

Yearly implementation report - 2016
INTERREG Caraïbes programme
Briefing for the general public

I – Introduction : What is INTERREG Caraïbes ?

A European program to stimulate cooperation in the Caribbean.

Over the past 27 years, INTERREG programs have sought to strengthen cooperation between institutional partners and project holders on both sides of a common border or within a common geographical space in Europe. For the period 2014-2020, there are 107 European territorial cooperation programs. INTERREG Caraïbes, which has existed since 2000, is a specific cooperation program: it aims to strengthen cooperation between European territories (Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique and Saint-Martin) and Caribbean territories and states (more than 40)!

A programme to strengthen the integration of the French Caribbean territories in their regional space.

INTERREG Caraïbes is a partnership programme: it is managed by the Regional Council of Guadeloupe in conjunction with European partners (the Territorial Collectivity of Guyana, the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique, the Saint Martin Community, representatives of the French state and the European Commission) and Caribbean partners (represented by the following international regional organizations: Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, CARIFORUM, Association of Caribbean States, Association of Caribbean OCTs). Through regular exchanges between the partners, the programme contributes to the integration of the Caribbean area.

An answer to the issues experienced by all the territories in the Caribbean zone.

The INTERREG Caraïbes co-operation strategy was defined jointly by the programme partners. It covers areas of specific concern or of priority interest for the entire zone. The areas of cooperation are: employment and innovation, natural risks, the natural and cultural environment, public health, renewable energy, and human and capacity building.

Structural cooperation projects with win-win benefits.

INTERREG Caraïbes supports structuring projects, that is to say, which adequately respond to one or more issues in the cooperation area and requiring a rich and relevant partnership. INTERREG Caraïbes projects are co-operative projects, whose beneficiaries are fairly distributed

among the partners, and quite different from export assistance projects. These projects are led by an EU project leader with sound administrative and financial stability and solidity. The project holders (project lead partner and project partners) have various origins: public institutions, local authorities, associations, businesses, universities, research and innovation bodies, civil society stakeholders, etc.

Management and support as close as possible to project holders.

The Managing Authority, the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, and the Joint Secretariat backup the projects and advise the beneficiaries from the early idea to the closure of their project. To make the programme well-known and embraced by all, the programme managers have created a Regional Contact Points (RCP) system. These RCPs, located in the partnering territories, act as local promotion agents and advisors to the would-be and actual project holders.

II - Landmarks of the programme in 2016:

The INTERREG Caraïbes programme was adopted by the European Commission on December 1st, 2015. 2016 was therefore mainly devoted to the institutional and operational implementation of the programme.

Implementation of the programme governance.

The partners met for the first time in a Monitoring Committee in April 2016 in Guadeloupe. The rules of procedure of the committees were adopted on that occasion. They met again in Saint Lucia in December 2016 to launch the programme. During this event, the Monitoring Committee met again, as did the first Selection Committee, which gave an opinion on the pre-projects submitted. In parallel with these Committees, the Regional Contact Points met as a technical working group in October 2016. This working group will meet regularly to ensure that partners keep ongoing contacts.

Launch of the first Call for Expression of Interest (CEI).

The first CEI was launched from October 25 to November 18, 2016. For this first call for project ideas, all the program axes were opened to proposals so as to launch the programming.

This first CEI received 114 pre-projects, covering all the cooperation priorities, as follows:

- 43 projects for the Employment and Innovation axis;
- 11 projects for the Natural Hazards axis;
- 35 projects for the Natural and Cultural Environment axis;
- 8 projects for the Public Health axis;
- 4 projects for the Renewable Energies axis;
- and 13 projects for the Human Capital axis.

Meeting of the first selection committee, December 13, 2016.

The Selection Committee met for the first time in Saint Lucia, following the CEI, to give a notice of relevance on the pre-projects submitted. At the end of the committee, 30 pre-projects received a positive notice of relevance and will be accompanied towards the formalization of a complete application which will be submitted in early 2017.

These projects fit into the Thematic priority areas as follows:

- 15 projects including 7 in TF and 8 in TN for the Employment and Innovation axis;
- 4 projects in TN for the Natural Risks axis;
- 5 projects in TN for the Natural & Cultural Environment axis;
- 4 projects in TN for the Public Health axis;
- 2 projects in TN for the Human Capital axis.

Communication.

The launch of the first call for expression of interest (25 October to 18 November 2016) and the launch of the program in Saint Lucia (12, 13 and 14 December 2016) were apexes of communication on the program. They provided potential project leaders and the general public with an unprecedented familiarization with the program and its features.

EDF-ERDF Articulation.

Several European funds are dedicated to cooperation in the area: the ERDF (used in the framework of INTERREG Caribbean in particular, intended for EU project leaders) and the European Development Fund (EDF) for non-EU project leaders. In order to strengthen the articulation between these funds and to enable all the partners to be on equal footing in the programme, an additional 2.94 million euro of EDF was delegated to the Managing Authority of INTERREG Caraïbes. This will enable the programme to support both European (through the ERDF) and non-European (through the EDF) project holders. During their December 2016 meeting, the partners defined the strategic orientations for this EDF-ERDF articulation, an unprecedented mechanism to be implemented jointly.