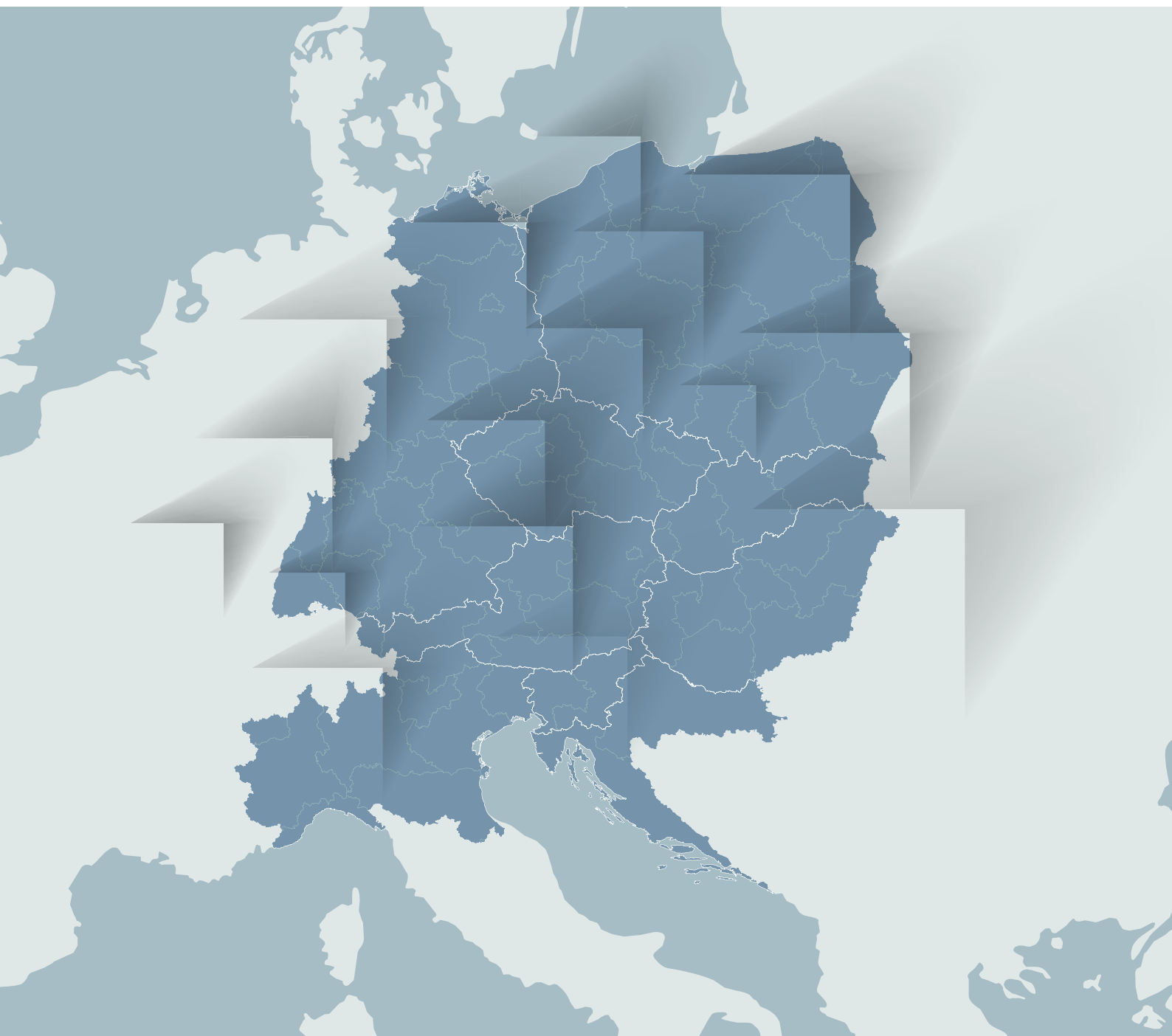


APPLICATION MANUAL

Third Call

Version 1
September 2017



Content

I. Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme: An overview	4
II. Programme area	4
III. Strategic priorities and specific objectives	6
IV. Programme budget	11
V. Legal framework and programme related documents	13
VI. Management structure	15

Table of abbreviations

Abbreviation

AF	Application form
BL	Budget line
eMS	Electronic monitoring system
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
LA	Lead Applicant
LP	Lead Partner
MA/ JS	Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat
MC	Monitoring Committee
NCP	National Contact Point
PP	Project Partner
SO	Specific Objective
WP	Work Package

I. Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme: An overview

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective, which supports regional cooperation among central European countries during the programming period 2014-2020.

Key variables of the programme were agreed by the participating Member States following thorough consultations with relevant partners and stakeholders. They are described in detail in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE cooperation programme document available for download in its latest version from <http://interreg-central.eu/cooperation-programme>

In the following sections a brief overview is provided on the programme area, the strategic programme orientation, the programme budget and its management structure. However, the main source of information on several key aspects to be considered when preparing a project proposal remains the above mentioned cooperation programme document.

II. Programme area

Covering an area of over 1 million square kilometres the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is home to about 146 million people. The programme cooperation area comprises the territory or parts of the territory of nine EU Member States.

In total, the programme area is made up of 76 statistical NUTS 2 regions. The participating countries and regions are listed in the following table.

Table 1 - Countries and regions participating in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

The whole country	Germany	Italy
Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia	Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt and Thüringen	Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Valle d'Aosta and Veneto

Central Europe is highly heterogeneous in geographical terms (marked by coastal areas, mountain ranges, rural areas, large urban agglomerations etc.) as well as in economic and social terms (exposing the lingering east-west divide). The programme area has a large number of assets but also faces numerous challenges in various fields affecting regional development, which have all been thoroughly analysed before concentrating the programme on four strategic priorities. Results expected from the programme will directly contribute to reaching goals of the Europe 2020 strategy (EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth).

An in depth analysis of the programme territory as well of its strengths and weaknesses is available in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE cooperation programme document (cf. sections 1.1.1.2 and 1.1.1.3), which can be downloaded from www.interreg-central.eu/application-documents

Figure 1 - Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE programme area





III. Strategic priorities and specific objectives

In direct response to the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme has formulated its overall programme objective as:

”Cooperating beyond borders in central Europe to make our cities and regions better places to live and work.”

More precisely, transnational cooperation in central Europe is the catalyst for implementing smart solutions answering to regional challenges in the fields of innovation, low-carbon economy, environment, culture and transport. It builds regional capacities following an integrated bottom-up approach involving and coordinating relevant actors from all governance levels.

In doing so, the programme will coordinate with other instruments for regional development in the area, including national and regional programmes supported by the European structural and investment funds (ESIF), macro-regional strategies, thematic EU programmes or the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The programme builds on four priorities of particular relevance to central Europe. These are further broken down to specific objectives and respond to the programme area’s challenges and needs or build on opportunities identified in the analysis included in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE cooperation programme document.

Projects to be funded have to address one of the specific objectives of the programme as formulated under each priority axis. They also have to meet a thematic focus for some of these objectives (see the call announcement and the overview table on the following pages). More information on the thematic scope of each specific objective including examples of supported actions is provided in annex I of this manual.

Figure 2 - Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE programme strategy, priority axes and specific objectives

CENTRAL EUROPE - Territorial needs

Cooperating beyond borders in CENTRAL EUROPE to make our cities and regions better places to live and work



PRIORITY AXIS 1

Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive

Specific objective 1.1

To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe

THEMATIC
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Specific objective 1.2

To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in CENTRAL EUROPEAN regions

THEMATIC
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PRIORITY AXIS 2

Cooperating on low carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 2.1

To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures

THEMATIC
FOCUS IN
THIRD CALL

Specific objective 2.2

To improve territorially based low carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation

Specific objective 2.3

To improve capacities for mobility planning in functional urban areas to lower CO2 emissions

CLOSED IN
THIRD CALL



PRIORITY AXIS 3

Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 3.1

To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources

Specific objective 3.2

To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources

THEMATIC
FOCUS IN
THIRD CALL

Specific objective 3.3

To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places



PRIORITY AXIS 4

Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 4.1

To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport systems for better connections to national and European transport networks

Specific objective 4.2

To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multimodal environment-friendly freight solutions

Thematic focus of the third call - INNOVATION

PRIORITY AXIS (PA)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (SO)	THEMATIC FOCUS
<p>Cooperating on INNOVATION to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive</p>	<p>1.1 To improve sustainable linkages among actors of the innovation systems for strengthening regional innovation capacity in central Europe</p>	<p>> Bottom-up implementation of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) in industrial sectors that are technology priority areas in central Europe ¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple and quadruple helix approaches to strengthen the participation of public and civil society actors (in particular RIS3 key actors) • Innovative practices such as open innovation and co-creation approaches involving e.g. the creative sector (<i>overlaps with SO 3.2 targeting cultural and creative industries have to be avoided</i>). • Actions for bringing innovation closer to the market such as financing mechanisms for market introduction and leverage of innovation
	<p>1.2 To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions</p>	<p>> Social innovation and integration of disadvantaged groups and regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up social innovation practices creating and strengthening support infrastructure, services and schemes (e.g. mentoring, community-owned initiatives, services of general interest) • Integration of migrants and other disadvantaged groups into society and the labour market • Innovation of social policies (e.g. tackling policy-related challenges, policy improvements and coordination) • Development of entrepreneurial competences for social entrepreneurship (including entrepreneurship of migrants) and entrepreneurship aiming to create positive social effects

¹ Energy and environment, Public health, medicine and life sciences, Agro- and bio-economy, Advanced materials and nanotechnology, Transport and mobility, Advanced manufacturing systems, ICT and electronics - see http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/81824/S3-CE_160926_report.pdf/491bbef6-7610-4960-a74c-b58a57a-0c9f4. Projects are encouraged to address also multiple sectors under broader headings such as circular economy.

Thematic focus of the third call - LOW CARBON STRATEGIES

PRIORITY AXIS (PA)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (SO)	THEMATIC FOCUS
Cooperating on LOW-CARBON strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE	2.1 To develop and implement solutions for increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Energy efficiency and renewable energy usage in public infrastructure other than public buildings and streetlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport infrastructure including railway, road, waterways, terminals etc. (<i>overlaps with Priority Axis 4 have to be avoided</i>) • Water infrastructure including distribution and maintenance of water supply • Waste and waste water infrastructure including collection and treatment • ICT infrastructure including data storage and distribution systems > Financing aspects of energy-efficient renovation, e.g. considering investment and operational costs or financial savings during the operation phase (exclusively related to above listed types of public infrastructure) > Integration of renewable energy sources (exclusively related to above listed types of public infrastructure)
	2.2 To improve territorially based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No thematic focus, all topics can be addressed as described in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme - Version 2.0 (available here)
	2.3 To improve capacities for mobility planning in functional urban areas to lower CO ₂ emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Remains closed because topics are already sufficiently covered by projects. No project proposals can be submitted in this specific objective.

Thematic focus of the third call - NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

PRIORITY AXIS (PA)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (SO)	THEMATIC FOCUS
Cooperating on NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE	3.1 To improve integrated environmental management capacities for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No thematic focus, all topics can be addressed as described in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme - Version 2.0 (available here)
	3.2 To improve capacities for the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cultural and creative industries (CCI) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCI entrepreneurship • CCI policies • Cross-sectorial cooperation and linkages of CCI to other sectors or innovative technologies
	3.3 To improve environmental management of functional urban areas to make them more liveable places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No thematic focus, all topics can be addressed as described in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme - Version 2.0 (available here)

Thematic focus of the third call - TRANSPORT

PRIORITY AXIS (PA)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (SO)	THEMATIC FOCUS
Cooperating on TRANSPORT to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE	4.1 To improve planning and coordination of regional passenger transport system for better connections to national and European transport networks	> No thematic focus , all topics can be addressed as described in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme - Version 2.0 (available here)
	4.2 To improve coordination among freight transport stakeholders for increasing multi-modal environmentally-friendly freight solutions	> No thematic focus , all topics can be addressed as described in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme - Version 2.0 (available here)

TIP More detailed information on the priority axes and specific objectives of the programme can be found in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme document (section 2 and annex I), available on www.interreg-central.eu/discover as well as in annex I of this application manual, Annex I of the application manual also contains further information on the thematic focus of the third call (including examples of actions for the concerned specific objectives). Additional information on the programme intervention logic and types/examples of outputs is provided in annexes II and III.

Actions focusing on policy-learning and implementation-oriented approaches at the transnational level will be supported across all specific objectives applicable to this call. More concretely, these will include the development and implementation of strategies and action plans, the development, testing and implementation of tools, the preparation of larger investment, the implementation of pilot actions - including pilot investments - as well as capacity building measures including training.

IV. Programme budget and budget for the third call

The Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supplemented by match funding from projects (national counterpart). The ERDF contribution to the programme amounts to around EUR 246,6 million ERDF, out of which around EUR 231 million ERDF are available for projects.

The overall programme budget including also the national counterpart amounts to around EUR 299 million.

The programme budget allocation according to priority axes is provided in the table below.

Table 2 - Funds per priority axis

	ERDF budget (EUR)	National (public and private) counterpart (EUR)	Total budget (EUR)	%
PRIORITY AXIS 1: Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive	69.042.711	14.141.278	83.183.989	28%
PRIORITY AXIS 2: Cooperating on low- carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE	44.384.600	9.090.822	53.475.422	18%
PRIORITY AXIS 3: Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE	88.769.200	18.181.643	106.950.843	36%
PRIORITY AXIS 4: Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE	29.589.733	6.060.548	35.650.281	12%
PRIORITY AXIS 5²: Technical assistance	14.794.868	4.931.623	19.726.491	6%
TOTAL	246.581.112	52.405.914	298.987.026	100%

² Priority axis 5 (technical assistance) is devoted to the functioning and management of the programme. Funds under this priority axis are not available to projects.

The ERDF co-financing rate varies according to the Members States from which project partners are coming, as presented in the following table.

Table 3 - ERDF Co-financing rates

Maximum ERDF co-financing rate	80 %	85 %	80 %
Member State	Austria, Germany, Italy	Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia	Others ³

The budget allocated to the third call for proposals is of **around 60m EUR ERDF**. An indicative ERDF allocation to the four programme priority axes is presented in the following table. When deciding for project funding, such allocation may be adapted by the Monitoring Committee according to programme needs.

PRIORITY AXIS	INDICATIVE ERDF ALLOCATION (m EUR)
PRIORITY 1 Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive	20
PRIORITY 2 Cooperating on low-carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE	10
PRIORITY 3 Cooperating on natural and cultural resources for sustainable growth in CENTRAL EUROPE	20
PRIORITY 4 Cooperating on transport to better connect CENTRAL EUROPE	10
TOTAL	60

³ For further information on the participation of partners from other countries outside the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE programme area, please refer to Part B, chapter II.1.2 Partnership requirements and location of partners.

V. Legal framework and programme related documents

The relevant documents listed below or web links to these (non-exhaustive list) are available either on <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html> (regulations and other legal acts) or on the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE website <http://www.interreg-central.eu/application-documents>.

Relevant programme documents

- Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Cooperation Programme document (version 2).

European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Key regulations

- Common provisions regulation (CPR)
Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006
- ERDF Regulation
Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006
- ETC Regulation
Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal
- EGTC Regulation
Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings

Strategic framework

- EUROPE 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Communication from the Commission, COM(2010) 2020 final
- Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020: Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions, Gödöllő, May 2011
- Sixth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion: Investment for jobs and growth. Promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities, European Commission, July 2014

Macro-regional strategies

- European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - COM(2010) 715 final
- European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2009) 248 final
- European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2014) 357 final
- European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2015) 366 final
- Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (COM(2016) 805 final) and the accompanying Commission Staff Working Document (SWD(2016) 443 final)

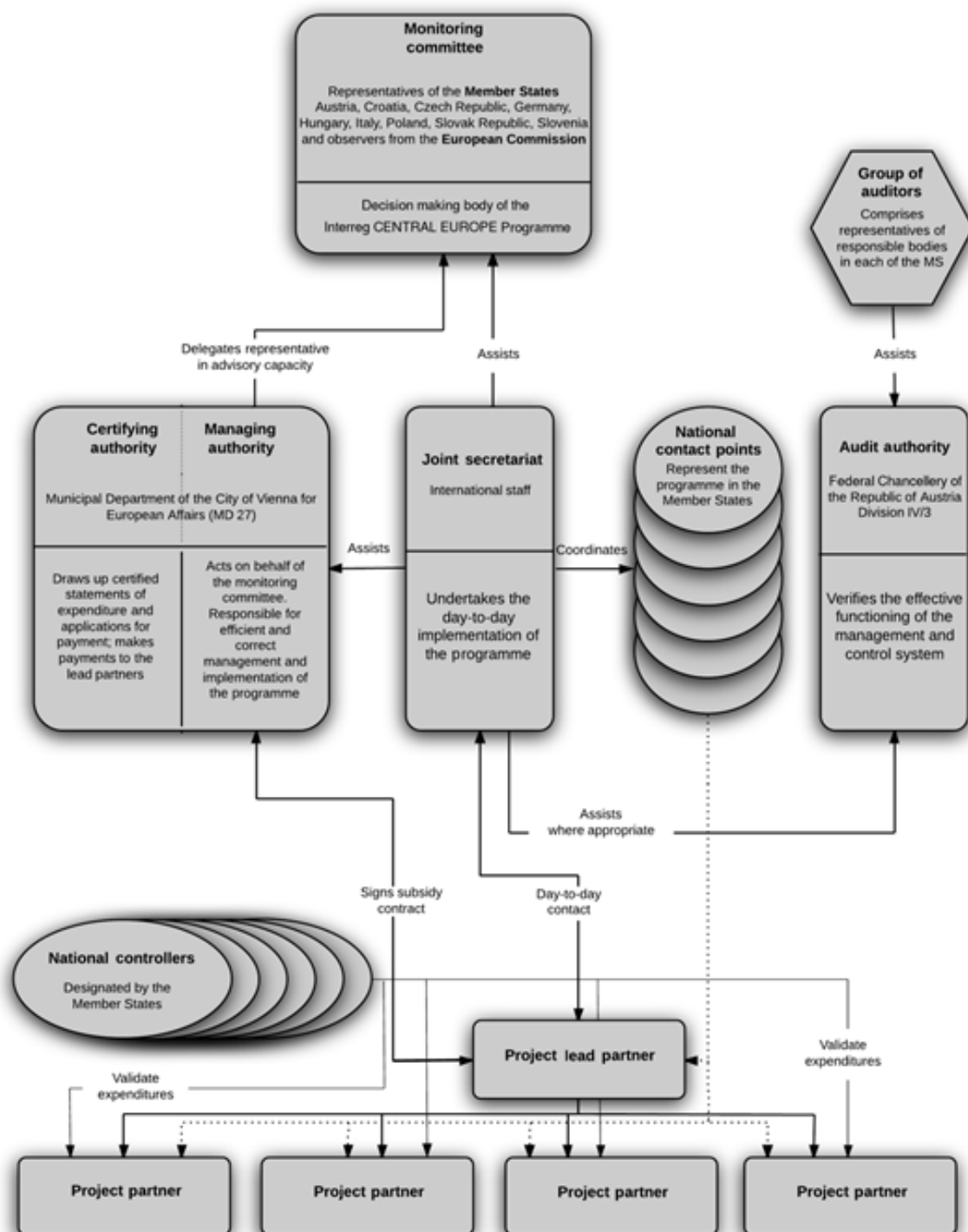
Other programme documents and relevant information

- CENTRAL EUROPE Programme: Results of the regional analysis (document analysis, online survey, interviews, SWOT), ÖIR/ IGSO PAS, September 2012
- Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme Communication Strategy, September 2015
- Thematic studies analysing results of CENTRAL EUROPE projects 2007-2013 (Innovation, transport, environment, energy, demographic change, cultural heritage), 2013/2014.
- CENTRAL EUROPE 2007-2013 Portraits (Innovation, transport, environment, energy, demographic change, cultural heritage), June 2014,
<http://www.interreg-central.eu/discover>
- CENTRAL EUROPE 2007-2013 project output library, available at
<http://www.central2013.eu/documents-2007-2013/output-library>
- CENTRAL EUROPE 2007-2013 approved projects, available at
<http://www.central2013.eu/nc/projects-2007-2013/approved-projects/>

VI. Management structure

The Member States participating in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme have established a shared management system to manage, coordinate and supervise the implementation of the programme (as illustrated in figure 3).

Figure 3 - Programme management structure



Monitoring committee

The monitoring committee steers the programme and ensures the quality and effectiveness of its implementation and approves projects for funding. It is composed of representatives of the Member States of the programme. The list of the monitoring committee members is available on the programme website.

Managing authority (with additional functions of certifying authority)

The managing authority is responsible for the management and implementation of the programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and in line with EU regulations ruling the ERDF funds. The managing authority will also carry out the functions of the certifying authority, i.e. certifying statement of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the Commission. It is also responsible for ERDF payments to project lead partners.

Audit authority and group of auditors

The main task of the audit authority is to ensure that audits are carried out on the management and control systems of appropriate sample of projects and on the annual accounts according to internationally accepted audit standards in order to verify the expenditures declared. Audits on projects will be spread during the entire programme lifetime. In line with Article 25(2) of the ETC regulation, the audit authority will be assisted by a group of auditors comprising of representatives of responsible bodies of each Member State participating in the programme.

Joint secretariat

The joint secretariat assists the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions and undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the programme. It also provides guidance to project applicants and partners.

Network of national contact points

Member States participating in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme have established national contact points representing the programme on national, regional and local level. In cooperation with the joint secretariat, the network of contact points provides information to potential applicants, advises and assists project partners, informs stakeholders on achievements of the programme and supports the national and transnational programme management.

Contact details of the national contact points are provided at
<http://www.interreg-central.eu/contacts>

National controllers

In line with Article 125(4) and 125(5) of the CPR as well as Article 23(4) of the ETC Regulation, each Member State has set up a control system making it possible to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared and the compliance of such expenditure with EU rules, programme rules and national rules.

For this purpose, each Member State has designated controllers that are responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each lead and project partner participating in a project located on its territory.

For detailed information on the control requirements in your country, please visit <http://www.interreg-central.eu/national-information>