

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

- 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.
- Flip – start with potential and space. 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.

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).

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

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.

Experts can register [here](#).

Stay informed and engaged

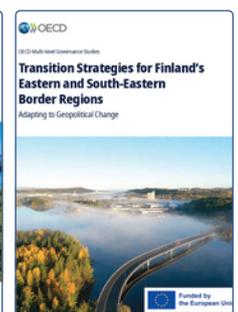
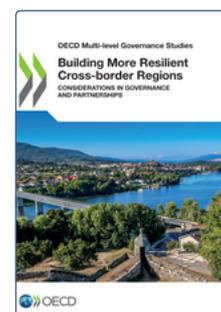
Receive information on:

- 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.

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



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