

**INTERREG III B Atlantic Area Community Initiative Programme 2000 - 2006**  
**Regional Council of Poitou-Charentes - INTERREG III B Atlantic Area Joint Secretari**

**Carrying out of a survey on the quality of the cooperation  
 for the INTERREG III B Atlantic Area programme and  
 projects**

**Analysis of the findings received on 30 October 2007**

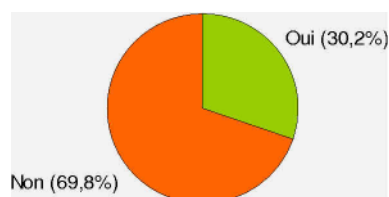
On 30 October 2007, of the 714 beneficiaries of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Community Initiative Programme, 370 beneficiaries, belonging to 65 different projects, answered the questionnaire. The overall answering rate for the questionnaire was good, at over 74%.

The majority of the beneficiaries who took part in the survey (nearly 70%) are taking part for the first time in the INTERREG programme. More than half of them, however, are currently involved in other cooperation projects and thus have a certain experience of cooperation.

**participation in previous programmes**

Have you already received aid in the framework of previous INTERREG programmes?  
 Answer rate: 97.2%

Yes	108
No	250
Total	358



**participation in other cooperation projects**

Are you currently participating in other cooperation projects?  
 Answer rate: 98.4%

Yes	197
No	165
Total	362



## The way the partnership was set up is appreciated

The setting up of the partnership, based for most of the partners on their professional network (40%), is regarded overall as satisfactory (61.8%), or very satisfactory (31.2%), by the beneficiaries surveyed. Two main reasons are given: the good collaboration and complementarity existing between the partners, and the intervention of the lead managers who seem to have for the most part carried out their triple role of steering, organising and keeping in contact with the partners.

### setting up the partnership

Are you satisfied overall with the way the partnership was set up?

Answer rate: 97.5%

Very satisfied	112	31,2%
Satisfied	222	61,8%
Dissatisfied	22	6,2%
Very dissatisfied	3	0,8%
Total	359	100,0%

**75%**

of the beneficiaries surveyed would go about it in the same way if they had to set up another INTERREG project

Moreover, the answers given underline the importance of the prior face-to-face meetings between the lead manager and all the partners. In fact:

- The great majority of lead managers (83.5%) and partners (67.5%) met face-to-face before the submission of the file. This was cited as one of the approaches that explain the solid grounding of the partnership.
- Among the partners who did not meet their lead manager when the partnership was being set up (32.5%) and who used more indirect modes of communication (mostly e-mails and telephone contacts), nearly one third pointed out that this certainly harmed the quality of the definition of their project.

*Carrying out of a survey on the quality of the cooperation for the INTERREG III B Atlantic Area programme and projects*

## A joint definition of projects that improves their content

The vast majority of partners (90%) and lead managers (80%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the degree of involvement of each one in the genesis of the project.

### involvement of the lead manager

Partners: Are you satisfied with your degree of involvement of the lead manager in the genesis of the project?

Answer rate: 95.8%

Very satisfied	108	37,7%
Satisfied	150	52,2%
Dissatisfied	27	9,4%
Very dissatisfied	2	0,7%
Total	288	100,0%

### involvement of the partners

Lead managers: Do you think that the partners were involved satisfactorily in the genesis of the project?

Answer rate: 98,5%

Yes, absolutely	22	32,5%
Yes, somewhat	31	47,1%
No, not really	14	20,4%
Not at all	0	0,0%
Total	67	100,0%

Nearly 70% of the beneficiaries say that the content of the projects was drawn up jointly. In most cases, a group of partners drew up the content of the project and then approached other partners.

## “Good contacts” between partners ensuring satisfactory joint management of projects

of respondents state that, when the project was being drawn up, the exchanges of experiences, knowledge and points of view between partners, as well as the mobilisation of the skills of each side, improved the content or the ambition of the projects.

68%

- This partnership added value was expressed particularly through:
- a more significant role allocated to European priorities, notably environmental issues. For example: the reinforcement of certain aspects of the project to take better account of the environment, integration of the environment in the themes treated, taking environmental issues on board in the determination of the industrial revitalisation strategy, discussion on the sustainable management of the resources used and waste, identification of new methods more protective of the environment, etc.
- the transfer of instruments between partners. For example: the contribution of complementary methodologies (surveys, production systems, etc.) and know-how between the different partners, the contribution of technical knowledge on the materials and methods used, exchanges of best practices in the transfer of technologies and other specific best practices (communication, quality approaches, etc.), devising joint tools (guide to best practices, websites, etc.), etc.

“In the day-to-day management of the project, the partnership is expressed in the involvement of the partners in the decision-making, implementation and coordination processes, with the general coordination provided by the lead managers.

Within the same project, the contacts between partners are relatively frequent, several times per month on average for 69% of them via e-mails or telephone contacts. Face-to-face meetings between all or some of the partners (steering committee, notably), however, are less frequent: two to three per year on average for 86.6% of the persons questioned.

These frequencies are very heterogeneous within the same project, as the nature of and the need for communication varies from one partner to the next, but they seem conducive to the proper implementation of the project for over 90% of the beneficiaries questioned

68%

% of beneficiaries questioned say they have “good” operational and codecisional contacts with their partners.

...difficulties arising from the partnership

A certain number of difficulties arising from the partnership were identified in the different stages of the implementation of the projects by over one half of the beneficiaries questioned (about 55%):

- differences of an administrative and technical order between countries (difference in institutional organisation or functioning) or between partners (difference in capacity) sometimes complicate the definition of projects ;
- the heterogeneous nature of the national and regional management systems, as well as the differences in working habits and customs sometimes create obstacles in the day-to-day management of projects..

Overall, lead managers and partners are satisfied with:

- their respective ability to meet deadlines. However, about a quarter of lead managers point out that reminders are sometimes necessary to obtain certain documentary proofs.
- the explanations given to them by the institutions managing the programme (joint secretariat, national correspondent, etc.). However, the answers of the 15% of beneficiaries who are “dissatisfied” helps to identify certain points where improvement is possible: the times set for replying, certification and payment are sometimes too long, and the turnover of personnel makes it less easy to monitor the project.

### responses to the requests of lead managers

Lead manager: how would you rate the answers of the Joint Secretariat /Management Authority to your requests for support or information, etc.?

Answer rate: 100,0%

Muito satisfatórias	31	46,2%
Satisfatórias	35	51,5%
Insatisfatórias	2	2,3%
Muito insatisfatórias	0	0,0%
Total	68	100,0%

### responses to the requests of partners

Partner: how would you rate the answers of the national correspondents/contact points to your requests for support or information, etc.?

Answer rate: 96,7%

Very satisfactory	78	26,8%
Satisfactor	174	59,9%
Unsatisfactory	36	12,5%
Very unsatisfactory	2	0,8%
Total	291	100,0%

## Results that correspond overall to the set objectives

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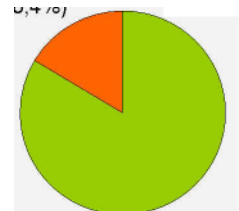
### results aimed at/results obtained

Do the results obtained correspond overall to those aimed at?

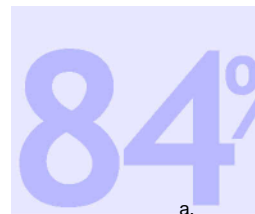
Answer rate: 97,4%

No (16,4%)

Yes	300
No	59
Total	358



Yes (83,6%)



of the beneficiaries questioned think that the results obtained by implementing the cooperation project correspond overall to the objectives aimed at.

The failure to achieve the objective for 16.4% of the beneficiaries questioned has two main reasons: firstly, difficulties inherent in the implementation of the project (66%) such as the lack of human resources to carry the project through successfully or the lack of precision in the definition of the initial objectives, which are points calling for special vigilance, and, secondly, difficulties arising from factors external to the project (34%)

# Sustainable cooperation

94%

of the beneficiaries questioned said that, when the ongoing project is completed, they will be able to continue to work with all or some of their partners

The pursuit of cooperation is contemplated by 66.7% of beneficiaries who intend to apply for a new public subsidy, or use their own funds in 27.7% of cases.

In accordance with the objective of the programme to develop transnational cooperation, more than half of the beneficiaries questioned (55.3%) state that the realisation of their project has enabled them to set up structures, or more generally networks of partners capable of working together on a cooperation project, and capable of financing themselves in 41% of cases.

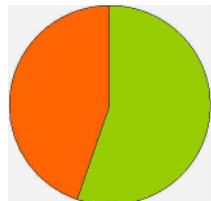
## setting up structures or networks

Has the realisation of the project led to the setting up of structures or networks capable of working together on a cooperation project?

Answer rate: 94,7%

Yes	193
No	156
Total	349

No (44,7%)



Yes (55,3%)

Once their ongoing project has been completed, over half of the partners are ready to undertake another cooperation project, with or without funding for some of them, which points to the real interest in this approach and its results.

# A partnership providing benefits

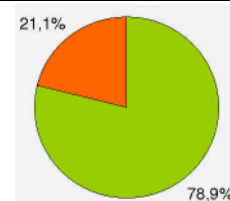
The vast majority of the beneficiaries questioned believe that the partnership has been beneficial for the completion of the project, notably for the definition of its content.

## partnership: benefits or pressure?

Overall, do you think that the partnership for your project brought benefits or created pressure? on the day-to-day management of the project

Answer rate: 94,7%

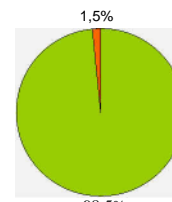
brought benefits	275
created pressure	73
Total	348



on the definition of the content of the project

Answer rate: 96,8%

brought benefits	351
created pressure	5
Total	356



98%

of beneficiaries questioned would not have undertaken the same project with the same partners without the FEDER INTERREG funding

## ...proposals to improve the quality of the cooperation

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**The point of views of the beneficiaries:**

**The beneficiaries questioned made a certain number of proposals to improve the quality of the cooperation. Their analysis identified 5 main types of proposals, in order of importance:**

- The improvement and simplification of the systems of administrative and financial management. In particular: the reduction of payment times, the simplification of administrative formalities, the reduction of the reply times, etc.
- Improved communication between partners, particularly via more frequent or mandatory face-to-face meetings between all the partners of a project. This recurring proposal concerns all the phases of the project, but more specifically the setting up of the partnership and the definition of the project's content.
- Others: this category groups various types of proposals, relating for example to the themes of the projects, improved ways of selecting partners, more human resources for the management of projects (notably for the lead managers), a necessary improvement in the motivation of certain partners, the development of quality control, longer times for the implementation of projects, etc.

Improvement in the training (languages, management, etc.) and the information on the projects and their management: production of a

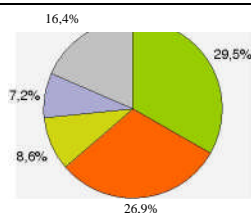
- methodological guide, greater participation of the management authorities at meetings, proposal for training particularly at the start of projects (project management bases, linguistic bases, etc.).

The development of exchanges and transfers of experience with other cooperation projects or programmes: production of regular

- newsletters, organisation of meetings between lead managers, etc.

### Proposals for improvements

Improvement and simplification of the administrative and financial management	47
Improvement of the communication and more frequent face-to-face meetings between the partners	43
Improvement of the training and the information on the projects and their management	14
Development of exchanges and transfers of experience with other projects or programmes	12
Others	26



Answer rate: 42,4%

Analysis of the proposals for improvements by the management authority:

The analysis of the results and suggestions received made by the management authority points to 3 main proposals for improving the quality of the cooperation, which overlap with the principal points of view of the beneficiaries and set them out in a more concrete and operational form:

1. Improvement and simplification of the administrative and financial management systems:
  - reinforce the capacity of the national authorities in charge of handling the refunding requests (check the service) and providing support for beneficiaries ;
  - formalise an audit track (description of the management system).
2. Improvement of the communication between partners:
  - Increase the number of face-to-face meetings between partners;
  - Handle the problem of the language barrier (training, translation and interpreting);
  - Encourage contacts between the lead managers of different projects.
3. Improvement in the training:
  - Systematically train the new lead managers.