

CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

July 2022

Because neighbours keep the doors open

Improving infrastructures
through cross-border cooperation
programmes along the external
borders of the European Union



Funded by the
European Union



Technical Support to the Imple-
mentation and Management of ENI
CBC programmes, implemented
by a consortium led by Participip



CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE

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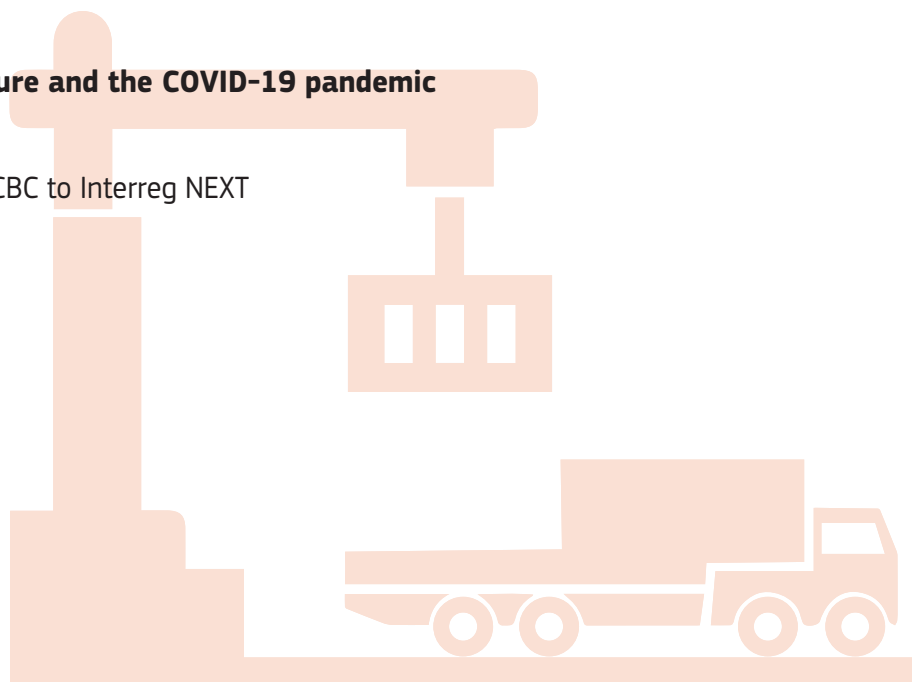
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All data in this publication portray the situation of the ENI CBC community in December 2021. While reliable, financial figures should be considered as estimates.

Introduction

Cross-border cooperation programmes under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI CBC) are a key component of the European Neighbourhood Policy and they have an important added value to other associated regional policies such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Eastern Partnership*.

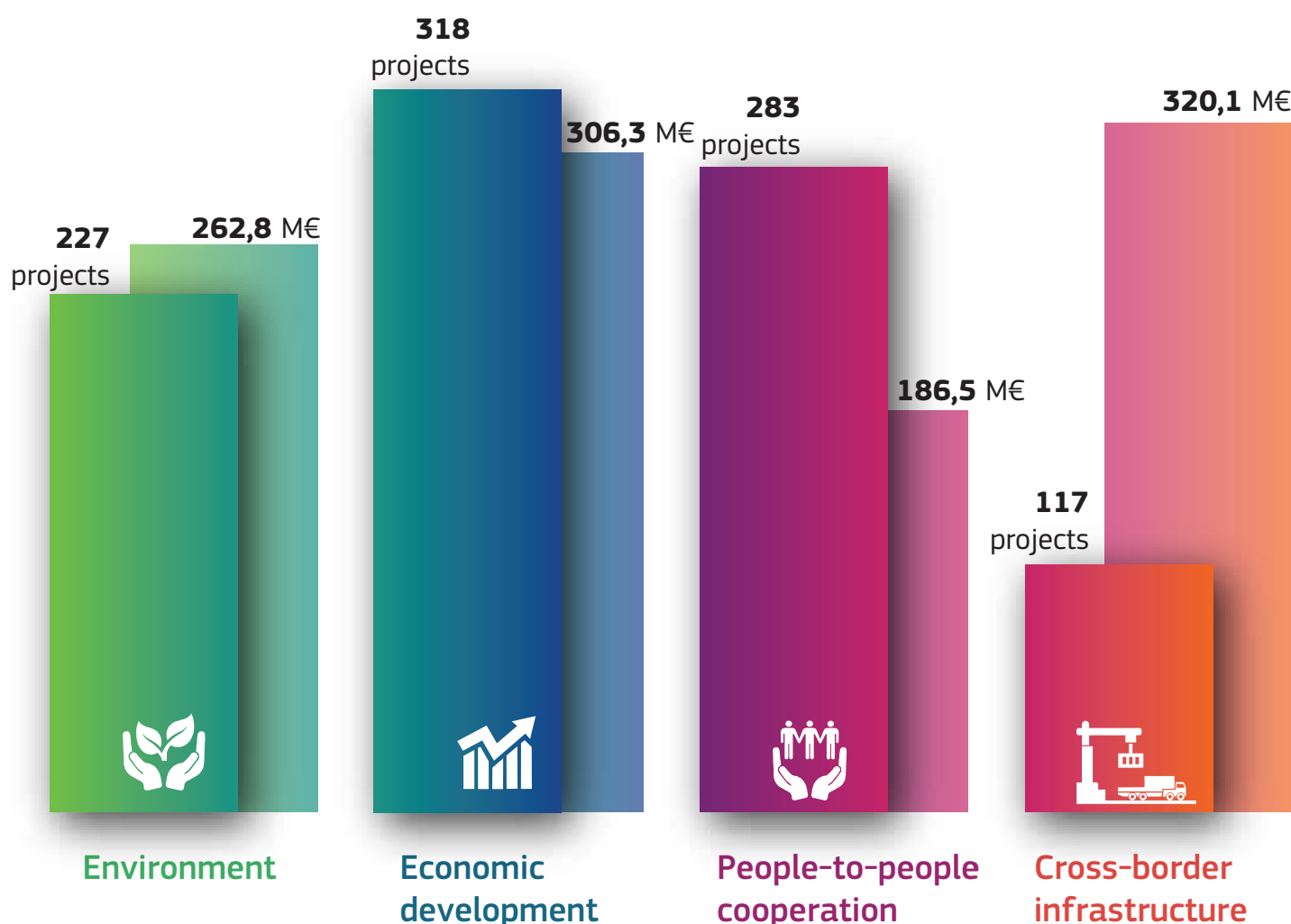
Until 24 February 2022 – before the Russian military attack on Ukraine – 15 ENI CBC programmes were in full implementation, involving 31 participating countries, and almost 950 cross-border cooperation projects: from environmental protection to economic development, from infrastructure improvements to people-to-people cooperation, they were – and most of them still are – building a greener, more social, more cohesive Europe and its neighbourhood. The suspension of the financing agreements with Russia and Belarus is bringing to a revision of the Strategic Partnership with Russia. However, the data analysis of this publication was performed before such suspension, and as such it is presented. We keep exploring this material, to find out how and in which sectors these projects have improved the lives of the citizens in both Member States and Partner Countries, paving the way to the programming cycle 2021-2027.

* Within this document, the term “cross-border” applies to all types of programmes: land borders, sea-crossings and sea basins.



Following the analysis of the running projects, TESIM has identified four clusters of action: environment, people-to-people cooperation, economic development, and cross-border infrastructures. They are an attempt to show in a structured way the richness of the cross-border cooperation initiatives being implemented along the external borders of the EU.

When confronting the four clusters, both in terms of number of projects and funding, the overall ENI CBC picture is as follows:



In this publication, we focus on the cluster related to the cross-border infrastructure. As can be seen, this cluster represents the biggest share in terms of financial allocation, amounting to 30% of the total, whereas the number of projects represents the smallest share, reaching only 12% of the total. The average size of a cross-border infrastructure project is, in fact, around 2,7 M€, which is significantly higher than the average budget for a project in all other clusters.

The cross-border infrastructure is described in terms of joint activities and investments that facilitate accessibility of the border regions and mobility across the borders, as well as response actions to the joint challenges in these areas. We will analyse the wide range of topics covered by the cluster and we will introduce those projects that we have found more illustrative, with the aim of highlighting the importance of cross-border infrastructure development in ENI CBC programmes.

Enjoy the reading!
The TESIM team

An aerial photograph of three construction workers in orange safety gear working on a concrete surface at night. The workers are illuminated by a warm orange light, while the rest of the scene is in deep shadow. One worker is in the upper left, another in the center, and a third is bent over in the lower left, using a long-handled tool. The ground is a mix of light and dark patches, suggesting different stages of work or materials.

Cross-border infrastructure in ENI CBC

Setting the stage

“Roads are the arteries through which the economy pulses. By linking producers to markets, workers to jobs, students to school, and the sick to hospitals, roads are vital to any development agenda.”

From publication
“How roads support
development”
by the World Bank

Roads, and transport infrastructure in general, are essential for the flow of people, goods and services both within the country, as well as across its borders. With the proper infrastructure in place, the development of efficient transport and logistics services is possible to ensure connectivity, and enhance productivity and profits. In addition to them, there are other essential elements for the flow across the borders of the countries that do not share a common travel area, namely the availability and capacities of border-crossing points, as well as the measures to ensure safety and security.

The Commission’s Communication on the Security of the Union (COM (2017) 779) states that “The effective management of the EU’s external borders is of strategic importance to the Union and, in particular, to the functioning of the Schengen area.” Next to other instruments and policies, such as the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and activities implemented by Frontex and Europol, cross-border cooperation programmes also support investments to upgrade the infrastructure on the borders between the EU Member States and their neighbouring countries.

Joining all forces is indeed necessary as the management of the EU external borders is a very complex task. The land border of more than 14.000 km* between the EU Member States and their neighbouring countries stretches from the Norwegian land border with Russia in the north to the Greek land border with Turkey in the east, and the Spanish borders with Morocco in the south. Of them, 6.000 km are shared with the ENI CBC Partner Countries. In addition, the maritime border stretches over the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, up to the coasts washed by the Atlantic Ocean.

As we will see in the following paragraphs, infrastructure projects do not necessarily always deal with the development of physical infrastructure. The related activities can be as well intangible, fostering the development of logistics schemes or digital infrastructure that can address common challenges related not only to accessibility and mobility, but also to the prevention and management of emergency situations and, more generally, to a better management of services in the cross-border territories.

* [The Union’s external borders: a European debate revisited](#)

The ENI CBC response

Mobility, as well as safety and security in the border regions, has been defined as a priority in most ENI CBC programmes. National and regional level organisations are involved in joint actions that contribute to two of the three strategic objectives of ENI CBC:

- ◆ **to address common challenges in environment, public health, safety and security;**
- ◆ **to promote better conditions and modalities for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capital.**

The Programming Document states that the result expected from the implementation of the ENI CBC programmes is that of contributing in the medium and long-term to enhanced prosperity, stability and security along the external borders of the Union through strengthened cooperation and contacts across borders. In order to achieve this, the programmes have to implement joint measures:

- ◆ in the areas of emergency, prevention and fight against crime, as well as social and health issues;
- ◆ in the areas of improved mobility, border passage and border operability.

Ten out of fifteen ENI CBC 2014-2020 programmes implement projects that fall within the scope of cross-border infrastructure. They are usually implemented under the following thematic objectives (TO).



The programmes have selected for financing 117 projects for a total amount of 320 M€, which is around 30% of their total allocation to the projects. More than 250 organisations from 13 countries are working together to implement joint activities that strengthen infrastructure and implement joint actions and services.

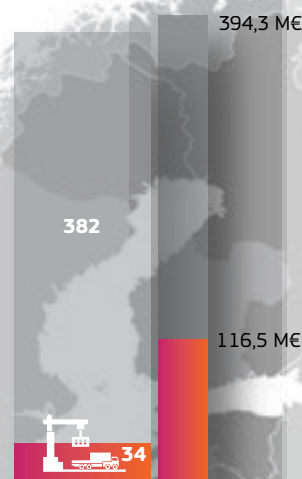
These projects are implemented both as large infrastructure projects (LIPs), that are contracted using a direct award, and as projects selected through calls for proposals. 27% of all projects in the cross-border infrastructure cluster correspond to direct award projects. This can be explained by the fact that the projects in the field of safety and security are implemented by the governmental agencies that have the sole responsibility for the activities related to this area and thus, an open competition for such projects is not possible.

As can be seen from the graphic, cross-border infrastructure projects are implemented in the programmes with a land border, both in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Northern and Baltic programmes. Sea basin and sea-crossing programmes gave priority to other cooperation activities.

Cross-border infrastructure budget per macro-region, compared to the overall budget

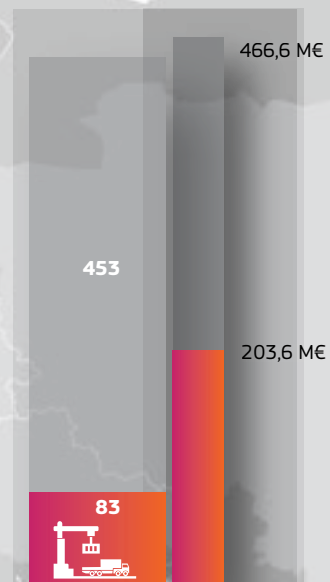
Northern and Baltic programmes

- Kolarctic
- Karelia
- South-East Finland – Russia
- Estonia – Russia
- Latvia – Russia
- Lithuania – Russia
- Poland – Russia
- Latvia – Lithuania – Belarus



Central and Eastern European programmes

- Poland – Belarus – Ukraine
- Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine
- Romania – Ukraine
- Romania – Republic of Moldova



Different types of cross-border infrastructure projects

As the projects under this cluster often include an infrastructure component, their budgets are higher than those of the projects in other clusters and range from 100.000€ for the projects with soft activities to 12,5 M€ for the largest infrastructure project. Therefore, the cross-border infrastructure cluster, which covers 9% of all projects in the Northern and Baltic programmes, receives 30% of the total budget allocated to projects. In the Central and East European programmes these numbers represent respectively 18% of the projects and 44% of the total budget.

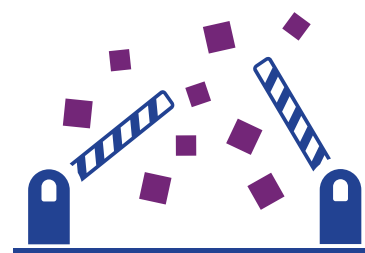
Even if the title of the cluster includes a reference to infrastructure, not all projects of the cluster include construction or renovation. There are also projects that focus on planning activities for the improvement of the cross-border infrastructure itself, as well as those that aim to ensure services across the border related to infrastructure. Along broad lines, the projects of the cluster can be divided into the following types:



Planning



Construction



Common benefits

These three types refer to the stages of the infrastructure development process, starting from the planning and preparation of the necessary technical documentation to the actual implementation of works, and culminating in the use of the infrastructure for joint operations and services across the borders. Some projects combine two or even all three types of activities, but it is more common for them to address only one single stage.



Planning

This step includes initiatives related to the preparatory stage before the actual investment takes place, be it the technical documentation for a single infrastructure object or a strategy/plan for a larger cross-border area. Joint development of strategies, plans, action plans, as well as exchanges of good practices, take place and create opportunities for new cross-border investments in the future.

Examples

Northern Axis – Barents Link is a research and development project implemented within the Kolarctic CBC Programme which joins academic institutes, authorities and private actors from Sweden, Russia, Finland and Norway to tackle a common challenge: the development of the east-west transport corridors in the Kolarctic area (including road, railway and airborne transport) to foster the regional development.

The Polish and the Ukrainian partners of the **SumCityNet** project jointly work on the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. The partners analyse the main shortcomings in their areas, like road network, public transport and pedestrian lines, and collect on a jointly developed cross-border exchange platform the best practices and solutions to address them.



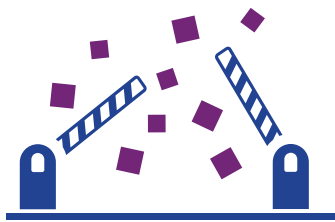
Construction

Construction of new or reconstruction of the existing infrastructure is the core activity for most projects in this cluster. Joint needs and challenges are addressed by infrastructure development and purchase of equipment to improve the conditions and capacities of the border guards, customs, police and emergency services, as well as by reconstruction of roads, bridges and cycling paths.

Examples

The **SMURD** project by the Romania-Republic of Moldova ENI CBC Programme aims at building a training facility for the emergency interventions staff in both countries, constructing seven helicopter landing platforms and two emergency care units, as well as implementing joint trainings, networking and capacity building activities to improve emergency response in the cross-border area with high risk of emergency situations due to natural and man-made disasters, as well as to better tackle health emergencies.

The **Svetogorsk – Imatra cycle track** project supported by the South-East Finland – Russia Programme aims at the promotion of cycling and the development of cycling routes between Russia and Finland. Cycling paths are built on the Russian side and connected to the existing ones on the Finnish side. Moreover, the equipment of the Svetogorsk border check point will allow border-crossing on bicycle. This improves safety, mobility and environment in the cross-border area.



Common benefits

Common benefits

When the cross-border infrastructure is in place, it is essential that the responsible organisations on both sides of the border make it work for the benefit of all involved countries and provide services to their population in the long run. By doing so, they contribute to an effective and comprehensive response to ensure stability and security in the EU and its neighbourhood. A joint operation of the developed infrastructure also greatly adds to the sustainability of the projects and allows target groups to enjoy the effects in the long term.

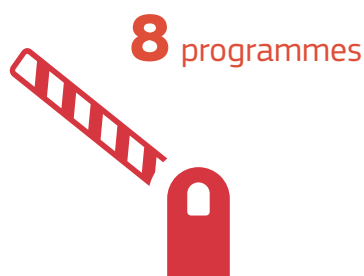
Examples

The **FriendlyBorders** project supported by the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine ENI CBC Programme improves the competences and qualifications of the staff working at the border-crossing points through joint training activities. This includes trainings on interpersonal and social skills, including a special biofeedback technique. On top of this, the project provides officers with postgraduate studies in security and crisis management.

Within the **DIT4BEARS** project of the Kolarctic CBC Programme, innovative technologies in transport and communication systems are developed, among others the use of disruptive technologies for winter road maintenance in the Kolarctic region and the safeguarding of drivers and reindeers on roads.

The thematic dimensions of cross-border infrastructure

Overall, projects supported by the ENI CBC programmes under the cross-border infrastructure cluster can be broadly categorised as falling under the following thematic areas:



Border regions are often peripheral and isolated, and a good quality of roads is necessary to keep up their economic activity and to ensure **accessibility in and to the border regions**. Well-functioning road and railroad network is essential for the flow of people, goods and services both within the country, as well as across its borders. Planning, improvements and construction of roads and railroads are performed in eight cross-border cooperation programmes.



Disasters do not recognize national borders. Just think of forest fires, emergency situations, epidemics, and crime. Therefore, projects addressing planning and implementation of **joint response actions** are underway in five programmes to ensure cooperation and coordination between rescue services and police in the neighbouring countries to fight human trafficking, organised crime, as well as natural and man-made disasters.



Not only investments in physical infrastructure are necessary to reduce travel and delivery time across the EU external borders. While the network of roads and railroads ensures the physical infrastructure, project activities related to **transport and logistics** serve the purpose of linking them between the countries by connecting the routes and developing smart solutions. These plans include actions that improve the life of people living in cities by addressing air and noise pollution, limited accessibility, fast and timely public transport. Five programmes are implementing activities in this area.



Another important factor that affects the transport flow across the borders is the availability of the **border-crossing points**, especially when we consider the transport and passenger flows in the context of cooperation across the borders of the countries that do not share a common travel area. Also, the capacity of these points plays a crucial role, and eight cross-border cooperation programmes implement activities aimed at both the improvement of border-crossing infrastructure, as well as joint planning and optimization of the procedures.

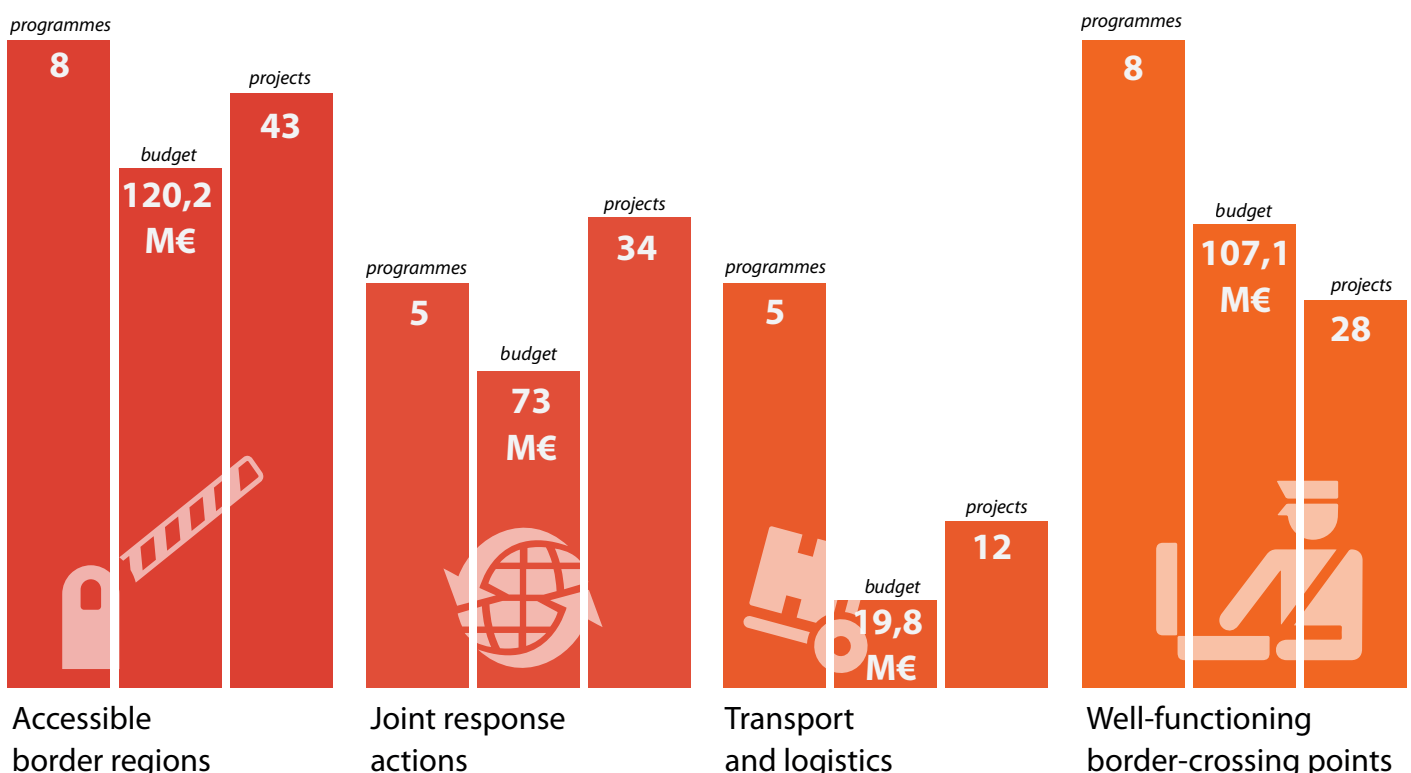
As one can see from the chart below, the biggest allocation in terms of financing and also the largest share of projects, belong to the sub-cluster addressing the accessibility of border regions, whereas the highest project budgets can be found in the sub-cluster related to improvements of border-crossing points, namely 3,8 M€ on average.

Most projects falling into the sub-cluster on transport and logistics represent the planning or the joint operations stage and do not include the infrastructure element at all or only in a very limited scope; this also explains the lowest average budget (1,65 M€) compared to other sub-clusters.

When comparing the number of cross-border infrastructure projects with the financial allocations to each sub-cluster we can see that most projects in the Northern and Baltic programmes address improvements in the border-crossing infrastructure, with more than 58% of the financing allocated to them. Instead, the Central and East European programmes prioritize projects related to accessibility and joint response actions.

The smallest projects are those addressing transport and logistics in the Northern and Baltic programmes. This is where mostly planning projects aimed at joint strategic development and programming of future investments are implemented.

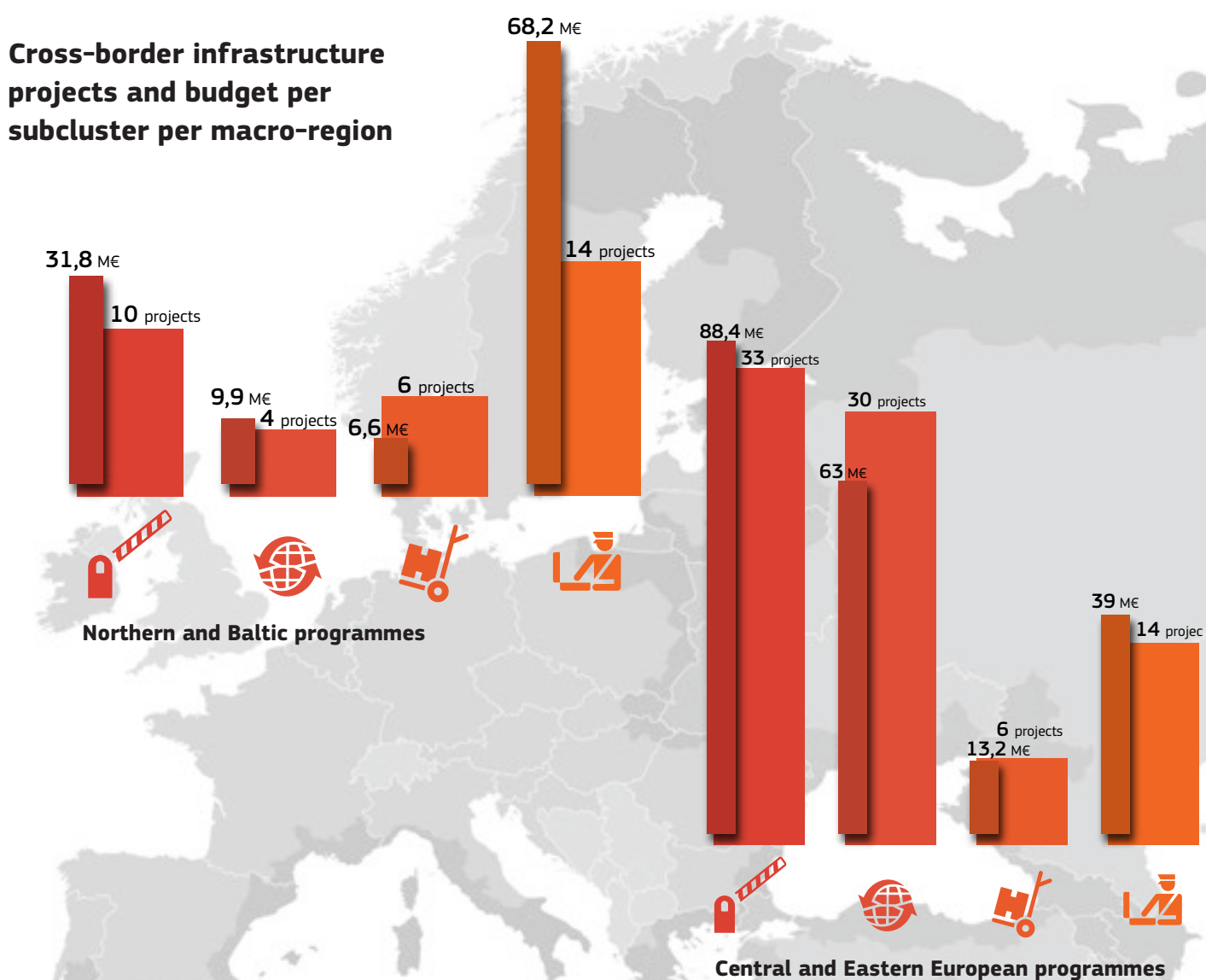
Even if there are geographical and thematic differences in the approaches adopted by the programmes in relation to the cross-border infrastructure, these projects undeniably provide a significant contribution to the programmes and to the border regions in which they are implemented.



Even if there are no objectively identifiable principles to select good practices, some case studies identified by TESIM are presented to you in the next section. The choice ensures an adequate geographical and thematic balance in order to represent as much as possible the wide spectrum of ENI CBC contributions to the cooperation on infrastructure. The selection has not been axed only on the expected outputs or achieved results, but also on their intended capacity to generate change in the territories of intervention.

Take a look at how many different ideas and initiatives are being carried out across the external borders of the EU: "Because neighbours keep the doors open!"

Cross-border infrastructure projects and budget per subcluster per macro-region



ENI CBC

Case studies



Accessible border regions



Joint response actions



Transport and logistics



Well-functioning border-crossing points

Kolarctic
ARINKA
Smart rails to boost
transport in the Arctic



South-East Finland - Russia
**KOTKA PAX
MULTI PASSPORT**
A year-round ferry boat
connection across the Baltic Sea



Poland-Russia
CB ROAD
A road towards the future



Poland-Belarus-Ukraine
FRIENDLYBORDERS
Improving border-crossing
with a smile



Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine
PREZAK
Modern roads to bridge
the Slovak and Ukrainian
border regions



Romania-Ukraine
BRIDGE
Ready to face
emergencies together

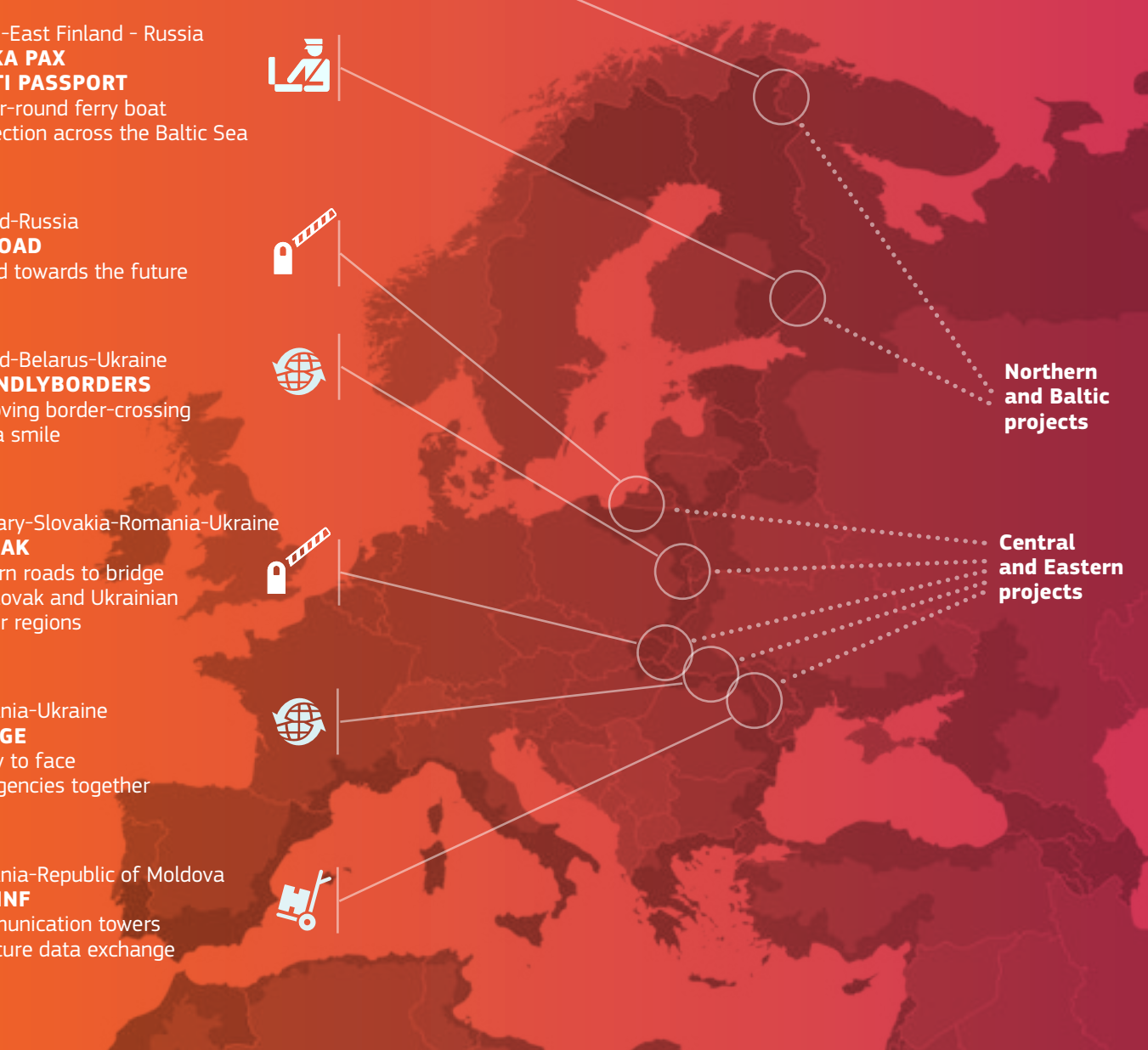


Romania-Republic of Moldova
COMINF
Communication towers
to secure data exchange



Northern
and Baltic
projects

Central
and Eastern
projects





ARINKA

Smart rails to boost transport in the Arctic

PROJECT TITLE	ARINKA - Arctic Railway Infrastructure in Kolarctic II
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	15.10.2018 – 31.10.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Northern Research Institute SINTEF Narvik (Lead beneficiary, Norway) Bane NOR (Norway); Luleå University of Technology (Sweden); Swedish National Rail Administration “Trafikverket” (Sweden); Lapland University of Applied Sciences “LUAS” (Finland); Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency (Finland); Emperor Alexander I St. Petersburg State Transport University “PGUPS” (Russia); Kola Science Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences “KSC RAS” (Russia); October Railway - Branch of Joint Stock Company “Russian Railways” (Russia)
PROGRAMME	Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	1.698.008 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	1.528.207 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Viability of arctic economy, nature and environment
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems



“We want to make the railway more climate-proof: snow and ice cause traffic problems, especially during the winter. Improving punctuality and regularity of the railway is great both for the industry and for passengers”

Rune Nilsen, Research Manager SINTEF Narvik (Norway)

How can longer, faster, and more frequent trains cross some Arctic regions where the ground used to be frozen all year long and now the ice is melting because of climate change? How can increasing levels of safe railway transport be guaranteed, when temperatures can vary from +35° to -40° and weather conditions are at the harshest? This is the challenge of the ARINKA project, striving to increase the effectiveness and reliability of the Arctic railway system.

In the Arctic region, railroad networks are key for the efficient transportation of goods and passengers through large stretches of wilderness. We are talking about the Northern Finland railway, the Murmansk network in Russia – with one thousand kilometres of rails transporting more than 20 mil tonnes of goods per year; the Swedish Malmbanan and the Norwegian Ofoten, the most intensely loaded lines in Europe, with 35 million gross tonnes per year, most of which transport iron ore from the Swedish mines, shipped out to the world from the port of Narvik.

Most of the Kolarctic network is built throughout sparsely populated regions, sometimes inaccessible, providing challenging conditions for railway repair and maintenance. Very low temperatures, frozen grounds and long periods with no daylight impact infrastructures and equipment, as well as repair works. Now, even climate change is joining in: because of the rising average temperature, heavy rains and snow melting affect the drainage systems along the lines. More and more sections of the track foundations, previously frozen all year round, are now beginning to thaw, pushing experts to propose artificial freezing as a measure to stabilise the foundations. In fact, most of the network was built in the early

1900s and, although the lines have been upgraded throughout the decades, much of the substructure still uses elements from when they were first constructed. As a consequence, there is a certain mismatch between the existing infrastructure and the expected growth and economic importance of railway traffic.

The ARINKA II project is dealing with this problem. Four countries – Sweden, Russia, Finland and Norway – have decided to join forces for a cross-border initiative, implemented through the Kolarctic CBC programme. ARINKA is a research and development collaboration between nine academic institutes, universities, and railway companies, scattered throughout the region. They all combine resources and expertise to find joint answers to their common challenge: upgrading the railway network through more robust infrastructure solutions, more cost-efficient maintenance and more effective monitoring. “It is really important to have a large network of experts in different areas”, explains Matti Rantatalo, Associate Professor of Luleå University of Technology (project partner).

This is the first experience of such a big collaboration in the railway sector. Partners have carried out a comprehensive survey of the railways in the region: many issues came out, like expanding rail in hot summers leading to the so-called “sunbursts” (rail breakages on the steep and curvy Ofoten Line) or maintenance challenges in the Kola area wetlands from both frost hives during winter and mosquito swarms in the summer. The per-country reports were the basis to create best practices and development plans for the whole region. “The main idea is to pinpoint challenges and then use these findings to elaborate recommended practices for all of us”, adds Terje Nordvåg,

Managing Director, SINTEF Narvik (lead partner).

One of the key lines of work refers to monitoring and sensor technologies, and data processing in compact computers: the experts studied the sensors used in each country to collect data and to better monitor the working conditions of the rail system. One of the partners – the Emperor Alexander 1 St. Petersburg State Transport University – has developed a new tool for solving thermophysical tasks of railway construction on permanently or seasonally frozen soils. The modern numerical software makes the railway system smarter, allowing it to carry out repair operations at the right time, and in a more cost-effective way: optimising maintenance operations implies in fact fewer repairing works. “Thanks to the new software, materials and energy are saved, there are not so many unnecessary checks, and we don’t need to travel so often, since monitoring can be done from the distance”, explains Ville Rauhala from Lapland University of Applied Sciences (project partner). In addition, trains generate electricity that can be used for their operation. As Mr Rauhala explains, by using renewable energy and electrifying the railway infrastructure, a positive impact can also be made on the environment.

Cross-border workshops, conferences, study visits, scientific papers and one of the most remarkable initiatives is coming still from the St. Petersburg State Transport University, where a PhD and Doctoral Programme named “Development of the Kolarctic transport network” has been established, and a cooperation agreement has already been signed between the St. Petersburg institution, the SINTEF Narvik and The Arctic University of Norway.

As the project delivers concrete results, there is an ambition of launching a new initiative: ARINKA III. Topics could be different: snow management and removal, or smart mobility solutions. Whatever the topic, the principle is clear: cross-border cooperation works, because neighbours keep their doors open and improve life conditions for all communities. In Europe, and beyond.



KOTKA PAX MULTI PASSPORT

*A year-round ferry boat
connection across the Baltic Sea*



PROJECT TITLE	KOTKA PAX – Kotkan Kantasatama Cruise Port and Ropax Terminal Development	MULTI PASSPORT – Reconstruction of the marine permanent multilateral Russian Federation State border checkpoint at the seaport Passenger port of Saint Petersburg
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	01.06.2019 - 31.05.2022	01.03.2019 - 31.08.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Port of HaminaKotka Ltd (Lead beneficiary, Finland) Passenger Port of Saint Petersburg “Marine Façade” Public Limited Company (Russia) Finnish Border Guard (Finland) Finnish Customs (Finland)	Passenger Port of Saint Petersburg “Marine Façade” Public Limited Company (Lead beneficiary, Russia) Port of HaminaKotka Ltd (Finland)
PROGRAMME	South-East Finland - Russia CBC 2014-2020	
TOTAL BUDGET	2.570.000 €	3.296.743 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	2.000.000 €	2.560.000 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Well-connected region	
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of border management and border security, mobility and migration management	

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



"I grew up in the port city of Kotka, and since my childhood I am used to the sight of ships entering and leaving the port. I liked seeing the small passenger boats coming to Kotka. Also, travelling by ship is so different from all the other means of transportation. I think there's some magic in it."

Ville Kuitunen, Director of Traffic Operations at the Port of HaminaKotka (Finland)

Two countries, two ports overlooking the Baltic Sea, two different port infrastructures with the same problem: how to increase the reciprocal traffic and business? From now on, it will be possible, thanks to two large ENI CBC projects establishing a year-round ferry-boat connection between Finland and Russia. With the final goal to create additional links between the neighbouring regions, and to foster business and people relations across the borders.

With over two hundred ports, the Baltic Sea is one of the world's busiest seas in terms of maritime transportation. The port of HaminaKotka is the biggest cargo port in Finland, offering its services to the Finnish exporting industries and transit maritime traffic, with daily connections to all significant oceanic ports in Europe. At the same time, HaminaKotka used to lack facilities to receive passenger traffic: its limited capacities were holding back trans-shipment communication and tourist flows, negatively impacting the economies on both sides.

Just 250 kilometres away, there is the Port of St. Petersburg, with the opposite problem: it is the largest port in Russia in terms of passenger traffic, handling annually over two million arrivals, among which 600.000 cruise passengers. But so far, the Russian structure had no possibilities to perform the necessary border and customs control procedures for the buses, cars and trucks transported by the ferries.

The cooperation between the Finnish and the Russian partners was formalised back in 2015, with the final aim to organise a regular international ferry connection between the two ports, and to provide a full range of services to passengers and vehicles arriving by cruise and ferry vessels. Today, the preparatory works are over and the "Kotka Pass" and the "Multipass port" projects are well advanced into their implementing phase.

In Kotka (Finland), the construction works are shaping a passenger terminal, fences and vehicle lines for arrival and departure of travellers, and new premises and equipment for custom operations.

Finnish customs and border guards are also partners in this project, as they are the ones to perform border control. And it's not only about building infrastructure: four training sessions have been organised, to allow the Russian counterpart to share their experience in managing passenger transport. Cooperation with tour operators was also discussed, as well as measures about passenger safety and custom controls. "When we met before the project – says Ville Kuitunen from the Port of Kotka - the Russian partners gave us some good advice on certain aspects of building a passenger terminal, and this has been really a valuable lesson for us".

At the same time, in St. Petersburg port, the twin-project "Multipass Port" has finalised works for the construction of a permanent multilateral checkpoint, which was equipped and opened in June 2021, after the local staff had been trained. These new premises now allow to perform checks on cargo vehicles, providing the conditions to upgrade the seaport

classification to "cargo-passenger". Widening the range of accepted vessel types to cargo-passenger ferry boats will increase the port workload beyond a mere tourist "high season". "As a result, the port will be able to process up to 45.000 vehicles per year, including more than 8.000 cargo trucks," – says Andrei Petrov, Deputy Director on Development of Passenger Port of St. Petersburg, lead beneficiary of the Multipass Port project. Thanks to the initiative, timely and reliable controls of travellers, goods, and vehicles are now being implemented, and the overall quality of services has improved. Further on, the two ports will identify a partner to start regular commercial operations between Kotka and St. Petersburg, adding a year-round ferry connection to the ports' service-portfolio.

"I have been working with Russian counterparts for most of my professional life – says Ville Kuitunen from the Port of Kotka - but what we do in this project is totally different. Here we are benefitting from each other, it is a real partnership: they are teaching us things that otherwise we wouldn't have a clue about. And hopefully we are doing the same for them. And this would not have been possible without the project." A cooperation effort now reaching its final phase, which is also a response to the increasing flow of people and goods registered between Finland and Russia before the pandemic.





CB ROAD
A road towards the future

PROJECT TITLE	CB Road to future - Initiative of the Ruciane Nida Commune and Guryevsk Urban District to improve the quality and safety of existing transport networks
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	22.05.2020 – 11.05.2022
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Ruciane-Nida Municipality (Lead beneficiary, Poland); Road Management and Improvement Directorate of the Administration of the Gurievsk City District (Russia)
PROGRAMME	Poland - Russia CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	1.860.194 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	1.674.175 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Accessible regions and sustainable cross-border transport and communication
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“After a while, it was clear that even a small municipality like ours was able to prepare a large cross-border cooperation project!”

Mark Kaczmarczyk, project manager (Poland)

What is the “CB Road” project in brief? It's simple, but ambitious: more accessible borders, better and safer roads, and the creation of the conditions for economic growth in the territory.

The story of friendship and cooperation between the Municipality of Ruciane-Nida in Poland and Gurievsk in Russia goes back to 10 years ago. “The project's background has actually more history than the project itself!”, explains Mark Kaczmarczyk, project manager. First, it was the collaboration between the local fire brigades. Soon after, the two municipalities kept exchanging and identifying common challenges: wastewater infrastructure, old road connections, low accessibility... “The common experience and challenges of the partners, together with trust, are the key elements for the success of any project”, explains Mark.

In the end, the project partners decided to focus on the issue of poor road infrastructure in the neighbouring regions and, considering the nature of the problem, the Poland-Russia CBC Programme was immediately identified as the perfect tool to find a common solution.

The low quality of the transport and communication networks between the two areas was the main problem addressed by the project. Indeed, the difficulty to access the region impeded international road traffic



and affected negatively the development of the area.

The “CB Road” project seeks to develop the regional transport and communication network, improving the road infrastructure and the carrying capacity of the road. Further aims at the increase of transport flows and the access to the national and international transport system.

On the Russian side, the project partners are undertaking the reconstruction of a two-lanes road of 2,2 kilometres and rebuilding a bridge in the Gurievsk District. The idea is also to set up five bus stops and plant two hundred trees, as well as to purify the watercourse and to clean the riverbanks of the Gurievka River, located near the bridge. In Poland, the reconstruction of a two-lanes road of 2,4 kilometres long was accomplished. This road will be a part of the Via Baltica motorway, a key route for trucks and travellers alike, that runs from Prague to Helsinki through the Baltic countries.

The development of a modern road infrastructure will enable passengers and goods to cross the border faster and more conveniently. As a result, businesses will be more

effective, and the improved roads will attract the interest of other enterprises willing to invest in the area. Fewer accidents on the road are also expected because of the renewed road infrastructure.

Equally important are the interpersonal relations between the two communities. On top of the infrastructural component of the project, the partners are creating a solid basis of cross-border cooperation, organising public events such as conferences, bike rides, a rally of vintage cars and campaigns to raise awareness on road safety or on the use low-carbon transport means.

In addition, developing cultural and historical heritage tourism among the two municipalities is in the interest of both local authorities and might well be the next step for cooperation. In the end, the road to the future is about creating a cross-border space with the necessary human and infrastructural conditions for economic development, a territory destined to grow in the name of a relationship of collaboration and friendship between two municipalities that share challenges and know-how and look together beyond their own borders.





FRIENDLYBORDERS

Improving border-crossing with a smile

PROJECT TITLE	FriendlyBorders - Cooperation of Universities supporting the development of security and crisis management of the Lublin and Lutsk transborder regions
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	12.09.2018 - 11.09.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (Lead beneficiary, Poland); Lutsk National Technical University (Ukraine)
PROGRAMME	Poland-Belarus-Ukraine ENI CBC 2014 – 2020
TOTAL BUDGET	305.994 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	275.394 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Improvement of border management operations, customs, and visas procedures
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Promotion of border management border security and mobility

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“The most interesting part of the project is a possibility of informal communication between border guards and customs staff, communication without subordination.”

Alla Shymanska, Financial manager (Ukraine)

A quicker border clearance, an increased smuggling detection; sometimes a more relaxed and friendly approach can bring unexpected advantages besides the obvious ones. “It is not pleasant to communicate with a grumpy border guard or customs officer. ‘FriendlyBorders’ means also friendly communication between crossing people and control or customs officers,” explains Olena Kovalchuk, project coordinator from Ukraine.

The border-crossing points at the Poland-Ukraine border are remarkably busy, causing a heavy workload for customs and guard officers. Securing the entire border perimeter faces a number of threats, for instance, cybersecurity, illegal migration, terrorism and smuggling of weapons. As customs and border guards work in stressful conditions - duty-bound to fast decision-making for solving critical situations - it is particularly important to support them in developing their soft skills, especially interpersonal and social ones. The “FriendlyBorders” project improves the competencies and skills of the Polish and Ukrainian border guards and customs officers in security and crisis border management, with the overall objective to increase the efficiency of border control operations.

The idea of the project emerged from the results of numerous interviews and research carried out by the University of Lublin under the supervision of Wojciech Gizicki, the scientific project coordinator. A thorough preparatory work done before the submission of the proposal matured the project, which is in line with the EU initiative “Integrated border management”.

The initiative focused on several target groups. First, more than 260 customs and border officers from Poland and Ukraine have participated in a series of trainings for the development of people-to-people communication: emotional control, action orientation, stress management, teamwork, team management, etc. The acquired skills and knowledge have enabled the attendees to cope with a wide range of interpersonal conflict situations, to understand the impact of their own behavior, to better use body language to communicate with colleagues. “Both officers and members of the ranks

took part in the training. They have a strict subordination at work, and many inter-personal problems, such as communication difficulties, cannot be solved in a simple way” – continues Olena Kovalchuk – “During the training, people have opened up and teamed up; the communication and psychological problems that could not be solved at the workplace before, have been finally faced.”

A special technique – “Biofeedback” – was used to improve the participants’ self-control skills. This comprehensive technique consists of continuous, real-time monitoring of certain physiological indicators (heartbeat, fear, pressure, muscle tension) and their conscious management through multimedia and game techniques. Based on body signals collected by sensors, during the training a specialist gave recommendations on how to correct the impaired body functions. Biological feedback trainings have improved the health as well as the well-being of the involved staff, by increasing stress resistance and eliminating insomnia, attention disorders, fears or obsessive thoughts.

Also, over 60 officers from Volyn and Lublin Voivodeship regions received a postgraduate training in the field of security and border management: the programme promoted a shared understanding of the prerequisites of a balanced approach in border management, including security, technology, and educational developments. Upon graduation, each participant received a diploma. Two international conferences have finally allowed the participants to discuss economic and energy security, as well as challenges and threats to border security in Eastern Europe, allowing participants to exchange experiences and to take into account international best practices.

In the long-term, the project will result in reducing time in border clearance and in increasing detection of smuggled goods. Besides, both universities plan to continue to train border and customs staff in postgraduate programmes. Kamil Debinskiy, Project Manager from Poland, confirms the eagerness to maintain the cooperation: “We have already prepared two proposals based on the results of the current project: a similar one for the police and another for the emergency services. Also, based on interviews conducted with participants of the ongoing initiative, we know that they would like to receive more in-depth soft skills trainings. The next project for border and customs services is ready, and we are just waiting for the suitable call”.





PREZAK

Modern roads to bridge the Slovak and Ukrainian border regions

PROJECT TITLE	PREZAK - Modernization of the road connection between the Presov region and the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	01.12.2019 – 30.11.2021
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Roads administration of Prešov self-governing region (Lead beneficiary, Slovakia); Road Service in Zakarpattia Oblast (Ukraine)
PROGRAMME	Hungary – Slovakia – Romania - Ukraine ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	4.381.651 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	3.732.212 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Development of transport infrastructure to improve the mobility of persons and goods
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“Small cafes, shops, petrol stations...

The reconstruction of roads does not only impact on the traffic flow; it increases the number of tourists, it helps develop small businesses along the way.

And all counts when it comes to extra profit for our region”

Vasyl Markovych, PREZAK project communication manager (Ukraine)

Présov in Slovakia and Zakarpattia Oblast in Ukraine: two border regions sharing common interests and challenges but badly connected due to poor road infrastructure. This is the main problem addressed by the PREZAK project, an initiative implemented by the roads' administrations of both regions, to modernise the transport infrastructures between Ukraine and Slovakia, and enforce links with superior highways, ensuring a more open, well-connected area for travellers, goods and services.

The negotiations between the two partners started back in 2004. They quickly saw they had similar characteristics and problems, and decided to join efforts to implement a cross-border cooperation project. In 2017, regional administrations discussed all the details and in 2018 the project was agreed at national level. Construction works started right after, in December 2019, and by the end of 2021 all works were completed!

On the Slovak side, the partners have improved a section of the road II/558 between Stakčín and Ulič, the most important traffic artery in the north-eastern tip of Slovakia that further heads to the border with Ukraine, the Ubl'a - Malyj Bereznyj crossing point.

On the Ukrainian side, the works included the reconstruction of the roads P53 and H13 that head from the border-crossing to the town of Dubrunych.

In total, twenty kilometres of road were rebuilt and modernised and three bridges were repaired. To do so, and for the first time in the region, the partners used innovative materials like stone cement asphalt in Ukraine, and a special micro-pile foundation in Slovakia, to achieve a better stabilisation of the bridge pillars.

These improvements are facilitating already connections within the countries and across the border. Trucks up to 7,5 tonnes and buses can now move safely along the renovated roads and reach the cross-border point in Uzhgorod, connected to an important autoroute with Slovakia.

“The reconstruction of the roads and border-crossing points does not only impact on the traffic flow, it increases the number of tourists and it helps develop small businesses in the region. Cafes, shops, petrol stations... all counts when it comes to extra profit for the area” - says Vasyl Markovych, communication manager of PREZAK project. Indeed, the road improvements will intensify the local economic activities related to transport, tourism, social affairs and international transport, benefiting the local population and attracting new visitors.

The Ukrainian partner already has plans for new projects, to increase tourism and trade flows with neighbouring countries. For example, the Zakarpattia Oblast

shares almost forty kilometres with Poland, however there is no possibility to cross the border from the region. A crossing point between the two countries would open the door to tourism across the border to the Bieszczady National Park, in Poland, and the Uzhansky National Park, in Ukraine.

On the other side of the border, the Slovak project manager, Ms Juliana Fecušová, explains that, after the pandemic, the interest for accommodation in the mountains has increased with the rise of inland tourism. “The number of tourists in the region has tripled and the appeal for purchasing estates is now as high as never before. Présov is the most visited region of Slovakia, mainly because of well-known nature spots such the primeval beech forest Stužica, an UNESCO World Heritage Site”, explains Juliana.

The interest is clearly there and the potential for cross-border tourism and economic prosperity is finally meeting the necessary infrastructural conditions to thrive. The PREZAK project partners highlight that the preparation of an infrastructure project is a time-consuming process, it requires the organizing of an extensive paperwork and the undergoing bureaucratic procedures...but it's worthy! In the end, the roads for which the project parties are responsible are connected at the border, they should equally benefit from good conditions and cross-border cooperation is the perfect instrument to achieve that. The fruitful collaboration in this project has created a sense of ownership and fellowship between the two partners and ultimately also between the citizens. In fact, a second stage of the project has already started, PREZAK II, to keep improving road connections between the two friendly regions.



BRIDGE

*Ready to face
emergencies together*



PROJECT TITLE **BRIDGE – Improvement of the population safety and security level in the cross-border area by enhancing the joint training and cooperation actions in emergency management**

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD 28.06.2019 - 14.12.2022

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (Lead beneficiary, Romania)
General Inspectorate of Aviation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Romania)
General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie (Romania)
Department of State Emergency Service of Ukraine in Chernivtsi oblast (Ukraine)
Department of State Emergency Service of Ukraine in Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukraine)
“Bucovina” Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of Suceava county (Romania)

PROGRAMME Romania - Ukraine
ENI CBC 2014-2020

TOTAL BUDGET 7.416.592 €

PROGRAMME FINANCING 6.675.000 €

PROGRAMME PRIORITY Support to joint activities for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters as well as joint action during emergency situations

THEMATIC OBJECTIVE Common challenges in the field of safety and security



“While we were planning and implementing this project, we developed many more ideas, some of which have already become concrete initiatives! Yes, ‘Bridge’ was just the beginning of the cooperation with our partners”.

Silviu Sima, captain, officer of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (Romania)

Road accidents, floods and landslides, forest fires: border areas between Romania and Ukraine are hard to manage, landscapes are challenging, emergencies are frequent. As nature increasingly poses new threats and natural disasters multiply, major accidents often occur on public roads, requiring a quick and skilled response to rescue people and to unblock highways. Emergency management needs joint actions involving people on both sides of the border. In 2008 and 2010 heavy rain devastated Prut and Siret valleys, in the Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi regions, showing the vulnerability of the existing system of professional rescue, and the unsatisfactory conditions of technical facilities and equipment for emergency services. This is the ground where the BRIDGE project was born, out of the need to enhance the professionalism of people involved in emergency prevention and response.

The first discussions between partners began in 2014, and it was clear that improving infrastructure was not enough: what was needed was professional training, monitoring and alerting system. “The project has a significant infrastructural component – says the coordinator Alla Fedorchak, senior civil protection lieutenant in Ukraine – but the soft component is equally important: we are developing joint procedures that will regulate border-crossing, resource mobilization, coordination and logistics issues between Romanian and Ukrainian emergency management services”.

The first problem to address was the need for a proper centre where to conduct trainings in conditions close to real-life so that rescuers would not put their lives in danger once confronted with a true emergency. “The centre in Siret – says Silviu Sima, captain of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, Romania – is one of the five designed to be constructed in the future on the Romanian border, not only with Ukraine, but also with Moldova, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Serbia”. In Siret, the BRIDGE project is building premises for both theoretical and practical trainings, with specific installations for fire and rescue activities, and classrooms supplied with special materials and protective equipment: training sessions at the centre will be based on a

joint programme developed as part of the project. An administration building with living quarters for instructors and trainees is also under construction. But there is more: the Romanian air force is facing difficulties in recovery operations in mountainous areas, because of the distance with the nearest helipad. So, a helicopter landing platform is also being built, from where the Romanian Gendarmerie can develop search and rescue operations together with its Ukrainian partner.

On the other side of the border, in Chernivtsi (Ukraine) the partner has already completed most of its infrastructural part, modernizing the Command Centre: a corporate intranet communication network was established for the Main Department of the State Emergency Service, to protect against hacker attacks and to link all subscribers in one network. A “multivisor” has also been integrated into the existing IT network, to visualise the state of emergencies and create more efficient access to cartography. The panoramic screen is providing high-quality visualisation of large amounts of data, making them available simultaneously to all operational staff. Additionally, a video surveillance system is being installed at sixteen facilities in the Chernivtsi region, connecting them to the central server for image processing and recording.

The last component of the infrastructural BRIDGE project package counts on the

installation of a Rescue Training Complex in Ivano-Frankivsk: the facility consists of a set of containers – with appropriate equipment for gas rescue services – where training programmes are developed and delivered. Alongside the complex, a rehabilitation centre for emergency staff is also about to be completed: this is in line with international requirements, which foresee for every rescuer to maintain physical condition and skills at the highest level, to effectively endure and bypass difficulties in rescue response operations. To prevent injuries and deaths of tourists and to ensure their quick and efficient search in case they lose their way on the mountains, the Ivano-Frankivsk Dispatch Centre is also implementing an electronic system to monitor the movement of tourists, consisting of a central hardware as well as software for rescue operations.

Once the project infrastructure is fully established, joint training exercises will be conducted to strengthen the cooperation between professional emergency services of both countries, and to develop a common approach to activities. One table-top and one field exercise have already been designed to fully shape cooperation strategies with all partners. After the project is finalised, the cooperation plan will remain as the basis for future joint operational and training activities between the Romanian and Ukrainian emergency response forces. The funding for the training centre maintenance will be provided by the central government of Romania, regardless of who will be trained at the centre: Romanian or Ukrainian rescuers. “The project is contributing to the transformation of the cross-border region into a safer area – concludes Alla Fedorchak – improving conditions for attracting foreign and local investors, and for developing tourism potential”.



COMINF

Communication towers to secure data exchange



PROJECT TITLE	COMINF – Communication Infrastructure
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	29.06.2019 - 12.10.2022
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Lead beneficiary, Republic of Moldova); Ministry of Internal Affairs (Romania); Ministry of Transport (Romania)
PROGRAMME	Romania – Republic of Moldova ENI CBC 2014-2020
TOTAL BUDGET	7.951.320 €
PROGRAMME FINANCING	5.013.840 €
PROGRAMME PRIORITY	Development of cross border transport infrastructure and ICT Infrastructure
THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	Improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of transport and common networks and systems

The information provided is subject to changes during the project's lifetime. Please refer to the project's website for the latest updates.



“The project is an opportunity to create an unprecedented communication infrastructure at country level. There is no other public institution in the Republic of Moldova with such infrastructure and, in the future, it will also be used by other public institutions and local authorities”

Andrian Sova, Director of IT Service at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Republic of Moldova)



Faster, more reliable and secured communication between the public authorities of the Republic of Moldova and Romania: this is the objective of the COMINF project, strengthening the cooperation capacities between the public authorities by improving information and communication technology services, to respond more effectively to common cross-border challenges.

The communication infrastructure in the border area was quickly becoming obsolete: it did not allow for timely and secure information exchange between the public authorities, and it was starting to become a threat to secure data exchanges. All in all, it did not provide the necessary conditions to tackle raising challenges like organised crime, emergency situations, smuggling or illegal migration. Reaction times in emergency situations were too long and it was becoming each time more difficult to fight cross-border criminality. These information and security challenges were already identified back in 2013 and were the target of a previous ENPI cross-border cooperation project. As a result, an integrated communication system between the two neighbouring countries was implemented.

Now, the COMINF project builds on the successful achievements of the previous partnership to increase access to the communication system and to further develop it and improve it. The project partners are extending the communication infrastructure to uncovered areas in the Northern-West of the Republic of Moldova, installing sixteen communication towers with radio relay and data transport equipment. This was absolutely necessary to respond to the constant increase of transferred data volumes that were putting a strain on the existing infrastructure and, of course, to enhance the exchange of information between law enforcement institutions, emergency inspectorates and railway stations.

In addition, to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise between the law enforcement authorities from the two countries, a cross-border police cooperation centre is being set up in Lipcani, in the Republic of Moldova, right at the border with Romania. The centre will be equipped with modern means of communication – like a broadband interconnection service – and will become an integrated communication point for more direct and secure connections between the centre itself, the Internal Affairs Min-

istries Headquarters and the subordinated structures from both countries. An upgraded network between Chisinau and Iasi to increase the data transmission capacity to at least 5Gbps speed, is also one of the project ambitions.

But not only the communication between the main central points is important, the project partners want to expand the communication network to smaller, more isolated areas by establishing mobile communication centres. Vehicles are being acquired and adapted to improve the communication network flexibility and coverage wherever needed, and maintenance vehicles will carry out interventions to carry out on site the diagnoses and repair of the communication equipment and infrastructure.

With a view into the future and the scalability of the project, all the infrastructure created within COMINF project will be used for other needs of the Ministries of Internal Affairs. Developing the TETRA standard radio network and other communication systems is now possible thanks to the fifteen years guaranteed utility of the infrastructure. A dedicated team and the good bilateral relationships between the project partners are certainly the factors of success to implement this project. “For us, being in the role of Lead applicant was really a challenge, we learnt a lot from our Romanian partners in previous projects, both about the technical aspects of the information system and about project management” explains Mr. Denis Mihaiescu, project manager from the Republic of Moldova, “we are now ready to put this into practice for the next project, as cross-border cooperation is the only way to invest in a sustainable manner in the well-functioning of cross-border points and the security of the citizens in the Moldova-Romania border”, concludes Mr Mihaiescu.





Cross-border infrastructure and the COVID-19 pandemic

Compared to the soft projects that primarily aim at an active interaction across borders, the cross-border infrastructure projects suffered less from the stillstand and border closure caused by the pandemic. Still, the restrictions led to slowing down the pace of works and disruptions in supplies and logistics, causing delays in the implementation of project activities. Even more, the projects were affected by the secondary impacts of the pandemic, namely by the increased prices in the construction material market.

To tackle the challenges, in April 2020 the European Commission gave its rapid response to the crisis, launching the Team Europe package to support Partner Countries in the fight against the pandemic. The resources made available exceeded 40.000 M€. This enormous support was initially focused on an emergency response to humanitarian needs, and then expanded to strengthening health, water and sanitation systems and ultimately turned into mitigating the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. Other measures were introduced to face the challenges posed by the emergency: the Commission adopted two Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives, enabling the regions on both sides of the EU external borders to benefit from the same opportunities as the internal EU border regions. Exceptional and useful measures were introduced to use the Cohesion Policy funds (2014 - 2020) to finance initiatives related to the outbreak of the pandemic such as investments in the healthcare sector, support for SMEs and the labour market. The deadline for projects implementation was also extended, and programmes were granted more flexibility, liquidity and simplification in several spheres of implementation.

This flexibility from the European Commission and the programme authorities has allowed to continue with the project implementation. It required project partners and contractors to adjust, to re-evaluate the risks and to work jointly to keep the sites open and to implement the planned activities. And this has had a positive impact on the border regions, as projects with an infrastructure component have the potential to stimulate recovery by creating jobs and thus boost the economy.

Even if the capacities of the border-crossing points will not be used to their full potential still for a while, there are lessons that the cross-border infrastructure projects have drawn, as well as tools and measures that they have adopted to ensure that the benefits from the cross-border infrastructure are available to people living in the border regions and those visiting them.

Looking ahead: from ENI CBC to Interreg NEXT

“Peace, security and development are all mutually dependant. We need an integrated and comprehensive approach to our security.”

Stressed by President Ursula von der Leyen in her Agenda for Europe

The priorities related to the planning, construction and common benefits of cross-border infrastructure remain relevant for the Interreg NEXT programmes in the 2021-2027 period as well. The policy objectives and the specific objectives allow to continue the implementation of activities related to all four sub-clusters highlighted in this publication.

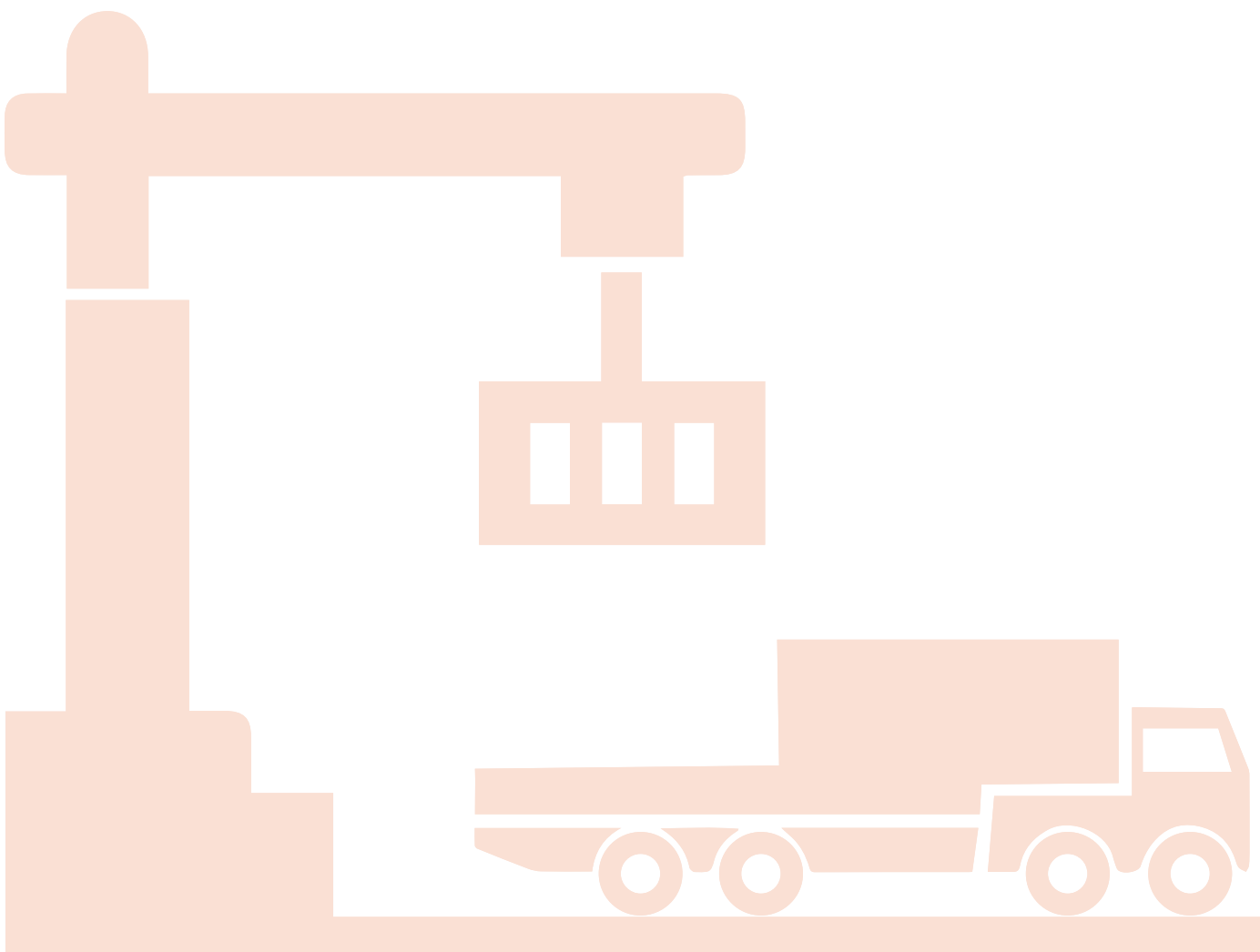
A specific policy objective dedicated to enhancing mobility for a more connected Europe (policy objective 3) is defined to support developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal mobility. And even if the majority of the investment projects under this policy objective will be implemented by other cohesion funds, there is still space also for cross-border cooperation activities among the bordering regions to boost joint planning and infrastructure improvements. The South-East Finland – Russia Interreg NEXT Programme has selected this objective, aiming at the facilitation of accessibility and mobility at regional and local levels. It is expected to lead to an increased safety and equal opportunities for people living in the programme area, as well as enhanced climate resilience, efficient border management, sustainable logistics and mobility management and coordination of transporting goods.

Also, the Interreg specific objective 2 (ISO2) allows Interreg NEXT programmes to continue their cooperation in the areas of border-crossing safety and security. In the Joint paper for Interreg NEXT, the European Commission explains:

ISO 2 (“A safer and more secure Europe and its neighbourhood”) offers the possibility to build a strong partnership between the EU and Partner Countries to address, where relevant, the common challenges of security, also in relation to migration (implemented in particular by actions in the fields of border-crossing management and accessibility and migration management). Under ISO 2, cooperation programmes could, inter alia, continue to support the upscaling and replication of infrastructures in border-crossing points, integrate people with migrant background, foster cohesive and inclusive societies, promote better management of disaster risks especially in health.

These challenges are taken up by the Karelia Interreg NEXT Programme, as well as by the Romania – Ukraine and the Romania – Republic of Moldova Interreg NEXT Programmes, the three of which plan improvements in the border management infrastructure. On top of this, Romania – Ukraine also plans the implementation of “other actions to contribute to a safer and more secure Europe” to continue cooperation in the implementation of activities to tackle joint challenges related to safety and security of the border areas.

On top of these two policy objectives that specifically address cross-border infrastructure improvements, there is also a possibility for cooperation in planning and developing a strategic view to future investments in the framework of the Interreg specific objective 1 (ISO 1, “A better cooperation governance for Europe and its neighbourhood”) which allows for joint planning activities, tackling obstacles and enhancing capacities of the authorities to pave the way for the future cross-border infrastructure investments. Improving connectivity across borders is feasible and beneficial to all communities: the NEXT seven years have a strong ground to build upon.





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