

# IMPLEMENTATION OF E-COHESION

## General characteristics

 No. of **targeted Interreg programmes** covering ERDF/CF: **101**

 No. of **e-Cohesion systems**: **22**

### At a glance:

**e-Cohesion systems:** 22 interregional systems identified.

**Introduction of the systems:** Most systems operational between 2015 and 2017.

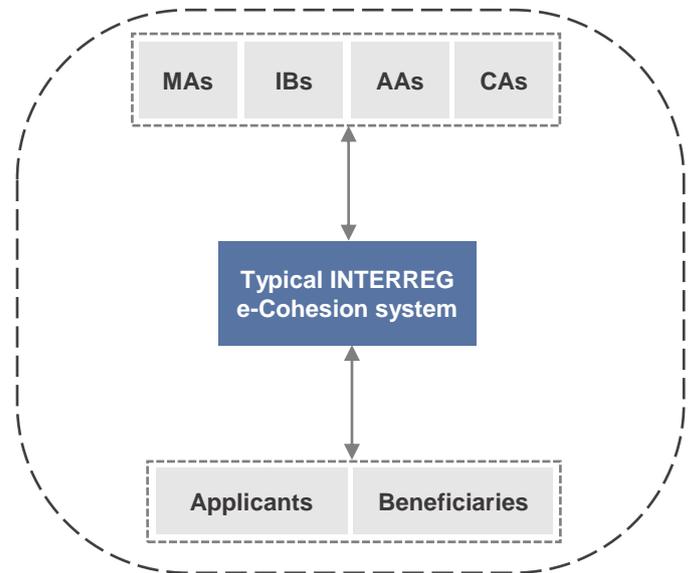
**Implementation mode:** Decentralised. Most systems cover one OP. Four systems cover more than one OP. 36 of 101 OPs use the same system (eMS).

**Use during 2021-2027:** Most OPs introduce a new system.

## Context and structure of e-Cohesion

- INTERREG's implementation of e-Cohesion is **decentralised** – 22 systems were identified; 36 of the 101 OPs use the community monitoring system eMS of Interact, of which each OP uses its own separate instance.
- National e-Cohesion systems that also manage Interreg OPs are not included in this analysis – they cover 35 of 101 OPs;
- No systems are integrated with the **European Commission's System for Fund Management (SFC2014)**;
- Only 1 system (eMS) is integrated with the keep.eu system for INTERREG projects;
- In 18 of 22 systems, all major **authorities** and intermediate bodies access the data submitted by applicants and beneficiaries through the respective OPs e-Cohesion system;
- 18 of 22 systems support not only the key processes related to implementation, but they also handle the **application process**.

### 101 INTERREG Operational Programmes



## Key principles of e-Cohesion: interoperability and once-only encoding

 **Principles: Extensive reuse of information; limited interoperability with EU tools.**

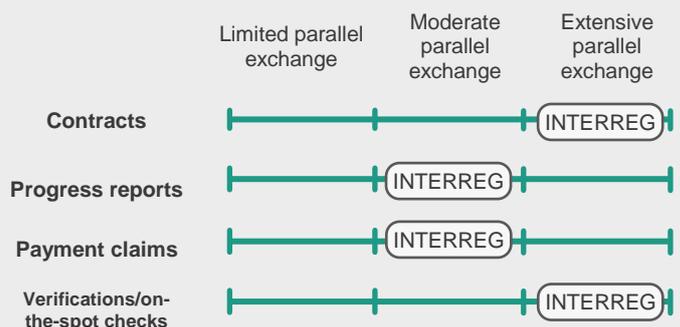
Most INTERREG e-Cohesion systems **support once-only encoding**. Data and documents provided by beneficiaries are shared with all relevant authorities.

The systems **extensively support the pre-filling of information**:

- Information is pre-filled based on data entered during project application and previous steps of the operation;
- **The pre-filling of information is highly valued** – nearly all INTERREG beneficiary respondents aware of this functionality perceived it as useful to their operations (resulting in efficiency gains and reducing the number of errors).

 **Parallel data exchanges: Moderate exchange of information outside of the system.**

Beneficiaries overall indicate that there are **moderate to extensive parallel data exchanges** taking place outside INTERREG systems.



## Implementation of e-Cohesion features



**Key processes:** Support of project cycle from start to finish.

- **Most INTERREG e-Cohesion systems support all operations related to project application and implementation** (progress reports, modification requests, payment claims and management verifications / on-the-spot checks).



**Functionalities:** Support for all required functionalities, including interactive forms.

- **Most INTERREG e-Cohesion systems support all functionalities which ensure user-friendliness** (interactive forms, automatic calculations, checks for incorrect/missing data, system-generated alerts, online status tracking, access to already processed data, e-signature);
- **Most beneficiary respondents aware of the functionalities provided by INTERREG e-Cohesion systems consider them as useful**, meaning that they result in notable time gains and reduce the number of errors for their users.

## Results of the introduction of e-Cohesion

### Effectiveness – results and simplification

- The introduction of e-Cohesion systems has resulted in **extensive improvements and simplification**;
- Most beneficiary respondents using INTERREG systems agree that their introduction has led to significant improvements in various areas and has simplified the way they handle information compared with paper-based processes or email exchanges;
- **INTERREG systems extensively improved information exchanges between authorities and beneficiaries** – most respondents report that their use has reduced repeated transmission of the same information.



### Efficiency – benefits vs costs

- **The benefits of using INTERREG e-Cohesion systems compared to its costs are extensive** with regard to beneficiaries' key processes;
- Most beneficiaries indicate that the **benefits (e.g., reduced administrative burden, simplification)** of using the system outweigh any associated costs (the time and effort required to use it).

### User-friendliness

- **Beneficiaries using INTERREG e-Cohesion systems report a moderate level of user-friendliness** – some users indicated that the system should be easier to use;
- In general, features that are particularly appreciated include: The **helpdesk services** which provide useful assistance and the **e-signature** function which helps to save resources and increases security.

