

IMPACT

An Interreg Mechanism for Promoting Active Communities and Territories

IMPACT is a two-year European Commission–funded initiative to strengthen community-led local development (CLLD) in cross-border regions.



The challenge

Border regions often underperform compared to non-border regions

In 2023, unemployment was around 6% higher in border regions than in non-border ones ([OECD, 2024](#)).

In 2021, GDP per capita in EU border regions stood at only 86% of the EU average ([OECD, 2024](#)).

Structural barriers hold back cross-border development

Legislative, administrative and language differences raise costs for firms and limit labour mobility.

Limited cross-border co-operation can strain investment, limit public service delivery and reduce effective responses to emergencies.

Community-led local development (CLLD) can help meet cross-border challenges

- Despite its wide use across the EU, including in the [LEADER programme](#), CLLD remains rarely applied in cross-border contexts, pointing to significant untapped potential.
- Addressing cross-border challenges, such as limited access to healthcare and slow economic development, often requires local solutions designed and delivered through co-ordinated action on all sides of a shared border.
- CLLD is a proven, place-based and participatory tool that helps mobilise actors on all sides of a shared border and translate common priorities into tangible projects.

About the 2026–2027 IMPACT project

IMPACT will strengthen CLLD in cross-border regions across the EU and in select neighbouring countries by supporting local cross-border partnerships in the design of joint, place-based strategies, with the ultimate goal of improving resident well-being.

Main objectives

1

Support 30 pilot cross-border regions
strengthen governance partnerships and adopt
joint CLLD strategies.

2

Generate sustained support from Interreg
programmes for community-led cross-border
development.

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What will the 30 pilot cross-border regions gain through IMPACT?



Tailored expert support to design and adopt a practical cross-border CLLD strategy.

Access to peer learning and exchange among pilot territories, Interreg programmes and other relevant actors.

Advice on: 1) translating the CLLD strategies into concrete projects and 2) mobilising project funding.

The project will also develop **practical tools, guidance and recommendations that can be used by non-pilot cross-border territories** and other actors interested in supporting community-led cross-border development.

How to engage with IMPACT

Apply as a pilot cross-border region

- **A first call for applications will be launched in February 2026.** Two additional calls are planned for April and June 2026.
- In total, up to **30 cross-border regions** will be selected.
- The calls are open to **regional and local institutions/organisations** with a legal entity in border regions (e.g. local governments, tourism offices, LAGs, EGTCs).

Register as a CLLD expert

- Each pilot community will be supported by CLLD experts.
- Experts selected by the OECD will provide **training and coaching for the design of cross-border CLLD strategies.**
- Experts and regions will be **matched** based on expertise, language skills and availability.

Stay informed and engaged

Receive information on:

- **Calls for applications** to select the pilot regions.
- **Calls for applications for CLLD experts** to support the pilot regions.
- **Webinars and in-person events** open to public participation.
- Publication of **new analytical tools and analysis.**

Find [here](#) more information on the calls, including eligibility criteria.

Experts can register [here](#).

Register [here](#) to stay informed.

Explore relevant OECD work

- **Country work**, including with Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Spain
- Cross-border Governance [Analytical Framework](#) and [Assessment Tool](#)
- OECD Cross-border Governance [website](#)
- **Thematic reports**



GET IN TOUCH!

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