

Interreg



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Meuse – Rhine (NL – BE – DE)

Communication – visibility obligations
for projects involving physical
investment or the purchase of
equipment (plaques and stickers)

Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)

2021-2027

1. Introduction

This document explains the visibility rules for Interreg Meuse-Rhine projects that include equipment, infrastructure, or other physical investments.

If your project has a total budget of more than EUR 100.000 and includes the purchase of equipment or physical investment, you will need to place a plaque or sticker to show that the project receives support from the European Union.

The purpose of these rules is to make EU support visible to the public. If the rules are not followed and the issue is not corrected, a financial correction of 2% may be applied.

This guide explains:

- when the rules apply,
- what kind of plaque or sticker is needed,
- where it should be placed,
- what to do for mobile equipment,
- and how to get support from the programme.

If you are unsure whether the rules apply to your project, please contact your project manager through your lead partner.

2. Legal background

The communication and visibility requirements described in this document are based on Article 50 CPR (Regulation 2021/1060)¹ and Article 36 ETC Regulation (Regulation 2021/1059)². Among others, these two articles lay down obligations for project partners concerning visibility requirements.

Under these provisions, beneficiaries of EU funding must ensure that support from the European Union is visible to the public. In the case of operations involving physical investment or the purchase of equipment, this includes the display of durable plaques or billboards presenting the emblem of the Union.

¹ Article 50(1)c) CPR: “beneficiaries shall (...) displaying durable plaques or billboards clearly visible to the public, that present the emblem of the Union in accordance with the technical characteristics laid down in Annex IX, as soon as the physical implementation of operations involving physical investment starts or purchased equipment is installed”

² Article 36(4)c) ETC: “each partner of an Interreg operation (...) shall (...) displaying durable plaques or billboards clearly visible to the public, presenting the emblem of the Union in accordance with the technical characteristics laid down in Annex IX of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, as soon as the physical implementation of an Interreg operation involving physical investment or the purchase of equipment starts or purchased equipment is installed, with regard to operations supported by an Interreg fund, the total cost of which exceeds EUR 100 000”

For Interreg operations, this obligation applies where the total cost of the operation exceeds EUR 100.000.

If a project partner or final recipient does not comply with these requirements and does not correct the issue, a financial correction of 2% of the fund support may be applied. As described in the programme policy towards irregularities, financial corrections, recovery and liabilities, non-compliance with the obligation laid down in these two articles, a correction of 2% of the support from the funds can be taken in case a partner of an Interreg operation or a final recipient has not taken remedial actions to respect the transparency and communication provisions.

This document explains how these legal requirements are interpreted and applied within the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme.

3. Interpretation

3.1. The general rule

The Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme follows the interpretation of the European Commission.

This means that for all projects exceeding EUR 100.000, involving physical investment (equipment or infrastructure and works costs under the cost catalogue) or the purchase of equipment, items purchased under the equipment or other infrastructure and works cost categories are subject to the visibility requirements. In practice, plaques must be placed for all such items purchased under the project.

According to the European Commission, it does not matter *“whether the purchase of equipment is the main purpose of the operation (project) or whether the amount of support to the equipment was a significant part of the co-financing (ERDF) or not. So as long as the total cost of the project exceeds € 100.000 and equipment/infrastructure is purchased within the framework of implementation of the project, the obligation applies. The plaques should be permanently placed on the equipment, mentioning EU co-financing, no matter where such equipment is moved”*.

According to the European Commission, *“The rules on information and communication apply to operations that have already been selected. This means that after support has been provided to the operation, full compliance with information and communication rules should be ensured”*.

The technical characteristics of the plaques are laid down in Annex IX of the CPR.

3.2. How to deal with mobile equipment and items that cannot carry a plaque

According to the Commission, “for mobile equipment, the relevant display should be clearly visible to the public. It may be placed where such equipment is normally stored, for example, on the exterior of a warehouse, if it is not possible to put a plaque on the object itself. It is considered good practice to indicate the support from the Union on all equipment, for example, by using stickers”.

Therefore, and more generally, the Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE) programme asks all project partners to use stickers where there are good reasons why plaques are not suitable for equipment purchased under a project. This should be discussed directly with the project manager at the programme.

To conclude: Where the size and nature of the purchased equipment or investment item allow it, the plaque must be placed directly on the item. Where this is not technically feasible or proportionate, a programme sticker identifying EU support should be placed on the purchased item, while the durable plaque should be displayed at the location where the equipment or investment is normally stored or used within the beneficiary's premises. The same approach applies to mobile equipment.

3.3. For partners using cost option 3

Project partners under cost option 3 (as presented in the programme cost catalogue) do not have to declare direct costs (including equipment and infrastructure). The obligation to display plaques therefore does **not** apply in this context.

However, the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme considers it good practice to indicate support from the Union by using stickers if equipment is directly used in the framework of the project.

4. How to get plaques and stickers

To avoid differences between projects and partners, and to ensure the technical requirements in Annex IX of the CPR are respected, the Interreg Meuse-Rhine programme can provide plaques and stickers to project partners when this is legally required.

Project partners involved in a project with a budget over EUR 100.000 and with equipment or infrastructure costs are invited to discuss this with their programme project manager (via their lead partner). The programme will then provide plaques or stickers where necessary.