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	0,00	8,00	

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	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	0,00	3,00	

Priority Axis		5 – Technical Assistance						
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(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
F	PSI23	Number of promotion and publicity activities (focussed on promotion and publicity of the programme)	Number	20,00	0,00	0,00	1,00	3,00	
S	PSI23	Number of promotion and publicity activities (focussed on promotion and publicity of the programme)	Number	20,00	0,00	0,00	20,00	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	0,00	0,00	1,00	2,00	

S	PSI24	Number of research, studies and evaluations (on (sub)programme level for the purpose of effective functioning of the programme)	Number	4,00	0,00	0,00	4,00	4,00	
F	PSI25	Jobs involved in implementation (in fte)	fte	14,00	0,00	0,00	12,00	14,00	
S	PSI25	Jobs involved in implementation (in fte)	fte	14,00	0,00	0,00	14,00	14,00	
F	PSI30	Annual reports	Number	6,00	0,00	0,00	2,00	3,00	
S	PSI30	Annual reports	Number	6,00	0,00	0,00	6,00	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	Final target (2023) total	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
1	O	CO41	Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Enterprises	0	25,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.
1	F	PI1.2	Amount of certified expenditures made by beneficiaries as specified in the payment claims to the European Commission	Euro	5.752.588,00	47.142.857,00				0,00	Although a first set of costs was certified by the CA before the end of the year no payment claim could be submitted to the European Commission as the programme authorities were not designated before the end of 2017.
1	I	PI1.1	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border research projects	Number	5	25,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.
2	F	PI1.2	Amount of certified expenditures made by beneficiaries as specified in the payment claims to the European Commission	Euro	3.486.417,00	28.571.430,00				0,00	Although a first set of costs was certified by the CA before the end of the year no payment claim could be submitted to the European Commission as the programme authorities were not designated before the end of 2017.
2	I	PI2.1	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	80	750,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	Final target (2023) total	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
2	O	PI2.1	Number of SMEs receiving support	Number	0	750,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.
3	F	PI1.2	Amount of certified expenditures made by beneficiaries as specified in the payment claims to the European Commission	Euro	3.388.841,00	27.771.786,00				0,00	Although a first set of costs was certified by the CA before the end of the year no payment claim could be submitted to the European Commission as the programme authorities were not designated before the end of 2017.
3	I	PI3.1	Number of participants in cross-border projects aiming at equal treatment between men and women, non-discrimination and social inclusion	Number	40	300,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.
3	O	PI3.1	Number of participants in cross-border projects aiming at equal treatment between men and women, non-discrimination and social inclusion	Number	0	300,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.
4	F	PI1.2	Amount of certified expenditures made by beneficiaries as specified in the payment claims to the European Commission	Euro	3.102.912,00	25.428.572,00				0,00	Although a first set of costs was certified by the CA before the end of the year no payment claim could be submitted to the European Commission as the programme authorities were not designated before the end of 2017.
4	I	PI4.1	Number of cross-border cooperation between public authorities	Number	3	10,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	Final target (2023) total	2014	2015	2016	2017	Observations
4	O	PI4.1	Number of cross-border cooperation between public authorities	Number	0	10,00				0,00	No reports submitted by the partners and no data collected in 2017.

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	34.384.893,68	72,94%	31.092.920,69	0,00	0,00%	9
2	ERDF	Total	28.571.430,00	70,00	13.423.733,46	46,98%	12.012.786,04	0,00	0,00%	4
3	ERDF	Total	27.771.786,00	70,00	19.410.546,57	69,89%	18.272.553,19	0,00	0,00%	8
4	ERDF	Total	25.428.572,00	70,00	22.418.783,39	88,16%	21.609.076,21	0,00	0,00%	6
5	ERDF	Total	11.520.000,00	50,00	14.275.298,51	123,92%	14.275.298,51	118.453,16	1,03%	6
Total	ERDF		140.434.645,00	68,36	103.913.255,61	73,99%	97.262.634,64	118.453,16	0,08%	33
Grand total			140.434.645,00	68,36	103.913.255,61	73,99%	97.262.634,64	118.453,16	0,08%	33

Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention

Priority axis	Fund	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	Thematic objective dimension	ESF secondary theme	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	056	01	01	07	01		21	NL423	4.752.192,74	4.175.428,08	0,00	1
1	ERDF	057	01	01	07	01		21	NL423	5.620.340,88	5.620.340,88	0,00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	01	07	01		20	NL423	4.838.266,50	4.431.595,05	0,00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	01	07	01		21	NL423	4.855.690,96	4.575.805,50	0,00	2
1	ERDF	063	01	01	07	01		05	NL423	2.398.395,16	1.830.833,28	0,00	1
1	ERDF	063	01	01	07	01		19	NL423	3.402.970,74	2.873.840,26	0,00	1
1	ERDF	063	01	01	07	01		21	NL423	4.617.464,26	4.209.137,04	0,00	1
1	ERDF	064	01	01	07	01		20	NL423	3.899.572,44	3.375.940,60	0,00	1
2	ERDF	067	01	01	07	03		06	NL423	3.742.286,76	3.742.286,76	0,00	1
2	ERDF	067	01	01	07	03		19	NL423	6.150.001,28	5.962.719,39	0,00	2
2	ERDF	067	01	01	07	03		24	NL423	3.531.445,42	2.307.779,89	0,00	1
3	ERDF	109	01	01	07	09		21	NL423	6.108.010,67	5.517.428,84	0,00	2
3	ERDF	109	01	01	07	10		21	NL423	4.074.416,44	4.074.416,44	0,00	2
3	ERDF	117	01	01	07	10		19	NL423	1.603.726,92	1.370.845,80	0,00	1
3	ERDF	118	01	01	07	10		19	NL423	5.738.132,78	5.580.816,11	0,00	2
3	ERDF	120	01	01	07	09		20	NL423	1.886.259,76	1.729.046,00	0,00	1
4	ERDF	044	01	01	07	11		12	NL423	4.625.463,06	4.037.018,91	0,00	1
4	ERDF	053	01	01	07	11		20	NL423	5.226.732,01	5.184.282,01	0,00	1
4	ERDF	053	01	01	07	11		21	NL423	3.372.669,42	3.193.856,39	0,00	1
4	ERDF	055	01	01	07	11		23	NL423	5.856.368,90	5.856.368,90	0,00	2
4	ERDF	112	01	01	07	11		20	NL423	3.337.550,00	3.337.550,00	0,00	1
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			24	NL423	14.275.298,51	14.275.298,51	118.453,16	6

4 SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUTIONS

In accordance with Article 56 of EU Regulation 1303/2013, the programme has drawn up an evaluation plan to measure and evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the programme. An evaluation plan was adopted by the Monitoring Committee in 2017.

An expert meeting took place in February 2017 in Eupen, reuniting 20 representatives from the programme member states. At that time the projects from call 1 and call 2 were analysed taking into consideration their contribution to the programme indicators that are the translation of the overall objectives and aims of Interreg V-A EMR. The conclusions of the meeting were the following:

- For axis 1 most of the target values of the indicators have been achieved. The program seems successful in cross-border research and innovation in products. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that the private financing as well as investments are lagging behind;
- For axis 2 most of the target values are not achieved the way they are intended to. Only the development of new business cases and support for new business is above the target values. Furthermore, as can be expected on the basis of the nature of the projects approved, the values for environmental measures are almost zero;
- For axis 3 the achievements as foreseen in the projects are well above the target values. Here, specifically in the field of social inclusion the expectations are high. With regard to labor market initiatives and projects there still is a lot of work to be done;
- Finally for axis 4 also the values as presented in the projects are well above the target values. Especially in the health care sector the expected outputs in terms of indicators are high.

Although in most cases the indicators set by projects were higher than the target values established at programme level, the issue of investigating the reliability of the set indicators by projects needs to be carried out. Based on the discussions held during the meeting, a set of questions have been raised that need to be solved by future investigation:

- How are the indicators calculated within the various projects and are the methods used compatible and consistent;
- Are the target values as set in the program realistic and/or ambitious enough;
- How to adapt the indicators for future projects and project calls and to assess whether new target values are necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of projects.

These investigations were initially foreseen for 2017, but due to a lack of capacity on the part of the MA/JS it has been decided to postpone this task for the first semester of 2018.

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 programme was only approved late (15 December 2015), meaning that the start was also delayed. An important accent was therefore on measures to promote the development, submission,

and assessment of project proposals in order to be able to implement the programme as soon as possible. A lot of hard work was carried out together with the regional antennas. After the selection of projects was done, a series of hindrances were encountered that prevented the smooth implementation of the programme.

On the administrative side, the different procedures applied by the member states involved in the programme for issuing the co-financing statements generated certain delays. Without the co-financing statements, the grant letters were not issued and without these documents the partnerships were reluctant to start the work.

Furthermore, as initial state-aid analyses began to be checked by the legal department of the MA, it was observed that in certain situations, full-assessments had to be redone. The consortium members concerned were informed of these aspects and intense discussions on state-aid relevance of certain activities and partners began. While some partners had sufficient know-how on state-aid issues and accepted the results of the analyses carried out by JS/MA with the support of the legal department, others decided to involve specialized legal services which prolonged the entire procedure. These delays had two major cause:

1. lack of sufficient knowledge in the field of state-aid on the part of beneficiaries
2. lack of human resources with sufficient expertise in state-aid analyses for ETC projects on the side of the MA/JS

To counterbalance the first cause, a set of documents on state-aid aspects and how they are interpreted and applied in the framework of Interreg V-A EMR were prepared by the JS/MA and published on the programme website. Internally, the JS/MA also organized a set of training sessions with the representatives of the Regional Antennas that are always in direct contact with the beneficiaries.

To solve the second problem identified the MA/JS carried out a recruiting procedure in May 2017 in order to renew the programme team and extend the pool of internal expertise.

Once the results of the state-aid analyses were accepted by the partnerships, mitigating solutions were identified so as not to endanger the project implementation due to lower funding rates. As such, several projects underwent changes in partnerships, by introducing members that were capable of doing the work, but were not affected by the provisions on state-aid. These changes in partnerships generated extra administrative procedures, changes in budget and the need for new co-financing statements.

Furthermore, as eMS was not used at the time the first call was launched, application forms approved at that point had to be retranslated in the official reporting tool. Extra information sessions were needed to inform the beneficiaries about the features of the eMS and how modifications and changes had to be addressed in this context.

All these elements combined led to certain projects not starting on the initially stated date and getting a delay of more than 12 months. The effects of the changes in partnerships and need for extra administrative documents continues to be seen in 2018, as financial reporting in the eMS is lagging behind.

An important delay had to be recorded in the approval by the MA of the selected applications under the first 3 calls of the programme. The MA was only able to send out the first grant letters by the end of November 2016. By the end of 2017, not even half of the selected projects received a grant letter. Major efforts have been undertaken during the first half of 2018 in order to correct this situation. This exceptional situation can be explained by following elements:

- The premature launch of the first call that resulted in applications of low quality written in a format that did not fit the minimum standards in order to guarantee a sound monitoring of project activities and expanses by the programme bodies. Numerous intensive exchanges between the MA/JS (with the support of the RAs) and applicants were necessary in order to reach the minimal financial criteria (structured budget and complete financing guarantees). Due to this exceptional circumstances the MA and JS were forced to adopt a pragmatical approach and have decided to postpone the revision on the content descriptions and credibility of output indicators (necessary for i.a. a targeted selection of applications by the MC) to a later stage.
- Unclear terms in the selection procedures for the first 3 calls. One major unclarity concerned the scope of conditional approval. Multiple projects have been requested to make fundamental amendments to the original applications, which resulted in the postponement of selection decisions and consequently the approval of the application by the MA.
- An unbalanced use of the TA budget resulting in the lack of staffing at the MA and JS.

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

Under P1 - Innovation 2020, four project proposals were approved in 2017, thus contributing to the positive kick-off registered the previous year. The observation made before on the need for close monitoring of the manner in which knowledge is transferred between knowledge institutions and businesses in the Meuse-Rhine Euregio remains valid for 2017. The partner and progress reports submitted in the eMS will need to highlight the manner in which this collaboration occurs. Overall improvements have been made by the proposals submitted in 2017 in connection to the introduction of realistic values linked to output indicators, but further discussions are needed with the projects that have already been approved.

For call 4, the outlines submitted by applicants have also been revised in connection to output indicators and written recommendations have been issued explaining the difference between outputs and deliverables and the target values needed for each category.

As no project progress reports were submitted in 2017, the MA/JS has scheduled for the first semester of 2018 a review of the target values for approved projects. Bilateral meetings will be organized to decide on the revision of the target values and setting realistic and achievable indicators. This measure is valid for all priority areas.

The current report includes an update on the performance indicators at programme level. The fields left empty in the report for 2016 were filled in for the current report.

Under P2 - Economy 2020 one project was selected in 2017 and it focuses on cross-border support for businesses, especially for starters. The upcoming calls will give priority to those projects tackling the improvement of tourism services as well as sustainable business practices for SMEs (energy efficiency, low carbon economy and resilience to climate change).

Six projects have been approved in 2017 for **P3- Social inclusion and education**, adding up to the previous 2 ones from 2016. The recently approved projects are focused on the cross-border labour market aspects associated with the training of students, employees and refugees in the Meuse-Rhine Euregio. Certain initiatives are also focused on the better social integration of people with disabilities and environmental, social and economic reintegration of the excluded neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. Additional efforts will be made in the upcoming calls to have more projects focused on increasing the access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people and also to modernize the labour market institutions. Projects focused on the development and promotion of public cultural and heritage services are also expected in the next calls.

Territorial development (P4) 3 additional projects were approved in 2017. The topics of the projects approved this reporting year deal with boosting the tourism industry in the EMR region and decreasing the border hindrances effects. However, under the 4th call this PA has seen a great increase of attention on the part of applicants with 10 proposals being submitted altogether. The selection will be finalized in 2018. It is expected that among the selected applications in 2018 there will also be projects aiming at making investments in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services. Projects focused on capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education; lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies are also expected.

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

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation 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)

7.1. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Calculated amount of support to be used for climate change objectives based on the cumulative financial data by category of intervention in Table 6:

Priority axis	Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)
4	1.295.129,63	7,28%
Total	1.295.129,63	1,35%

DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Interreg EMR-AIR 2017- Citizen's summary-NL	Citizens' summary	25-May-2018		Ares(2018)2723491	Interreg EMR-AIR 2017- Citizen's summary-NL	25-May-2018	nodeurje

LATEST VALIDATION RESULTS

Severity	Code	Message
Info		Implementation report version has been validated