

Interreg



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Meuse – Rhine (NL – BE – DE)

Evaluation Plan

Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)

2021-2027

Version presented to the Monitoring Committee on the 22 April 2026

Table of content

Introduction	3
1. Objectives, scope, and coordination of the evaluation plan	3
1.1. Main objectives of the evaluation plan	3
1.2. Substantive focal points of the evaluation plan	3
1.3. Coordination mechanisms, cooperation and exchange on evaluations	4
2. Description of the framework for evaluations	5
2.1. Competences and evaluation process	5
2.2. Nature of the expertise of the evaluation	7
2.3. Promoting expertise	8
2.4. Application and communication of the evaluation results	9
2.5. Budget for the implementation of the evaluation plan	9
2.6. Strategy for the quality management of the evaluation process	9
2.7. Update of the evaluation plan	10
2.8. Timetable for planned evaluations and required reports	11
3. Planned evaluation periods for the 2021-2027 programme period	12
3.1. Overview and timetable	12
3.2. Mid-term evaluation of programme implementation	12
3.3. Major impact evaluation (large)	14

Introduction

The present evaluation plan for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) has been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Fund-specific Regulation for Interreg (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Article 35). The evaluation plan was discussed and approved by the Monitoring Committee on 22 May 2024 and 22 April 2026. The evaluation plan is published on the programme website www.interregmeuserhine.eu.

The evaluation plan sets out the framework conditions for the evaluations during the 2021-2027 programme period (Interreg VI). First, Chapter 1 defines the objectives, scope and coordination of the evaluation plan, after which Chapter 2 elaborates on the practical framework for evaluations. In addition, the evaluation plan contains an overview of the planned evaluations (section 2.8 and chapter 3).

1. Objectives, scope, and coordination of the evaluation plan

1.1. Main objectives of the evaluation plan

The main objectives of the evaluation plan for the 2021-2027 programming period are:

- Improving the quality of evaluations through good planning, including producing and collecting the necessary data for evaluations (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Art. 35(4));
- Providing a framework for the planning and implementation of evaluations, in particular those assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Art. 35(1));
- Ensuring the provision of all the resources necessary for the evaluations (financial resources, staff, structures, etc.) and independence of the evaluators (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Art. 35(3));
- Enabling informed decisions on aspects of the programme implementation and the strategic orientation of the programme;
- Ensure that evaluations feed into the required annual implementation reports and Member States' progress reports;
- Facilitating the synthesis of evaluation results from the different Member States by the European Commission and the exchange of results;
- Development of knowledge that can be applied in possible follow-up programmes.

1.2. Substantive focal points of the evaluation plan

The evaluation plan focuses on two substantive focal points: the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme and the aspects of programme implementation.

1.2.1. Effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme

Evaluations of the Programme's effectiveness, efficiency and impact are explicitly mentioned in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and in the Commission's guidance documents. At least once during the lifetime of the programme, an evaluation shall be carried out for each of the four programme priorities on how the ERDF support contributes or has contributed to the objectives of the priority in question. Assessments of effectiveness and impact are essential

for obtaining information on the extent to which the programme objectives have been achieved and allow for optimisation of the programme during or after the programme period. Such evaluations are also a central means of clarifying the impact and usefulness of the funds spent and can increase transparency for funding providers and the general public.

1.2.2. Aspects of programme implementation

The second substantive focus of the evaluation plan is formed by evaluations of various aspects of programme implementation. Specifically, the following aspects should be examined through evaluations during the programming period:

- *Administrative burden.* During the duration of the Interreg programme 2021-2027, an evaluation of the administrative burden for beneficiaries will be carried out, identifying parts that represent the greatest administrative burden for the projects. A specific point of evaluation is the administrative burden reduction for both projects and at the level of the programme that was implemented at the start of the Interreg programme 2021-2027. The evaluation findings will lead to proposals for further reduction of the administrative burden. These proposals will partly be implemented during the Interreg programme 2021-2027, and the rest will be included in the preparation of the Interreg programme for the period 2028-2034.
- *Priority axes.* The priority axes are thematically broad, allowing for a wide range of projects within these axes. In the interest of the programme, it is desirable to monitor closely the extent to which projects are actually selected and implemented for the individual thematic areas, so that the development and selection of projects can be influenced, if necessary, for a given theme. In addition, the extent to which project selection takes into account the specific needs and challenges of the programme area should be examined.
- *Indicators.* The Interreg programme 2021-2027 includes a modified set of indicators. In addition to the result indicators, the current values of which are analysed in conjunction with the above-mentioned 'impact' evaluations, there are many innovations in the output indicators. For the Interreg programme 2021-2027, binding, unambiguous and accessible definitions of all indicators have been drawn up, which have been laid down for each indicator in a methodological document, including accessible 'indicator sheets'.

1.3. Coordination mechanisms, cooperation and exchange on evaluations

Importance is attached to coordination, cooperation and mutual exchange on evaluation results and methods. This is primarily provided at the European level, with active participation in the exchange of information and best practices in the field of evaluation through Interact. In addition, it is envisaged that this topic will be the subject of regular consultations with the neighbouring ETC programmes, as part of the exchange on typical issues, which has proven its worth in the previous programming periods. This applies in particular to the Flanders-Netherlands, Germany-Netherlands and Grande Région/Großregion programmes. Some of these programmes involve the same partners, making it easy to identify and exploit synergies. In this context, methods of reviews and expertise exchange are also being considered. The same applies to the national ERDF programmes.

2. Description of the framework for evaluations

2.1. Competences and evaluation process

This section describes the powers and tasks of the various programme bodies and partners in the preparation and implementation of the evaluation plan. The evaluation process itself is also explained in detail.

2.1.1. Roles in the evaluation process

Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee shall approve the evaluation plan and any subsequent changes and revisions to it. In addition, the Monitoring Committee is responsible for the adoption of evaluation results and the approval of evaluation reports. The Monitoring Committee reviews the progress of the implementation of the evaluation plan at least once a year (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Article 30).

Evaluation Core Group

The European Commission has already recommended in the previous programming period that a core group be set up on the theme of evaluation, which would inform the Monitoring Committee on developments in the field of evaluation and implement the decisions of the Monitoring Committee. Such a core group has been established and active during the 2014-2020 programme period. The core group is composed of representatives of the programme partners and programme bodies. The same core group will be used for the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme 2021-2027.

The Evaluation Core Group has the task of implementing the decisions of the Monitoring Committee. It advises on the preparation and revision of the evaluation plan, reports to the Monitoring Committee at least once a year on the progress of the implementation of the evaluation plan and submits the evaluation plan (via the Managing Authority) to the Monitoring Committee for approval and/or amendment.

The main task of the core group is to plan practically and supervise the implementation of the planned evaluations. More specifically, this means the technical supervision of the evaluations, the preparation and approval of the list of requirements, the monitoring of a transparent and correct tendering process, the supervision of the preparation of the evaluation reports and the guarantee of appropriate follow-up measures. In addition, the Evaluation Core Group should facilitate evaluators' access to the information necessary for the conduct of evaluations, and ensure that procedures are in place for producing and collecting the data required for the evaluations. This includes the non-routine initiation of an exchange of information and possible cooperation activities in the field of statistics.

The secretariat of the Evaluation Core Group is housed within the Managing Authority. The core group meets one or more times a year, depending on the circumstances.

After consultation with the Monitoring Committee, the Evaluation Core Group is composed as follows:

- *Representative(s) of the Monitoring and Steering Committee*

- *Marvin Schmidt*
- *Representative(s) of the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat:*
 - *Erwan Bovy*
 - *Johanna Füten*
 - *Gesa Remmert*
 - *Isabelle Weisser*
- *Representative(s) of the STIPP initiative - Fund Management SME Grant Scheme:*
 - *Raluca Danila*

Managing Authority (MA) and Joint Secretariat (JS)

The Managing Authority is responsible under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 for ensuring that evaluations are carried out, based on a concrete evaluation plan. The MA carries out this task in close consultation with the JS. This includes (in combination with the function as secretariat of the Core Group on Evaluation) the implementation of all ongoing work in the field of evaluation, as well as work on the preparation, coordination and continuous review of the evaluation plan, the preparation and follow-up of the meetings of the Core Group on Evaluation, work on the implementation and monitoring of evaluations and on reporting on them to the Monitoring Committee and the Commission. Within the MA, the senior programme manager 'programme tasks' has been designated as the person primarily responsible for carrying out these tasks, possibly with the support of other JS employees.

2.1.2. Evaluation process

Each evaluation included in the evaluation plan shall be carried out as follows:

1. On the basis of a proposal from the MA, the Evaluation Core Group consults on the evaluation plan or on an update/amendment of the evaluation plan:
 - a. The precise question of the evaluation
 - b. The desired nature of the implementation (external/internal/mixed)
 - c. The desired methodology
 - d. The data to be used (and the provision thereof)
 - e. Details regarding the report
 - f. The precise timetable for implementation
 - g. In the case of (parts of) evaluations to be carried out externally: the available budget
 - h. In the case of (parts of) evaluations to be carried out externally: the type of procurement procedure, eligible external providers, timetable of the tender, and award criteria
2. Based on the consultation in step 1, the MA draws up a 'draft' of the evaluation. For (parts of) evaluations to be carried out externally, the MA draws up a package of requirements (terms of reference). These documents are coordinated with the evaluation core group.
3. In the case of (parts of) evaluations to be carried out externally, the MA carries out the tender in accordance with the current procurement policy and informs the core group about the tenders received. The evaluation core group consults and designates the winner of the tender. The MA grants the assignment. The external service provider

starts with the execution of the assignment. The MA acts as the first point of contact and informs the evaluation core group about the state of affairs.

In the case of (parts of) evaluations to be carried out internally, the MA coordinates the implementation of the evaluation or carries out parts of it itself, in consultation with the Joint Secretariat and based on the concept of the evaluation. The MA informs the evaluation core group about the state of affairs.

4. Progress and final reports are discussed in the core group and adjusted if necessary. The core group discusses the results and conclusions of the evaluation and finally decides on the provisional approval of the evaluation report. The core group is consulting on possible follow-up measures after the evaluation.
5. The MA prepares a concept for the Monitoring Committee informing about the implementation, results and proposed follow-up actions, as well as proposing the results to be identified and the way forward.
6. The Monitoring Committee discusses the proposal and determines the evaluation results and the way forward, or instructs the evaluation core group to make an adjustment (in which case it starts again at step 4).
7. The evaluation core group monitors and supervises the implementation of any follow-up measures taken after evaluations and reports to the Monitoring Committee.

2.1.3. Active role of the Monitoring Committee and programme partners

As can be seen from the above, the Monitoring Committee plays a guiding and determining role in the preparation and implementation of the evaluation plan. The Monitoring Committee represents all programme partners and programme bodies so that they can have a direct influence on the evaluation process. The evaluation core group is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation core group consists of representatives of the programme partners and bodies. In order to ensure the efficient functioning of the group, not all organisations represented in the Monitoring Committee are directly represented; However, these organisations are informed about the work of the core group. If necessary, the core group can be expanded to include other interested parties and/or programme partners and bodies involved.

2.1.4. Dealing with experts/scientific guidance during the evaluation process

If necessary, the evaluation core group may be expanded to include external experts/advisors from society and science, or advice from external experts may be sought during discussions within the evaluation core group.

2.2. Nature of the expertise of the evaluation

Both external and internal expertise must be involved in the implementation of the evaluation plan. The following principles apply here:

2.2.1. External expertise in the execution of evaluations

To the extent possible, external expertise should be used when carrying out evaluations, especially on complex topics such as the impact of the programme, which require the application of complex methodologies and the collection and analysis of a wide range of data. In addition, external service providers are suitable for evaluations of programme processes and structures and aspects of programme implementation, as they can analyse them completely independently and objectively.

2.2.2. In-house expertise in the execution of evaluations

Based on experiences with previous Interreg programmes, it has proven effective to carry out (parts of) evaluations internally. The Interreg programme 2021-2027 also provides for (parts of) evaluations to be carried out in-programme. This could include, for example, smaller 'inventories' at the start of the programme, or evaluations of programme processes and structures. Internal evaluators have important prior knowledge in these areas that enables them to carry out evaluations efficiently and effectively. The basic principle is that (parts of) evaluations are only carried out internally if this is more effective than the use of external expertise.

The use of internal evaluators should ensure that they are able to carry out their tasks as independently and objectively as external service providers. This is subject to the condition that the internal evaluators are functionally independent of the bodies responsible for programme implementation. As an additional measure to ensure this independence of (parts of) evaluations carried out internally, it may be required that the methods and results of such evaluations are 'validated' by external service providers. As a first step, an external service provider receives the concept of the evaluation, an explanation of the planned methods and the data that should serve as input for the evaluation. They examine whether the planned methods and the available data are appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation and proposes adjustments if necessary. In a second step, they 'validate' the results of the evaluation, i.e. they examine whether the conclusions follow logically and objectively from the available data.

2.2.3. Collegial reviews

It has been agreed between the Interreg programmes, in particular the Netherlands-Flanders and Germany-Netherlands, that "peer reviews" will take place from time to time as part of the evaluation. In these cases, an expert staff member from one of the other secretariats assesses the work or results of the other programmes. In this way, exchange takes place that also benefits the promotion of expertise. The nature and implementation of these reviews will be discussed during the programme period.

2.3. Promoting expertise

In order to ensure the quality of the evaluations to be carried out and to be able to better assess the offers of external service providers, expertise and training in the field of evaluation methods are useful. It is therefore the intention that the 'Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator' will develop further in this area, both through self-study and by participating in thematic seminars, for example, in the framework of INTERACT.

2.4. Application and communication of the evaluation results

As described in paragraph 2.1 under 'Evaluation process', the evaluation core group shall consult on the results of each evaluation carried out, in particular with a view to possible follow-up measures. Any follow-up measures are then also decided in the Monitoring Committee. The evaluation core group is responsible for the implementation of the Monitoring Committee's decisions and reports on this implementation to the Monitoring Committee. The aim is to use the evaluation results to optimise the implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme.

In order to ensure transparency of programme implementation, the results of the evaluations carried out shall be made publicly available in accordance with Article 35(7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. The implementation report is published on the programme homepage. In addition, it is planned to publish the evaluation plan and the evaluation reports, possibly in aggregate form, also on the programme homepage (www.interregmeuserhine.eu). In accordance with the advice in the European Commission's Guidance document on the evaluation plan, evaluation reports, including supporting documents, will be uploaded via the SFC 2021-2027 portal and thus made accessible to the European Commission.

2.5. Budget for the implementation of the evaluation plan

For the performance of evaluations, a budget of € 150.000 in external costs is estimated.

Activity	Budget
Mid-term evaluation	€ 50.000
Major impact evaluation	€ 100.000
Total	€ 150.000

2.6. Strategy for the quality management of the evaluation process

To ensure the quality of the evaluations to be carried out, the following measures are used, among others:

2.6.1. Establishment of an Evaluation Core Group

The evaluation core group is distinguished by the fact that it includes representatives of the bodies that supervise and monitor the projects of the programme, as well as the subsidy providers and the bodies of the programme management. This will ensure that evaluations are planned in such a way that they are of the best benefit to all programme participants. The core group also ensures that all evaluations are carried out in a professional and ethical manner. If necessary, the core group can be expanded with external experts/advisors from society and science, or advice from external experts can be consulted during discussions within the core group.

2.6.2. Careful planning of the evaluations by the Evaluation Core Group

Evaluations are carefully planned by the evaluation core group based on this evaluation plan.

This planning includes intensive consultation on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the specific evaluation questions and an estimate of the required data. The *terms of reference* for (parts of) evaluations to be carried out externally comprise the elements as described in Appendix 1 of the European Commission's Guidance document on Evaluation Plans and are established in the core group.

2.6.3. Quality criteria in the selection of external service providers

When selecting external service providers for the performance of (parts of) evaluations, the award will be made on the basis of the criterion 'most economically advantageous offer'. In concrete terms, this means that in addition to price criteria, quality criteria are also used. At least half of the quality criteria will be taken into account in the final assessment.

2.6.4. Intensive contact and exchange between the programme/core group and external service provider

External service providers who carry out (parts of) evaluations or who register for them have a senior programme manager as a permanent point of contact in the programme, with whom they are in close contact throughout the entire evaluation process. The need for bilateral consultation or consultation with the core group, or for progress and interim reports is determined individually for each evaluation, but as a rule it comes down to at least one or two detailed discussions with the contact persons at the MA, a regular e-mail exchange, at least one interim report on (preliminary) evaluation results and a presentation to the Core Group Evaluation with subsequent discussion.

2.6.5. Internal evaluations

In principle, the same quality management measures apply to evaluations carried out internally as to evaluations carried out externally. Instead of terms of reference, an 'evaluation concept' is developed, in which all relevant data about the evaluation are recorded and supplemented with concrete information about the method used, the data to be used and the internal division of tasks in the execution of the evaluation. This document will be coordinated in the core group. The MA coordinates the evaluation activities, and the core group is closely involved in the evaluation process. In addition, in order to ensure the independence and objectivity of the evaluation results, internal evaluations may be validated by an external evaluator.

2.6.6. Follow-up measures

The implementation of follow-up measures for evaluations is supervised by the Evaluation Core Group, which reports to the Monitoring Committee.

2.7. Update of the evaluation plan

During the course of the Programme, changes or problems may arise that require a supplement, modification or update of the evaluation plan to keep the evaluation plan in line with the Programme. At least parts 2.8 and 3 of the evaluation plan are therefore verified and updated at least once a year – if there is reason to do so – according to the method described in the subsection 'Evaluation process' in section 2.1. The final decision on this lies with the Monitoring Committee.

The update of the evaluation plan can take place in the period March-May and can be combined with the preparation of the annual implementation report, which describes the state of implementation of the evaluation plan and the results of evaluations. The evaluation plan may also be submitted to the Monitoring Committee, which may be informed of the progress made in the implementation of the evaluation plan.

2.8. Timetable for planned evaluations and required reports

A timetable has been drawn up for the planned evaluations, which is shown at the top of page 12. The timetable takes into account the periodic reports that the programme is required to submit to the European Commission. These mandatory reports are also listed below.

The planned evaluations are in bold.

When (conclusion)	What	Who
Every quarter	Quarterly reporting of data pursuant to Article 32 ETC (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059), on the data in accordance with the template of Annex VII of the CPR.	Internal (led by the BAF)
Every calendar year	Annual performance report pursuant to Article 32 ETC (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059), on the topics referred to in Article 40(1) CPR.	Internal (led by the BAF)
Maximum Q2 2027	Mid-term evaluation of programme implementation, with inventory of first projects and estimation of the programme objectives	External
Maximum Q4 2028	Major impact evaluation under Article 35(2) ETC Regulation	External
Q4 2030 (no later than 15-02-2031)	Final performance report under Article 33 ETC	Internal (led by the BAF)

3. Planned evaluation periods for the 2021-2027 programme period

The planned evaluations are described separately in section 3.1. Without regular reporting obligations, this concerns the two evaluations in bold from the table in section 2.8. In the following sections, the two evaluations are described in more detail. If necessary, additional evaluations are scheduled, or the thematic emphasis of the planned evaluations is adjusted.

3.1. Overview and timetable

When (conclusion)	What	Who
Maximum Q2 2027	Mid-term evaluation of programme implementation, with inventory of first projects and estimation of the programme objectives	External
Maximum Q4 2028	Major impact evaluation under Article 35(2) ETC Regulation	External

As both evaluations are external, in terms of strategy, it is recommended to have a single tender, divided into lots. The tender will have to be published by September 2026 at the latest.

3.2. Mid-term evaluation of programme implementation

3.2.1. Theme

The subject of this mid-term evaluation is various aspects of programme implementation, in the first place, those described in 1.3. If other specific issues emerge during the implementation of the programme, they will also be examined.

Also, specific attention will be dedicated to:

- the STIPP initiative - SME Grant Scheme due to its importance and novelty in the programme 2021-2027 context;
- The ongoing call 5 due to its specific characteristics in the programme history.

3.2.2. Background/necessity

See explanation in 1.3.

3.2.3. Scope, type of evaluation, central questions

This mid-term evaluation concerns the Interreg 2021-2027 programme. However, when evaluating individual aspects, such as administrative burdens, comparisons can also be made with previous Interreg programmes.

The main questions of the mid-term evaluation of programme implementation are: Is programme implementation effective, efficient and in accordance with planning? What adjustments and changes are necessary (or desirable)?

For the reasons set out in 1.3. identified main aspects of the mid-term evaluation, the following key questions are conceivable:

- *Administrative burden*: How are the administrative burdens for beneficiaries in the programme assessed? Have simplifications/improvements been made compared to the Interreg V programme? On what points are further simplifications necessary or desirable?
- *Projects of all priorities*: What is the match between the projects already approved and the thematic areas defined in advance in the programme document? On which topic areas should project development be concentrated in the future? (To what extent) have the special needs and the defined social challenges of the programme area been taken into account in the project selection?
- *Indicators*: Have realised values already been entered for all indicators? Are the (target) values of the indicators clearly substantiated? Are the definitions in the methodological document and the accompanying indicator sheets used correctly? What problems arise in working with the indicators? To what extent do the selected projects contribute to the overall programme objectives with their results (indicators)?
- *Forms*: Are the (digital) forms of the programme applied correctly, and do they provide the desired information? Are there unnecessary or missing elements? What changes are desirable?

It is also analysed whether there have been any changes during the programme implementation which have had an impact and whether any follow-up measures have been implemented. In addition, other current aspects of programme implementation can be evaluated.

The mid-term evaluation includes all programme priorities of the Interreg programme 2021-2027.

3.2.4. Methods and data required

This mid-term evaluation is carried out externally.

Internal call evaluations and the evaluation of the Steering Committee led by KplusV must be taken into account in the mid-term evaluation.

Desk research is particularly suitable as a method, based on data from the monitoring system (project applications, progress reports, indicator tables, etc.) and documents from the programme bodies. In addition, interviews or questions submitted to project representatives and programme bodies can provide important insights into specific aspects of programme implementation. For comparison with the previous programme, old evaluation reports and data from the old monitoring system can be consulted. The aim is to use both qualitative and quantitative data, depending on the specific central question.

3.2.5. Duration and provisional date

The duration of the mid-term evaluation is estimated at 3 to 6 months (including external guidance and validation). The mid-term report will have to be concluded by June 2027, at the latest. By then, it is expected that several projects will already be in the implementation phase,

several calls will have already been completed (including the ongoing call 5), and the programme processes will have taken 'fixed form', so that an evaluation is meaningful.

3.2.6. Estimated budget

€ 50.000 is available for the mid-term evaluation.

This amount also includes the inventory of the first programme results and the first estimate of the programme objectives (see 3.3).

3.3. Major impact evaluation (large)

3.3.1. Theme

This major impact evaluation focuses on the 'impact' of the programme, i.e. the effectiveness and impact of the programme, as well as the achievement of its objectives and efficiency. The major impact evaluation should consist of an analysis of projects in the programme and of their results and impacts. In addition, the programme result indicators developed for the entire programme area should be measured, and the contribution of the programme (and external factors) to the change in the values of the result indicators should be analysed. Based on these steps, an evaluation of the programme objectives' achievement should be provided.

Specific attention will be dedicated to:

- the STIPP initiative - SME Grant Scheme due to its importance and novelty in the programme 2021-2027 context;
- The ongoing call 5 due to its specific characteristics in the programme history.

3.3.2. Background/necessity

See explanation in 1.3.

3.3.3. Scope, type of the evaluation, central questions

The major impact evaluation can be carried out either theory-based or counterfactual (with a control group) (see Commission guidance document on monitoring and evaluation). Counterfactual methods are difficult to implement for Interreg programmes, so it can be assumed that the impact evaluations of Interreg Meuse-Rhine will be mainly theory-based and data-based. This type of major impact evaluation mainly checks whether and how the 'intervention logic' of the programme functions.

This results in the following possible central questions for each programme priority:

- What are the effects of the programme? Why, how, under which circumstances and for whom does the programme have an effect/function in the intervention logic of the programme?
- What are the results and effects of the projects within the programme? Do the projects contribute to achieving the programme objectives? If so, to what extent? Are the projects effective? Have they achieved the planned results and impacts? Are there any unexpected effects? Which instruments lead to the best results and effects?

- Are the projects efficient? Have the planned results been achieved with the lowest possible use of costs?
- Which changes have occurred as a result of the programme? Which changes are there in the values of the programme's result indicators? Which part does the programme play in these changes? Which other factors are influencing?

The focus is on the programme's output and result indicators and on any changes that have occurred since the first mid-term evaluation. Exactly which components will be evaluated depends, among other things, on the findings of the mid-term evaluation. The impact measurement consists of the measurement and analysis of the values of the output and result indicators. Focus on the questions: is the programme likely to achieve its objectives? Are changes/adjustments within the programme necessary to achieve the programme objectives in terms of defined indicators and associated target values? Is it likely that the programme has achieved its objectives (both quantitative and qualitative) or will achieve them in the longer term? What recommendations can be given to a successor programme?

The major impact evaluation includes all programme priorities of the Interreg programme 2021-2027 and the follow-up to previous recommendations from the mid-term evaluation. In particular, as the results and impact of innovation projects can only be determined in the longer term, the major impact assessment could also include an evaluation of the (longer-term) impact and/or sustainability of the Interreg V programme in terms of innovation (see 1.2), possibly as a complement to the evaluation of the current programme or in the form of a comparison. The extent to which this is useful will be determined in due course.

3.3.4. Methods and data needed

The major impact evaluation is carried out externally, with the help of the programme bodies (e.g. in the collection and provision of data).

The methods for measuring the result indicators are often already established, as part of the definition of the relevant indicators. The choice of the other impact assessment methods should be left to the relevant external service provider, as it has the required experience and expertise. For example, the evaluation of the projects and the values of the result indicators may involve the use of literature analyses, case studies, surveys, interviews or focus groups. The data required are very diverse and both quantitative and qualitative in nature. In addition to programme data (= data from the monitoring system and other data from the projects), other data from the entire programme area are also needed. This includes, for example, statistical data on aspects of both programme priorities and studies on the impact of comparable interventions. The evaluation methods should be determined by the external service provider, depending on the available or easily obtainable data.

3.3.5. Duration and provisional date

The major impact evaluation is scheduled at the end of the programme (to be ended maximum Q4 2028). The duration of the major impact evaluation is estimated to be 6 to 9 months.

3.3.6. Estimated budget

€ 100.000 is available for the major impact evaluation.

The Managing Authority of the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme,
22 April 2026