

# Key milestones

Preparation and Implementation of  
European Territorial Cooperation Programmes



2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>COMMUNITY REGULATORY FRAMEWORK</b>										
<b>PROGRAMME PREPARATION</b>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>START-UP</li><li>SETTING UP OF STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES, LEGAL FRAMEWORK</li></ul>										
<b>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</b>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT, SELECTION</li><li>IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING</li></ul>										
<b>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CONTROL AND AUDIT</li><li>PAYMENTS, RECOVERIES</li><li>DETECTION OF IRREGULARITIES AND RECOVERIES</li><li>DECOMMITMENT</li></ul>										
<b>COMMUNICATION PLAN, INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY</b>										
<b>REPORTING, EVALUATION, MONITORING</b>										
<b>EGTC</b>										
<b>PROGRAMME CLOSURE, ARCHIVING</b>										

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## COMMUNITY REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

<b>17 May 2006</b>	Interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission (EC) on budgetary discipline and sound financial management ( <a href="#">2006/C 139/01</a> )	■ <a href="#">Interinstitutional agreement</a>
<b>5 July 2006</b>	Adoption of: ERDF Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006) General Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006) EGTC Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006)	■ <a href="#">ERDF Regulation (1080/2006)</a> ■ <a href="#">General Regulation (1083/2006)</a> ■ <a href="#">Corrigendum 01.09.2006(Annex4)</a> ■ <a href="#">Addendum 21.12.2006(Annex3)</a> ■ <a href="#">Corrigendum 02.02.2007(Annex3)</a> ■ <a href="#">EGTC Regulation (1082/2006)</a>
<b>31 July 2006</b>	Entry into force of the ERDF, General and EGTC Regulations: publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.	
<b>4 August 2006</b>	EC Decision fixing an indicative allocation by Member State of the commitment appropriations for the European Territorial Cooperation Objective for the period 2007-2013 (Decision (EC) No 2006/609). <i>To be modified as a result of the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on 01.01.2007</i>	■ <a href="#">Decision</a>
<b>6 October 2006</b>	Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion (CSGC) ( <a href="#">Decision (EC) No 2006/702</a> )	■ <a href="#">Decision</a>
<b>31 October 2006</b>	EC Decision drawing up the list of regions and areas eligible for funding from the ERDF under the cross-border and transnational strands of the European territorial cooperation objective ( <a href="#">Decision (EC) No 2006/769</a> ). <i>To be modified as a result of the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on 01.01.2007</i>	■ <a href="#">Decision</a> ■ <a href="#">Map of eligible regions - cross-border cooperation (Inforegio Website)</a> ■ <a href="#">Map of transnational cooperation areas (Inforegio Website)</a>
<b>8 December 2006</b>	Adoption of the European Commission's "Implementing Regulation" ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006</a> ).	■ <a href="#">Regulation</a> ■ <a href="#">Corrigendum 15.02.2007</a>
<b>6 March 2007</b> (within 5 months of adoption of the CSGC)	Deadline for the adoption of the National Strategic Reference Frameworks ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.28(2)</a> ).	See Working Document ■ <a href="#">"Innovation in the National Strategic Reference Frameworks"</a>

See also [Regional Policy – INFOREGIO website – Regulations section](#)

See also [INTERACT web section 2007-2013](#)

A complete collection of INTERACT Studies is available on the [INTERACT Website](#)

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## PROGRAMME PREPARATION    START UP

**1 January 2007**

Starting date of eligibility of expenditure for all programmes  
([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/06 art.56\(1\)](#)).

Do you want to know more about eligibility of expenditure? See more in:

- [Article 3 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1080/2006](#)
  - [Chapter 3 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006](#)
- INTERACT Studies:
- [Eligibility of expenditure in INTERREG III Programmes](#)
  - [The MTEC Eligibility Handbook](#)

**1 January 2007**

at the earliest or within  
4 months of the formal  
submission of the OP  
to the EC

Starting date for the adoption of OPs by the EC ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.32\(5\)](#)).

- [INTERACT Presentation](#)

**6 March 2007**

(within 5 months of adoption  
of the Community Strategic  
Guidelines on Cohesion)

Deadline for the Member States to submit a proposal for an Operational Programme (OP)  
to the EC ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.32\(3\)](#)).

What should the OP contain?

- [Article 12 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1080/2006](#)
- [INTERACT Presentation](#)
- [INTERACT Analysis of Tools and methods IIIB-IIIC](#)

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## PROGRAMME PREPARATION      SETTING UP OF STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES, LEGAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Within 3 months of EC's adoption of the OP</b>	Setting-up of the Monitoring Committee (MC) ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.63</a> ).	Do you want to know more about the MC composition and functioning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Legal study</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Analysis of Tools</a></li></ul>
<b>Within 3 months of EC's adoption of the OP</b>	Setting-up of the Group of Auditors ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 art.14(2)</a> ).	Do you want to know more about the Group of Auditors and Audit Authority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Paper on Article 71 - Description of management and control systems</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006</a></li></ul>
<b>Within 4 months of EC's adoption of the OP</b>	Submission of the Communication plan to the EC ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 art.3</a> ). The communication plan is deemed approved if there is no EC reaction within 2 months of receipt): In case of reaction, a delay of 2 months is given to the programme for adaptations.	Do you want to know more about the content of the Communication plan and related procedures? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Paper: Information and publicity requirements 2007-2013 compared to the previous programming period</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Working document on communication plans</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">INTERREG III Programmes Communication Plans - INTERACT Web Library</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">Article 69 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006</a></li></ul>
<b>Within 6 months of EC's adoption of the OP</b>	MC to consider and approve the criteria for the selection of operations ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.65</a> ).	Do you want to know more about eligibility and selection criteria? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <a href="#">Article 19 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006</a></li><li>■ <a href="#">INTERACT Handbook: Project Evaluation and Selection Manual</a></li></ul>

See also section on the [EGTC](#)

Do you want to know more about general recommendations for setting-up of programme structures, organisational arrangements and legal aspects? [INTERACT Legal Study](#)

Do you want to know more about legal arrangements between programme partners, including the Memorandum of Understanding?

[INTERACT Template on Memorandum of Understanding](#)

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## PROJECT MANAGEMENT      PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT, SELECTION

### Within 6 months of EC's adoption of the OP

MC to consider and approve the criteria for the selection of operations  
([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.65](#)).

- Do you want to know more about eligibility and selection criteria?
- [Article 19 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1080/2006](#)
  - [INTERACT Handbook: Project Evaluation and Selection Manual](#)

### In parallel with the preparation of the OP

Preparation of the applicant pack:

- Application form
- Call for proposals
- Guidelines for applicants

- Did you know that INTERACT has developed a series of practical handbooks on these topics?
- [Quality project generation](#)
  - [Strategic project generation](#)
  - [Application pack](#)
  - [Reporting templates](#)
  - [INTERACT Project Management Handbook](#)
  - [Process monitoring of impacts - Case studies](#)
  - [Examples of INTERREG III application forms and guidelines on the INTERACT Web Library](#)
  - [INTERACT Handbook on the Lead Partner Principle](#)
  - [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)

### In parallel with the preparation of the OP

Preparation of the assessment documents:

- Assessment template
- Guidelines on assessment – for evaluators

- INTERACT handbooks on these topics are available:
- [Project Evaluation and Selection Manual](#)
  - [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)
  - [INTERACT Project management handbook](#)

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## PROJECT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING

### In parallel with the preparation of the OP

Preparation of the contracting documents:

- Subsidy contract (between Managing Authority and Lead beneficiary)
- Partnership agreement (between Lead beneficiary and project partners)

### To be ready when the first projects are approved

Preparation of the reporting documents:

- Reporting template(s)
- Guidelines on reporting requirements

Consult INTERACT documents on these topics:

- [Handbook on Subsidy Contract](#)
- [Handbook on Partnership Agreement](#)
- [INTERACT Project management handbook](#)
- [INTERREG III Subsidy contracts on the INTERACT Web Library](#)
- [INTERREG III Partnership agreements on the INTERACT Web Library](#)
- [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)

Did you know that INTERACT has developed a series of practical handbooks on these topics?

- [INTERACT Project management handbook](#)
- [Reporting templates](#)
- [Application pack](#)
- [Analysis of Tools](#)
- [Process monitoring of impacts - Case studies](#)
- [INTERREG III Reporting templates and Guidelines on the INTERACT Web Library](#)

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## COMMUNICATION PLAN, INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

### **Within 4 months of EC's adoption of the OP**

Submission of the Communication plan to the EC ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006 art.3](#)).  
The communication plan is deemed approved if there is no EC reaction within 2 months of receipt):  
In case of reaction, a delay of 2 months is given to the programme for adaptations.

Do you want to know more about the content of the Communication plan and related procedures?

- [Article 69 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006](#)
- [INTERACT Paper: Information and publicity requirements 2007-2013 compared to the previous programming period](#)
- [INTERACT working document on communication plans](#)
- [INTERREG III Programmes Communication Plans - INTERACT Web Library](#)
- [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)

### **9 May each year – for a week**

Programme's Managing to fly the flag of the European Union in front of its premises ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006 art. 7\(2\)\(c\)](#))

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT      CONTROL AND AUDIT

### FIRST LEVEL CONTROL

Article 16(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 states that “Each Member State shall designate the controllers responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary participating in the operation. Member States may decide to designate a single controller for the whole programme area”.

**Within 3 months  
of the submission of  
expenditure to national  
controllers**

Validation of the expenditure by the national controllers  
(Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 art.16.2).

- [INTERACT Financial management handbook](#)

### SECOND LEVEL CONTROL - AUDIT

**Within 3 months of EC’s  
adoption of the OP**

Setting-up of the Group of Auditors (Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 art.14(2)).

- [Article 23 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006](#)
- [INTERACT paper on Article 71 - Description of management and control systems](#)

**Within 9 months of EC’s  
adoption of the OP**

Audit Authority (AA) to present an Audit Strategy to the EC  
(Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.62(1)(c)).

- [Annex 5 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006](#)

**Within 12 months of EC’s  
adoption of the OP and  
before the submission  
of the first interim  
payment application**

Member States to submit to the EC a description of the management and control systems (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.71(1)). The description shall be subject to approval by a compliance assessment body (generally the Audit Authority) and the report of this body shall be submitted with the description to the EC. If the compliance assessment body reports reservations regarding the systems in place, Member States shall also provide a description of the corrective actions to be taken. (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.71.2)

- [INTERACT paper on Article 71 - Description of management and control systems](#)
- [Article 58 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006](#)
- [Article 24 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1828/2006](#)
- [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)

**30 June each year**

End of each 12-month audit period. The first audit period may, however, be considered to run from 01.01.2007 to 30.06.2008 and this period shall be covered by the first control report. (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.62).

- [INTERACT Financial management handbook](#)
- [Model of audit report](#)

**31 December each year  
(starting 2008, ending 2015)**

AA to submit an annual control report + opinion on management and control system (+ declaration for partial closure if applicable) to the EC (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.62(1)(d)).

- [INTERACT Analysis of Tools](#)
- [INTERACT Financial management handbook](#)

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PAYMENTS, RECOVERIES

**Within 2 months of submission of the description of management and control systems (and in the absence of observation from the EC)**

First interim payment by the EC can be made (on the basis of the submission of the first interim application for payment) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.71\(2\)](#)).

Do you want to know more about the Description of management and control systems?

- [INTERACT paper on Article 71 - Description of management and control systems](#)

**30 April**  
(each year, starting in 2008)

EC to make annual budget commitments to the OP's (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.75).

**30 April each year**

Member States to send the EC a provisional forecast of their likely applications for payment for the current financial year (N) and the subsequent financial year (N+1) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.76\(3\)](#)).

**31 October each year**

Latest date on which an application of payment should be submitted to the EC, for the payment to be made by the EC in the current year ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.87\(1\)](#)).

**2008**

Payment of the second instalment of pre-financing amount (3%) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.82\(1\)](#)).

**2009**

(only for programmes where at least one participant is a Member State that joined the EU on or after 1 May 2004)

Payment of the third instalment of pre-financing amount (2%) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.82\(1\)](#)).

**Within 24 months of the date of payment of the first instalment of the pre-financing amount**

If no application for payment is sent to the EC, the total amount paid as pre-financing shall be reimbursed ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.82\(2\)](#)).

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT      DETECTION OF IRREGULARITIES AND RECOVERIES

<b>Within 2 months of the end of each quarter</b>	Member States to report to the EC any irregularities which have been the subject of a primary administrative or judicial finding (and if applicable, the procedures instituted with respect to all irregularities previously notified and of important changes resulting from them): Even if there is no irregularity to be reported, the Member State must inform the EC of that fact ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 art.28</a> ).	Do you want to know more about irregularities? Recovery procedures? ■ <a href="#">INTERACT Financial management handbook</a>
<b>31 March</b> (each year, starting in 2008)	CA to send to the EC a statement, including the amounts withdrawn, the amounts recovered and the amounts to be recovered ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 art.20</a> ).	■ <a href="#">INTERACT Financial management handbook</a>
<b>28/29 February N+1</b>	When 95% of the total payments from the Funds to the OP have been made (year N), the CA shall transmit to the EC the amounts recovered during the year no later than the end of February of each subsequent year ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.79</a> ).	■ <a href="#">INTERACT Financial management handbook</a>
<b>Last day of the second month following the issuing of a repayment order</b>	Deadline for the repayment to the general budget of the European Union ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 art.102(1)</a> ).	■ <a href="#">INTERACT Financial management handbook</a>

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT    DECOMMITMENT

### 31 December N+2

Deadline for submission of applications for payment from the commitment for year N.  
Any funds unclaimed from this commitment after this point will be subject to the first application of the automatic decommitment rule (for programmes subject to the N+2 rule) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.93\(1\)](#)).

Do you want to know more about the decommitment rule?

- [INTERACT Study on the Decommitment issue](#)
- [INTERACT Financial management handbook](#)

### 31 December N+3 (until 2013)

Deadline for submission of applications for payment from the commitment for year N.  
Any funds unclaimed from this commitment after this point will be subject to the first application of the automatic decommitment rule (for programmes subject to the N+3 rule) ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.93\(2\)](#)).

- [INTERACT Study on the Decommitment issue](#)
- [INTERACT Financial management handbook](#)

**In case of automatic decommitment: within 9 months of the date of the automatic decommitment (31 December of the previous year), and after communication and agreement with the Member State on the amount**

EC to carry out the automatic decommitment ([Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006 art.97\(2\)](#)).

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## ANNUAL REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

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<b>No later than 30 June</b> (each year, starting in 2008)	Managing Authority (MA) to submit annual implementation report to EC ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.67(1)</a> ).
<b>Within 10 working days of receipt of the annual implementation report</b>	EC to inform Member State on the admissibility of the annual report ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.67(3)</a> ).
<b>Within 2 months of confirmation of admissibility of the annual report</b>	EC to inform the Member State on its opinion about the report ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.67(4)</a> ).

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## MONITORING

Arrangements for monitoring are detailed in [article 66 of Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006](#).

How and when do you monitoring the achievements of your strategic goals? See INTERACT Studies:

[Process monitoring of impacts - Case studies](#)

[Study on indicators for monitoring transnational and interregional cooperation programmes](#)

[EC Working Document: "Indicators for monitoring and evaluation: a practical guide"](#)

## ONGOING EVALUATION

[Article 48\(3\) of EC Regulation No 1083/2006](#) states that "During the programming period, Member States shall carry out evaluations linked to the monitoring of operational programmes in particular where that monitoring reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of operational programmes, as referred to in Article 33. The results shall be sent to the Monitoring Committee for the Operational Programme and to the Commission".

How can I evaluate the achievements of the programme?

[INTERACT Study process monitoring of impacts](#)

[EC Working Document: "Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: evaluation during the programming period"](#)

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## PROGRAMME CLOSURE, ARCHIVING

<b>Within 5 years of completion of an operation or at the latest with the application for payment of the final balance</b>	CA to deduct "the revenue generated within 5 years of the completion of an operation" from the expenditure declared to the EC ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.55(3)</a> )	INTERACT will soon publish a "Study on Programme and Project Closure": visit the <a href="#">INTERACT Website</a> to know more.
<b>31 December 2015</b>	Closing date for the eligibility of expenditure ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.56(1)</a> ).	
<b>31 December 2015</b>	EC to complete ex-post evaluation ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.49(3)</a> ).	
<b>No later than 31 March 2017</b>	Member State to send a final application for payment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ An application for payment of the final balance and statement of expenditure (made by the CA)</li><li>■ The final implementation report (made by the MA)</li><li>■ A closure declaration (made by the AA) (<a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.89(1)</a>)</li></ul>	■ <a href="#">INTERACT Financial management handbook</a>
<b>Within 5 months from the date of receipt of the final implementation report</b>	EC to inform the Member State of its opinion on the content of the report. ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.67(4)</a> ).	
<b>Within 5 months from the date of receipt of the closure declaration</b>	EC to inform the Member State of its opinion on the content of the declaration. In the absence of observation by the EC, the declaration is deemed to be accepted ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.89(3)</a> ).	
<b>Within 45 days from the later of the following dates: - date of acceptance of the final report by the EC - date of acceptance of the closure declaration by the EC</b>	EC to pay the final balance of the OP ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.89(4)</a> ).	
<b>For 3 years after the closure of the OP or after a partial closure</b>	MA to ensure that all supporting documents regarding expenditure and audits must be kept available for the EC and the Court of Auditors ( <a href="#">Regulation (EC) No 1083/06 art.90(1)</a> ).	Did you know that this obligation also applies to the final beneficiaries? ■ <a href="#">INTERACT Handbook on Subsidy Contract</a>

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## EGTC

<b>1 August 2006</b>	Entry into force – application of <a href="#">article 16</a> (Member States to make provisions to ensure the effective application of the regulation).
<b>1 August 2007</b>	Application of the rest of the regulation.
<b>Within 3 months of the date of receipt of an admissible application</b> (for participation of prospective member to an EGTC)	The Member State shall, as a general rule, reach its decision ( <a href="#">art.4(3)</a> ).
<b>Day of registration or publication of the statutes of the EGTC</b>	Acquisition of legal personality of the EGTC ( <a href="#">art.5(1)</a> ).
<b>Within 10 working days of registration and/or publication of the statutes of the EGTC</b>	Request to be sent to the Office for Official Publications of the EC for publication of a notice in the OJEC ( <a href="#">art.5(2)</a> ).
<b>1 August 2011</b>	EC to forward to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the application of the regulation and proposals for amendment, where appropriate ( <a href="#">art.17</a> ).

Did you know that INTERACT has developed a section on the EGTC on its website?

[To the EGTC web section](#)

See also [INTERACT Legal Study: Study on organisational aspects of cross-border INTERREG programmes - Legal aspects and partnerships](#)