

Interreg Caribbean

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION

Ex-ante and Environmental Strategic Assessment of the 2014-2020 INTERREG V Caribbean Operational Programme

SUMMARY

December 2015

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Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the final ex-ante evaluation for the 2014-2020 European ETC Caribbean INTERREG OP.

It is based on the following documents:

- Caribbean INTERREG V Operational Programme for 2014-2020 – Version dated September 2015.
- Final ex-ante report for the Caribbean INTERREG V Operational Programme for 2014-2020 – amended version dated September 2015.
- Final report of the strategic environmental assessment for the Caribbean INTERREG V Operational Programme for 2014-2020 – amended version dated September 2015.
- Joint opinion of the environmental authorities on the strategic environmental assessment for the Caribbean INTERREG V Operational Programme for 2014-2020, n°15-153 dated 21 May 2015.

1. The ex-ante evaluation and strategic environmental assessment

1.1. The ex-ante evaluation: methodology

EU Regulations require programmes to carry out an **ex-ante evaluation** in order to provide an independent opinion on the strategic coherence of the operational programme *while* it is being designed. The ex-ante evaluation takes into consideration:

- the strategies of the European Union and of other programmes being implemented in EU territories in the Caribbean area;
- the programme's objectives in light of the amount of funding allocated;
- the suitability and clarity of the programme's proposed indicators;
- the quality of arrangements for delivering and monitoring the programme.

As required by EU regulation, the evaluation of the Caribbean Interreg programme proceeded in step with the design of the programme and informed it on the basis of an **interactive** and **iterative** methodology. The evaluators examined the programme documents as they were drafted and provided their opinion along with recommendations, which the programme drafting team integrated in the OP where they deemed appropriate.

Progress in the evaluation was therefore dependent on progress in the design and drafting of the programme.

In parallel with the ex-ante evaluation, a strategic environmental assessment was also carried out and which was (1) submitted to public environmental authorities and (2) made available to the public for consultation.

The ex-ante evaluation integrated the final environmental assessment and by doing so completed the SEA process.

Table 1 – Ex-ante evaluation timetable

Programme drafting stage	Timetable for the drafting team	Handover of EAE deliverables	Timetable for the present EAE
Integrated strategy	Mid-October 2013	Report Step 1	End October
Objectives and priorities	February 2014	Report Step 2	End February 2104
Refinement of the strategy	April – July 2014		
Implementation system	July 2014	Report Step 3	End July 2014
Draft OP	End August 2014	Draft Report	Start September 2014
Final official version of the OP to be uploaded to the SFC	December 2015	Final report with final modifications	21 January 2015
Modification of the OP following consultations	Submit April 2015	Final Report completed	Submit May 2015
Refinement of the OP following feedback from the EC	Submit May 2015	Final report modified	Submit June 2015
Update following SEA consultation process	July 2015	Final Report final	August 2015

1.2. The SEA: methodology

The obligation to carry out a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was introduced in the previous round of European structural funds (2007-2013). The requirement stems from Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, which was incorporated into French law in the Environment Code. Its purpose is to improve the quality of plans or programmes by incorporating environmental considerations during their design and adoption. In accordance with the above Directive, the Caribbean SEA focuses on Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, and Saint-Martin.

The production of the Caribbean SEA involved the following 9 sequential work steps:

1. Study of the programme and its cooperation area
2. Determination of potential effects (*“environmental screening”*)
3. Formulation of recommendations and proposals for remedial actions
4. Assessment of programme implementation/monitoring system
5. Intermediate environmental report
6. Environmental Authority’s opinion
7. Public consultation
8. Final environmental report

9. Monitoring the effects of implementation

1.3. The Operational Programme: an iterative and participative process

The OP was designed and drafted over a 2-year period. It involved the participation of: beneficiary French regions and local authorities; Caribbean international cooperation organisations; French decentralised central government offices; as well as socio-economic stakeholders and civil society. This participation involved electronic communication, but also regular face-to-face meetings, which enabled the stakeholders to:

- perform a needs analysis;
- identify the challenges & opportunities for cooperation;
- select investment priorities and specific objectives;
- decide on budget allocations for the selected priorities;
- specify arrangements for implementation, including the programme's monitoring and evaluation systems.

In parallel with this process, the ex-ante & SEA evaluators performed their analyses and provided their opinions at different stages of the developing OP in order to enable its drafters to amend its content where deemed useful.

2. Non-technical summary of the Operational Programme

The Caribbean Interreg OP for 2014-2020 is part of Europe's European territorial cooperation policy for this period, which is designed to contribute to delivering Europe's Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Caribbean Interreg OP (2014-2020) is a single document with a two-strand architecture:

1. A transnational strand (TN) for Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Saint Martin with the rest of the Greater Caribbean;
2. A cross-border strand (TF) for Guadeloupe and Martinique with the countries of the OECS.

Table 2 – The Programme's Challenges and Priorities

Selection of 5 challenges from the needs analysis	12 Priorities	CB	TN
Challenge n°1 – Create wealth and employment, through economic diversification and strengthening the economic competitiveness of the Caribbean's economies	Priority 1 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment	X	
	Priority 2 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment		X
Challenge n°3 – Enhance risk prevention and management capacities	Priority 3 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks	X	
	Priority 4 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks		X
Challenge n°4 – Protect the environment, capitalise on cultural and natural heritage and deliver the energy transition	Priority 5 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean's natural and cultural assets	X	
	Priority 6 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean's natural and cultural assets		X
	Priority 9 – Support the development of renewable energies in the Eastern Caribbean	X	
Challenge n°5 – Strengthen human capital	Priority 10 – Strengthen human capital		X
Challenge n°6 – Social inclusion, health and improving living conditions	Priority 7 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues	X	
	Priority 8 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues		X
	Priority 11 – Technical Assistance (CB)	X	X
	Priority 12 – Technical Assistance (TN)		X

These priorities break down into 18 Specific Objectives (SO), which are structured under 6 ERDF Thematic Objectives (TO) and 8 ERDF Investment Priorities.

Table 3 – Summary overview of the operational programme

Priorities	TO	IP	Specific Objectives corresponding to the Investment Priorities	ERDF (CB)	%	ERDF (TN)	%
Priority 1 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment (CB)	TO3	IP3d	SO1 - Support the economic diversification of the different territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products	7 453 000 €	18.1%		
		IP3d	SO2 - Create a business context that stimulates trade between the Caribbean territories				
Priority 2 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment (TN)	TO3	IP3d	SO3 - Support the economic diversification of the different territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products			4 361 600 €	18.8%
		IP3d	SO4 - Create a business context that stimulates trade between the Caribbean territories				
Priority 3 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks (CB)	TO5	IP5B	SO5 - Increase territorial capacity to manage/respond to natural risks/disasters	8 631 000 €	21.0%		
Priority 4 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks (TN)	TO5	IP5B	SO6 - Increase territorial capacity to manage/respond to natural risks/disasters			5 452 000 €	23.5%
Priority 5 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean’s natural and cultural assets (CB)	TO6	IP6B	SO7 - Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean’s natural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments	9 042 000 €	22.0%		
		IP6D	SO8 - Increase the touristic appeal of the cooperation area through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage				
Priority 6 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean’s natural and cultural assets (TN)	TO6	IP6B	SO9 - Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean’s natural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments			5 452 000 €	23.5%
		IP6D	SO10 - Increase the touristic appeal of the cooperation area through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage				
Priority 7 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues (CB)	TO9	IP9A	SO11 - Increase territories’ response capacities in relation to emerging diseases and health risks	5 795 000 €	14.1%		
Priority 8 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues (TN)	TO9	IP9A	SO12 - Increase territories’ response capacities in relation to emerging diseases and health risks			3 271 200 €	14.1%
Priority 9 – Support the development of renewable energies in the Eastern Caribbean (CB)	TO4	IP4A	SO13 – Increase the share of renewable energies in the electricity mix in order to increase the energy independence of Eastern Caribbean territories	7 795 100 €	19.0%		
		IP4C	SO14 – Reduce energy consumption in public buildings in the eastern Caribbean area				
Priority 10 – Strengthen human capital (TN)	TO10	IP10A	SO15- Improve foreign language skills and foster their use in the Caribbean			3 271 200 €	14.1%
		IP10A	SO16 - Increase mobility for professionals and students in the Caribbean				
Priority 11 – Technical Assistance (CB)		IP10A	SO17- Optimise the delivery of the programme and its projects	2 413 456 €	5.9%		
Priority 12 – Technical Assistance (TN)		IP10A	SO18- Optimise the delivery of the programme and its projects			1 355 249 €	5.9%
12 priorities	6 TO	8 IP	18 SO with a total ERDF budget of 64 292 805 € for the 2 strands	41 129 556 €	CB	23 163 249 €	TN

3. The strategic environmental assessment

3.1. The key environmental characteristics of the cooperation area

The main environmental challenges facing the cooperation area are:

- Protecting and capitalising on biodiversity, which is subject to acute pressures (from tourism, the extraction of raw materials, urbanisation, agriculture, and fisheries);
- Improving water quality. Water quality suffers from agricultural pollution and treatment facilities are inadequate;
- The long-term depollution and integrated management of soils;
- Addressing air pollution at source (energies, personal mobility);
- Addressing the effects of and adapting to climate change – harnessing green energy sources, reducing energy consumption;
- Reducing the amount of waste produced and improving waste management and reuse;
- Strengthening the resilience of territories and populations with respect to natural risks.

3.2. The likely environmental impact of the programme in light of its priorities and envisaged projects

The OP's potential effects on the environment are shown in the following table (see legend below):

Specific Objectives		Biodiversity	Water	Soils	Air	Climate Change	Population & health	Landscape
SO1-3	Territorial economic diversification	0	0	0	(+)	++	(+)	0
SO2-4	A business context conducive to increasing the volume of trade	(+)/-	(+)/-	(+)/-	-	-	0	0
SO5-6	Natural risk/disaster response capacity	0	0	0	0r	0	++	0
SO7-9	Protect and capitalise on natural heritage	++	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	(+)	(+)
SO8-10	Touristic appeal of the territory	-	0	-	-	-	0	-
SO11-12	Response capacity to health crises	0	0	0	0	+	++	0
SO13	Increase the share of renewable energies	0	0	0	(+)	++	(+)	0
SO14	Reduce the energy consumption of public buildings	0	0	0	(+)	++	(+)	0
SO15	Improve foreign language skills and foster their use in the Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
SO16	Student and professional mobility in the Caribbean	0	0	0	0	-	+	0

NB: The environmental impact of the programme's specific objectives is given for each of the 7 environmental parameters (biodiversity, water, soils, air, climate change, population & health and landscape) using a graduated consolidated score/colour scheme as detailed in the legend below:

-	(+)/-	(-)	0	(+)	+	(+)+	++
Minor negative impact	Potential minor negative impact with possible positive impact from remedial measures	Possible minor negative impact	No identified impact	Possible minor positive impact	Positive impact	Positive and possibly major positive impact	Major positive impact

As the table shows, none of the specific objectives are likely to have a significant negative impact the environment since:

- the envisaged types of action are principally intangible in nature, which limits any risks.
- It should also be noted that the strict respect of existing legislation/norms would limit and/or very significantly reduce any negative effects on the environment.

The main potential problems will be indirect or induced as a result of economic and tourism growth (see analyses for SO2-4 and SO8-10), which generally translate into increased resource use and pressure on ecosystems.

To reduce this risk, the OP could consider specific mitigation strategies, in the field of transportation and business development for example (for more details see 3.3 below).

The programme's potentially negative effects would appear in any case to be largely offset by its positive effects, which underlines the extent to which the programme has incorporated sustainable development challenges. In summary:

- The majority of the OP's specific objectives focus on protecting the environment (SO7-9, SO13-14), civil population or health (S7-9, SO11-12, SO15-16);
- 57% of the budget is allocated to measures with an environmental objective.

In the opinion of the evaluators the programme's positive or negative **impacts** on the environment will depend on **the specific conditions** it applies to the selection and implementation projects. This observation is the basis for specific recommendations, which are further discussed below.

3.3. The SEA's main recommendations

The evaluators find that any positive or negative environmental impacts will be determined by the conditions applied to project approval/selection. They therefore recommend the use of eco-conditionalities and/or environmental **criteria in the selection of projects** – in order to limit identified risks and **to prioritise projects/policy areas having a lower or even positive impact on the environment.**

Such eco-conditionalities and/or environmental criteria could focus on different topics. The evaluators consider that the following topics merit further study in this respect:

- Transportation: the coordination between and use of different modes of transport (for passengers and goods);
- Business models: the different marketing models that may be prioritised (short/local supply distribution channels, etc.);
- Business models: in light of the scale of tourism in the economies of the cooperation area, 'greening' the tourism development model. The OP already offers positive prospects in this regard by very clearly stressing that it will only support sustainable tourism.

4. The ex-ante evaluation

4.1. The ex-ante evaluation methodology

Following the process described in section 1 above, the ex-ante evaluation provided an opinion for each of the different evaluation criteria set out in the ERDF Regulation. The opinions were provided during the programme design process, in some cases becoming redundant as solutions were identified and integrated. This summary therefore focuses solely on the main findings based on the final version of the OP, with reference, nonetheless, to the regulatory analytical criteria.

The criteria are listed below, in the order in which they were addressed, the first having been addressed at the early programme design stage, the latter being addressed in the later stages:

- The Programme's relevance
- The Programme's internal coherence
- Strategic coherence
- The Programme's 'external' coherence with other relevant policy instruments
- Intervention logic
- Suitability of measures proposed to promote the horizontal priorities
- Partnership
- Suitability of indicators
- Determination of baseline, milestone and target values
- Implementation system
- Ex ante conditionalities
- Evaluation Plan (continuous)
- Review of the environmental assessment and consultations

4.2. Conclusions of the ex-ante evaluation

4.2.1. The Programme's relevance and strategic coherence

The programme design process was one of quality, generated a robust needs analysis and identified relevant challenges listed below:

- Challenge 1 - Creating wealth and employment, through economic diversification and strengthening the economic competitiveness of the Caribbean's economies;
- Challenge 2 – Developing transport networks (maritime and air) and reducing the physical isolation of the territories to improve their accessibility;
- Challenge 3 - Enhancing risk prevention and management capacities;
- Challenge 4 - Protecting the environment and delivering the energy transition;
- Challenge 5 – Strengthening human capital;
- Challenge 6 – Social inclusion, health and improving living conditions.

The SEA finds that OP's strategy is also in line with the priorities of regional organisations and European overseas territories in the Caribbean.

Moreover, the OP clearly explains the choice of ERDF thematic objectives, thematic priorities and specific objectives with the 6 shared development challenges retained by partners for the cooperation area. NB: Only 5 of the 6 identified challenges were retained for the programme as, while challenge n°2 was deemed to be of strategic relevance, it was not selected as the OP would not be able to provide a satisfactory policy response.

In terms of delivery, the Programme has a distinctive two-strand architecture:

- A transnational strand (TN) for Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Saint Martin with the rest of the Greater Caribbean;
- A cross-border strand (CB) for Guadeloupe and Martinique with the countries of the OECS.

In this architecture, a core group of identical priorities and specific objectives double up in each of the strands.

The strategy is set out to align with the ERDF's strategic guidance:



(*) Excluding technical assistance (2 priorities and 2 SO)

Table 4 – Structure of the Programme

Challenge 1 – Creating wealth & jobs	Priority 1	TO3	IP3D	SO1-SO2	CB
	Priority 2			SO3-SO4	TN
Challenge 3 – Preventing & managing natural risks	Priority 3	TO5	IP5B	SO5	CB
	Priority 4			SO6	TN
Challenge 4 – Protecting the environment and energy transition	Priority 5	TO6	IP6B-D	SO7-SO8	CB
	Priority 6			SO9-SO10	TN
	Priority 9	TO4	IP4A-C	SO13-SO14	CB
Challenge 6 – Social inclusion, health	Priority 7	TO9	IP9A	SO11	CB
	Priority 8			SO12	TN
Challenge 5 – Strengthen human capital	Priority 10	TO10	IP10A	SO15-SO16	TN
Technical Assistance	Priority 11	-	-	SO17	CB
	Priority 12			SO18	TN

Table 5 – The Programme’s Priorities & Specific Objectives

Priority 1 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment (CB)	TO3	IP3D	SO1 - Support the economic diversification of the different territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products
		IP3D	SO2 - Create a business context that stimulates trade between the Caribbean territories
Priority 2 – Enhance in a sustainable and inclusive manner the competitiveness of Caribbean business and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment (TN)	TO3	IP3d	SO3 - Support the economic diversification of the different territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products
		IP3d	SO4 - Create a business context that stimulates trade between the Caribbean territories
Priority 3 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks (CB)	TO5	IP5B	SO5 - Increase territorial capacity to manage/respond to natural risks/disasters
Priority 4 - Strengthen response capacity to natural risks (TN)	TO5	IP5B	SO6 - Increase territorial capacity to manage/respond to natural risks/disasters
Priority 5 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean’s natural and cultural assets (CB)	TO6	IP6B	SO7 - Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean’s natural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments
		IP6D	SO8 - Increase the touristic appeal of the cooperation area through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage
Priority 6 – Protect and exploit the Caribbean’s natural and cultural assets (TN)	TO6	IP6B	SO9 - Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean’s natural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments
		IP6D	SO10 - Increase the touristic appeal of the cooperation area through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage
Priority 7 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues (CB)	TO9	IP9A	SO11 - Increase territories’ response capacities in relation to emerging diseases and health risks
Priority 8 - Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health issues (CB)	TO9	PI9A	SO12 - Increase territories’ response capacities in relation to emerging diseases and health risks
Priority 9 – Support the development of renewable energies in the Eastern Caribbean (CB)	TO4	IP4A	SO13 – Increase the share of renewable energies in the electricity mix in order to increase the energy independence of Eastern Caribbean territories
		IP4C	SO14 – Reduce energy consumption in public buildings in the eastern Caribbean area
Priority 10 – Strengthen human capital (TN)	TO10	IP10A	SO15- Improve foreign language skills and foster their use in the Caribbean
		IP10A	SO16 - Increase mobility for professionals and students in the Caribbean
Priority 11 – Technical Assistance (CB)		IP10A	SO17- Optimise the delivery of the programme and its projects
Priority 12 – Technical Assistance (TN)		IP10A	SO18- Optimise the delivery of the programme and its projects

The scope of the selected priorities is in line with the regulatory requirement for thematic concentration.

And with the same focus on avoiding overreach, priority 9 on renewable energy is only supported under the cross-border strand, and priority 10 – which relates to challenge 5 on strengthening human capital – is only supported under the transnational strand. This means

that each strand involves 5 priorities (excluding technical assistance) and 9 specific objectives.

The programme covers the realm of the possible in terms of cooperation. It should be borne in mind that:

- The cooperative action supported can only make a modest contribution to achieving the objectives of the ERDF and Europe 2020 for European regions, and an even more modest contribution to the objectives of Caribbean region overall;
- The cooperative policy supported will be what is feasible for the different stakeholders. It should also be borne in mind also that the degree of existing cooperation is related to work undertaken under previous rounds of Interreg, and as such is highly variable across the different policy fields in question.

Overall, the programme fits strategically with Europe 2020 and ERDF (ETC cooperation).

In summary, the selected priorities paint a clear picture of the nature & scope for the cooperative action that the Interreg Caribbean Space OP is aiming for:

- to innovate, organise & invest;
and to do so:
 - within the scope allowed by the ERDF concentration requirement;
 - with a modest budget;
 - that fits strategically with the Europe 2020 goals;
 - that builds on the achievements and experience of previous cooperation programmes.

4.2.2. The Programme's internal coherence

With the exception of priority 9 on developing renewable energies, the expected actions concern the whole Caribbean region.

The complementarities between the priorities merit further development as there are opportunities to stimulate the creation of genuine cross-thematic action 'task forces' in areas such as tourism, agriculture and agri-food, and the management of natural risks.

The total ERDF budget stands at 64 293 million €:

- 41 130 million € for the cross-border strand (CB)
- 23 163 million € for the transnational strand (TN)

Table 6 – Distribution of the cooperation programme budget according to the its strategic challenges

Strategic challenges	% total	ERDF Total
Challenge 1 – Create wealth and jobs	18.4%	11 814 600 €

Challenge 3 – Prevent & manage natural risks	21.9%	14 083 000 €
Challenge 4 – Protect the environment and energy transition	34.7%	22 289 100 €
Challenge 5 – Strengthen human capital	5.1%	3 271 200 €
Challenge 6 – Social inclusion, health	14.1%	9 066 200 €
Technical Assistance	5.9%	3 768 705 €
TOTAL	100.0%	64 292 805 €

Challenges 3 and 4, which address the environment, represent 46.6% of the ERDF budget (49.5% excluding technical assistance).

Table 7 - Breakdown of the cooperation programme's budget according to the strands and investment priorities and corresponding strategic challenges

Challenge	Thematic Objective	Investment Priority	Budget ERDF CB	Budget ERDF TN
Challenge 1 - Creating wealth and jobs by diversifying the Caribbean economies and increasing their competitiveness	(TO3) Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	IP3d – Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular to help them internationalise their activities	7.453 M€ 18.1%	4.362 M€ 18.8%
Challenge 3 - Strengthening disaster risk management and prevention capacities	TO5 - Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	IP5b – promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	8.631 M€ 21.0%	5.452 M€ 23.5%
Challenge 4 - Protecting the environment, capitalising on cultural and natural heritage and implementing the energy transition	TO6 – Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	IP6B/D – protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	9.042 M€ 22.0%	5.452 M€ 23.5%
	TO4 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors <u>CROSSBORDER (CBC)</u>	IP4a – promoting the production and distribution of renewable energy sources IP4C – supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including public buildings and in the housing sector	7.795 M€ 19.0%	-
Challenge 5 - Strengthening Human Capital	TO10 - Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning <u>TRANSNATIONAL</u>	IP10a – Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure	-	3.271 M€ 14.1%
Challenge 6 – Social inclusion, health and improving living conditions	TO9 Promoting social inclusion and tackling poverty	IP9A – investing in health and social infrastructure, thereby contributing to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health	5.795 M€ 14.1%	3.271 M€ 14.1%

status

Challenge 2 concerning transport development (air and maritime) and improving accessibility to isolated island territories is identified as a key enabler for developing the Caribbean. However, the programme is unable to respond as its budget is insufficient.

Technical assistance is allocated 5.9% of the budget for each strand, amounting to 3.77 M€ of the overall OP budget.

4.2.3. The consistency of the Programme's strategy with other relevant policy instruments (external coherence)

Each of the programme's priorities support projects that are complementary to the actions and

mechanisms supported by the:

- ERDF,
- EDF,
- ESF, and
- the EAFRD & POSEI

The development of economic exchange (trade) in the Caribbean region (challenge N°1) is largely absent from European programmes other than Interreg, since they, while promoting local growth, including exporting, naturally have place-centric focus.

The development of economic exchange (trade) is more specifically constrained by certain trade related policies pursued by each of the EU's overseas countries and territories in the Caribbean:

- Support for imports from the European Community and support for exports to third countries;
- Policies supporting local production may compete with imports;
- Competition between countries with different costs and regulations may distort competition.

The relevance of 'external coherence' to Interreg is questionable, given its relatively marginal role in economic development, rather, the question of policy coherence should be asked in relation to the potentially competing economic development strategies of the different EU territories in the region.

4.2.4. The intervention logic

The programme's intervention logic appears clear and coherent and is summarised in tables that specify the relationship with the needs analysis and partners' selection of ERDF thematic objectives, investment priorities and specific objectives.

The expected results are precise and the programme's goals are clear.

The envisaged policy actions fit well with the development challenges identified for the cooperation area.

Table 8 – The Caribbean Interreg Programme’s intervention logic

Investment Priority	Specific Objective	Expected Results	Challenge
IP3d – Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular to help them internationalise their activities	SO1-3: Support the economic diversification of the territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products	Innovation projects (excluding scientific cooperation), pooling of equipment, networking.	Challenge 1 - Creating wealth and jobs by diversifying the Caribbean economies and increasing their competitiveness
	SO2-4 – Create an environment conducive to increasing the volume of trade between the Caribbean territories	Actions to develop entrepreneurship among young people Development of business & economic development stakeholder networks Training for business leaders, company directors Harmonisation of technical standards and company law Regulation of maritime and air transport	
IP5b – promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster	SO5-6 – Increase territories capacity to manage/respond to natural risks/disasters	Improved understanding about the impacts of natural risks Introduction of joint risk management systems	Challenge 3 - Strengthening disaster risk management and prevention capacities
IP6B – protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	SO7-9 – Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean’s natural and cultural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments	Improved knowledge about the environment Design of joint strategies to protect the environment Joint instruments to protect biodiversity Initiatives in the carbon trading markets	Challenge 4 - Protecting the environment and implementing the energy transition
IP6D – protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	SO8-10 – Increase the touristic appeal of the territory through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage	Development of joint sustainable tourism products Action to enhance/market the Caribbean’s natural and cultural heritage Development of multi-destination tourism	Challenge 4 - Protecting the environment and implementing the energy transition

Investment Priority	Specific Objective	Expected Results	Challenge
IP4a – promoting the production and distribution of renewable energy sources (CBC)	SO13 – increase the share of renewable energies in the electricity mix with a view to a greater energy independence in the territories of the eastern Caribbean	R&D, experimentation, training and exchange of experience. Prospection and exploration for new energy sources Studies on the inter-connection between energy grids Standardisation of norms and governance	
IP4C – supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy use (CBC)	SO14 – Reduce energy consumption in public buildings in the eastern Caribbean area	R&D, experimentation, training, networking, exchange of experience	Challenge 4 - Protecting the environment, and implementing the energy transition
IP10a – Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure (TNC)	SO15- Improve foreign language skills and foster their use in the Caribbean	Language training in general and professional education Staff (teacher) exchanges Cooperation with the ' <i>Alliances françaises</i> ', in particular regarding joint qualifications	Challenge 5 - Strengthening Human Capital
	SO16 – Increase mobility for professionals and students in the Caribbean	Improve mobility for students and professionals in the Caribbean	
IP9A – investing in health and social infrastructure, thereby contributing to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status	SO11-12 – Increase territories' response capacities in relation to emerging diseases and health risks	Research projects on significant diseases Surveillance and vigilance for epidemics affecting people and animals Joint management plans for health crises Cooperation actions in the field of health	Challenge 6 – Social inclusion, health and improving living conditions

4.2.5. Suitability of the measures proposed to support cross-cutting priorities

As part of the EU's 2020 strategy, European programmes are required to promote multiple cross-cutting or 'horizontal' priorities. As the scope of action of programmes such as Interreg is limited, they respond only partially to these priorities. Moreover, as a result of the EC's concentration requirement for regional programmes, certain priorities are either not or only partially addressed.

Some of Europe 2020's horizontal priorities are however operationalised in a concrete way through the OP's selection of the following priorities:

- Sustainable development;
- Protecting the environment;

The programme should also have a positive but – due to its modest budget and scope of action that is limited to fields conducive to cooperation – limited impact on the following priorities:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Risk prevention and management.

The programme does not explicitly address the other horizontal priorities:

- Efficient use of resources;
- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination;
- Gender equality.

However, these may nonetheless be promoted within supported actions.

Evaluation will be necessary to assess any progress against these goals. To operationalise this, the programme could (1) define its selection criteria in cross-cutting terms, in such a way as to encourage projects to pursue these goals in their strategies and (2) incorporate relevant indicators in the programme monitoring system to measure progress.

4.2.6. Indicators and targets

Output Indicators

The OP's indicators are defined precisely and with practicality in mind. The target output objectives for 2023 are realistic and build sensibly on achievements under previous programmes.

Table 9 - Output Indicators for each specific objective

Investment Priorities	Output Indicators for the OS	Target Objective 2023 CB	Target Objective 2023 TN
IP3d – developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular to help them internationalise their	Total public expenditure through IP 3d (in M€)	7.45	4.36
	Number of cooperation actions (1)		
	Number of enterprises receiving a grant (direct aid)	7	4

Investment Priorities	Output Indicators for the OS	Target Objective 2023 CB	Target Objective 2023 TN
activities	Number of enterprises receiving non-grant aid (indirect aid)	242	112
	Number of active persons benefitting from support (training) (2)		
IP5b – promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster	Total public expenditure through IP 5b (in M€)	8.63	5.45
	Number of persons having participated in risk awareness actions	923	583
	Number of observation, management and response systems for natural risks put in place	12	7
IP6C – protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	Total public expenditure through IP 6c (in M€)	9.04	5.45
	Nombre d'aires d'écosystèmes forestiers, agricoles et d'aquaculture bénéficiant de mesures de gestion commune et de conservation	14	8
	Number of sites supported (3)		
	Area covered by supported sites (4)		
	Nombre de dispositifs de suivi et d'évaluation du développement du tourisme durable	26	16
	Number of supported tourist sites benefiting from a quality label (5)		
	Number of sites supported (6)		
	Increase in expected number of visits to supported recognised heritage sites	+5%	+5%
IP9A - investing in health and social infrastructure, thereby contributing to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status	Total public expenditure through IP 9a (in M€)	5.80	3.27
	Number of persons benefitting from implemented health projects	404	228
	Number of schemes put in place to address public health challenges	6	3
IP 4a – promoting the production and distribution of renewable energy sources PI	Total public expenditure through IP 4a (in M€)	5.45	
	Amount of investment in the production of renewable energy	(5.45 M€)	
	Number of cooperation initiatives supported (7)		
	Production of renewable energy supported (8)		
IP 4C – supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including public buildings and in the housing sector	Total public expenditure through IP 4c (in M€)	2.33	
	Level of investment made in energy efficiency for public buildings	(2.33 M€)	
	Energy savings expected as a result of the investment (9)		
IP10a –investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure	Total public expenditure through IP 10a (in M€)		3.27
	Number of persons benefitting from supported language projects		3077
	Number of persons benefitting from supported mobility projects		457
TA - Ensure the optimal delivery of the programme and its projects	Total public expenditure (in M€)	2.41	1.35
	Number of information meetings for project leaders	2	1

Investment Priorities	Output Indicators for the OS	Target Objective 2023 CB	Target Objective 2023 TN
	Number of training sessions for project leaders (selected projects)	6	3
	Nombre d'équivalent temps plein affecté à la gestion du programme	6	3
	Number of training sessions for JTS & EU RCP staff	14	9

The boxes shaded in blue are 'not applicable'.

The indicators shaded in grey and numbered from (1) to (9) are the evaluator's suggestions for enhancing programme monitoring and evaluation.

Result Indicators

Table 10 – Result indicators deployed by the programme's strategic investment plan

Priority	Specific Objectives	Result Indicators
Priority 1 (CB) Priority 2 (TN) Enhance the competitiveness of Caribbean business, and unlock its potential to create wealth and employment	SO 1-3- Support the economic diversification of the territories through knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of innovative products	RI1 Increase in the number of cooperation agreements between innovation stakeholders from across the Caribbean (unit: number)
	SO 2-4 - Create an environment conducive to increasing the volume of trade between the Caribbean territories	RI2 Increase in the volume of trade between the OCT and the countries of the Caribbean (unit: €)
Priority 3 (CB) Priority 4 (TN) Strengthen natural disaster risk management capacity (prevention and response capacity)	SO 5-6 - Increase the capacities of territories to manage/respond to natural risks (disasters)	RI3 increase in the capacity of Caribbean territories to respond to risk (unit: score on a scale from 1 to 5 based on electronic survey)
Priority 5 (CB) –Priority 6 (TN) Protect and capitalise on the Caribbean's natural and cultural heritage	SO 7-9 - Better protect and capitalise on the Caribbean's natural heritage through joint strategies and policy instruments	RI4 Increase in the number of transnational/cross-border initiatives to protect animal and plant biodiversity (unit: number)
	SO8-10- Increase the touristic appeal of the territory through the joint marketing of its natural and cultural heritage	RI5 Increase in the number of Caribbean tourist sites with a quality label (unit: number)
Priority 9 (CB) Support the development of renewable energies in the Eastern Caribbean	SO13 – Increase the share of renewable energies in the electricity mix with a view to a greater energy independence in the territories of the eastern Caribbean	RI7 Number of cross-border initiatives aiming to increase the production of renewable energy in the Caribbean (unit: number)
	SO14 – Reduce energy consumption in public buildings in the eastern Caribbean area	RI8 Number of territories and countries having adopted thermal regulations comparable to the French Thermic, Acoustic and Ventilation Regulations for the Overseas Departments (French abbreviation, RTAA)
Priority 7 (CB) – Priority 8 (TN) Develop a concerted Caribbean response to shared public health	SO11-12 - Increase the capacities of territories to respond to/manage emerging diseases and health risks	RI6 Increase in the response capacity in relation to health risks facing Caribbean territories (unit: rating on a scale of 1 to 5 on the basis of an

Priority	Specific Objectives	Result Indicators
issues		electronic survey)
Priority 10 (TN) Foster closer ties between the peoples of the Caribbean	SO15- Improve foreign language skills and foster their use in the Caribbean	RI9 Number of students enrolled on language courses in Caribbean universities
	SO16 - Increase student and professional mobility in the Caribbean	RI10 Number of international cooperation agreements with the Caribbean signed between Caribbean universities and regional vocational/professional training providers

(1) The Regulation (EC 288-2014) stipulates that this column should include the common and specific programme indicators for which objectives have been set. All of the programme's proposed indicators are programme-specific (the values of the result indicators are not given since they had not been determined at the time of writing the final ex-ante evaluation).

Result indicators are well specified and programme-specific.

The evaluator recommends supplementary indicators in order to better specify the expected results. These are not intended to be incorporated in the performance framework but to inform the programme's continuous evaluation.

4.2.7. Implementation of actions

The evaluator makes some minor analytical observations and points requiring vigilance with a view to better ensuring the achievement of objectives.

Table 11 – Points requiring vigilance and suggestions for programming strategy

SO1-3	On the involvement of SMEs; innovation in R&D not only in research. The programme should not limit its scope to only those innovation themes that are included in smart specialisation (S3) strategies, other themes may be suitable for cooperation, such as for example, agriculture or waste management.
SO2-4	Take an open approach in order to finance projects that may have an immediate impact in terms of economic activity and job creation. The harmonisation of standards in order to facilitate import-export in particular in agriculture and agri-food.
SO5-6	In order to amplify the impact of cooperation across the population – prioritise projects that involve ordinary people.
SO8-10	Do not neglect cultural heritage, which is less well known than natural heritage (performing arts for example). Prioritise projects that have a direct impact on tourism development.
SO11-12	Although the production of medicinal plants is supported by the EARDF and POSEI, cooperation projects could be envisaged in order to increase knowledge about tradition pharmaceutical plants in the Caribbean area.

4.2.8. Management, monitoring and evaluation

The programme's administrative and management capacity

Drawing on the experience of managing previous programmes and of subsequently building up cooperative working, the OP includes, as required, a description of the programme's management and steering systems.

Evaluation plan

In accordance with the ERDF ETC Regulation, programme evaluation is briefly addressed in section 5.

The evaluator makes observations regarding data gathering methods that could be considered for the programme's evaluation plan.

Performance framework objectives

The approach to determining the mid-term objectives (milestones) is the same for each priority: 30% for physical outputs and 15% for certified expenditure.

The evaluator recommends lowering the expenditure objectives for priorities 1-2, 9 and 10 to 10% and the objectives for physical outputs to 20%. The aim is to take into account difficulties that may be encountered with project implementation, which may affect certain target activities that involve organisations whose administrative reactivity is constrained by their annualised procedures.

Reducing the administrative burden

The key to simplification is the shift to digital data exchange with the beneficiaries. Digital exchange will limit delays in processing applications and other interactions between projects and the programme's managing body as well as the volume of paper documents requiring archiving.

The use of the Synergie CTE system should facilitate management and project monitoring. The systematic use of flat rates for costs will also reduce the administrative burden associated with different levels of control.

A more systematic use of Harmonised Programme Implementation Tools (HIT) developed by the INTERACT programme in collaboration with the whole of the European territorial cooperation programmes should also simplify procedures and reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

4.2.9. In addition to evaluation criteria, the ex-ante evaluation checked that the programme took due account of the strategic environmental assessment (SEA):

The SEA was amended on the basis of the joint opinion of the programme's environmental authorities (21 May 2015). The competent authorities are the three French government Environment, Planning and Housing Offices (*Directions de l'environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement, DEAL*) of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana.

The opinion states that the programme should have no significant negative environmental

impacts.

It also stresses the need to put in place, firstly, environmental selection criteria as well as, secondly, a programme monitoring and evaluation system. On these points, the opinion is in line with the recommendations of the SEA.

The environmental authorities concluded that the draft operational programme incorporates the environmental dimension in a satisfactory way, both in terms of the objectives it sets and the environmental assessment methodology.

Nevertheless, the environmental authority recommended to: (1) supplement the baseline analysis; (2) differentiate the OP's likely significant impact on the environment on different territories, etc.; (3) define the preventive or remedial actions precisely; and (4) propose measures to monitor impact.

The amended and final version of the SEA was submitted to a public consultation organised by the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, as the managing authority, and which ran from 1st July 2015 to 1st August 2015 in the territories of Guadeloupe/ Saint-Martin, French Guiana and Martinique. No submissions were received during the consultation.