

A key philosophical question in the life of every person or organisation consists of defining who we are, why we exist, and what we intend to achieve within our lifetime.

The following stories of Interreg aim to show off what we do, why and for who. Through marking our 30th anniversary, we hope to inspire everyone within the Interreg community for many more years to come.

Now more than ever, the social nature of people and those who work and act "together" remind us that our work is priceless. And that even when times are hard, even in the face of paperwork, illness, social conflicts or daily struggles, it is all worth it.

This is a simple introduction to our world of dreams, hopes and beliefs. We invite you to read it, share it and enjoy it. This exhibition and its accompanying e-book bring to life the "stories of people working, acting and cooperating... TOGETHER FOR ALL OF US."

The EU has made it possible for people and resources to travel freely within its boundaries, but it has not erased borders, nor eliminated cultural, religious and linguistic identities.

Borders may have been made invisible, but they still impact the lives of millions of citizens.

Like a gardener carefully watering their plants, the EU Cohesion Policy is dedicated to growing the seeds of cohesion and solidarity among EU countries.

Interreg is one of the instruments created to bring this vision of a united Europe to life – like a magnificent tree in the garden of peace.

We are but one tree in the forest of all EU programmes and funds that work tirelessly towards improving the lives of EU citizens.

We are part of a rich ecosystem where everything is connected in an endless cycle. Rooted in the very soil of every nation and region, the Interreg tree expands its branches into hundreds of programmes.

Each branch gives life to thousands of projects, like flowers destined to blossom – planting the seeds of a greener tomorrow.

We are helped in our mission by a myriad of local partners who – like bees carrying pollen – allow us to grow stronger and expand our reach further.

This is us. The Interreg community. We bring together professionals, public officials, academics and Interreg employees. We are united by the deep belief that no border should ever prevent the exchange of resources, ideas and knowledge. We work together across and beyond borders, to find common solutions to shared problems.

We find richness in our differences and opportunity in our challenges. We believe in sharing ideas and know-how, in learning from each other rather than reinventing the wheel, in order to grow together as people, as regions, and as the Interreg community.

OUR VALUES:

Together is better.

At Interreg, we value cooperation above all. That means working together as equals, regardless of borders. It means understanding that together we are greater than the sum of our parts.

We see cooperation as a means towards sustainable problem-solving; working together to achieve long-term benefits rather than short-sighted gains.

We value people who respect each other, regardless of differences, who include rather than exclude, and who ultimately put the wellbeing of the many before the interests of the few.

OUR ROLE:

Find and implement common solutions to shared problems.

Environmental, technological and social matters do not stop at geopolitical frontiers. This often creates shared challenges that affect citizens on all sides.

Whenever the safety, prosperity or freedom of an EU citizen is at stake, we will be there to find and implement common solutions to shared problems, one project at a time.

Within the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy, we bring together the most capable problem-solvers and give them the tools to turn their idea into a reality.

Beyond project funding, we provide guidance, and technical and administrative resources, skills and connections.

OUR MISSION:

Creating a culture of cooperation across borders.

We are on a mission to bring to life the vision of the EU – to ensure peace and prosperity for all its citizens – by creating a culture of cooperation across borders, in the EU and among its neighbours.

Project after project, we lay the foundations for collaborative thinking, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving to become the norm. We strive to support and empower others to take action in the hope of establishing a deeply-rooted culture of cooperation. We are creating the basis for a European Union, where one day this organisation might no longer be needed.

OUR VISION:

A European Union where people naturally cooperate across borders.

We envision a European Union in which all people will naturally work together regardless of physical, cultural or legal borders, to find long-term solutions, helping each other grow and prosper. Although our responsibility is towards EU citizens, it is a dream for everyone within the Interreg community to inspire people around the world to cooperate and overcome their differences to build together a world where borders become a little more "invisible".

We strive to improve life in the EU through cooperation across and beyond borders, one project at a time, just as we have for the last 30 years. Today we continue, for our future and for the future generations of Europeans.