



Procurement Contract for an NWE Territorial Analysis and Programme Draft Terms of reference

(CCTP – Cahier des Clauses Techniques Particulières)

Article 1 – Background and uncertainties

The EEIG GECOTTI-PE, funded and managed by the Conseil Régional Hauts-de-France (France) and Wallonia Region (Belgium), is a European Economic Interest Group of Cross-border, Transnational and Interregional Cooperation which employs three Joint Secretariats (JS) managing three strands of "INTERREG" European Programmes. The JS assists the Managing Authority which is the Hauts-de-France Region. The Contracting Authority is the EEIG GECOTTI-PE, acting in the name of the Programme Managing Authority.

Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) calls for action by the European Union to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion and promote overall harmonious development by reducing disparities between the levels of development of regions and promoting development in least favoured regions. In this framework, Interreg programmes contribute to this overall EU objective through the promotion of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation as well as a balanced and sustainable development of the EU territory.

The Member States participating in the Interreg North-West Europe (NWE) Programme have decided to setup a task force (NTF) to prepare the future Cooperation Programme for the 2021-2027 programming period.

History

The NWE Programme represents a long history of cooperation on territorial matters even before the existence of the EU and Interreg (since 1955 CRONWE gathered planners from Belgium, Netherland, Luxembourg, France, Germany and England). The founding parents for NWE are the IRMA and the NWMA Programmes (1994-1999) and the themes of both programmes (river management and metropole issues) were still visible until the IVB period (2007-2013).



Each period was built on solid territorial analyses and SWOT analyses which from period to period led to a change in programme focus. The current programme period (2014-2020) can be characterised by its focus on economic development, with key result indicators for all three priorities such as number of jobs and new products/services.

Economic and social situation

Clearly over the different periods the economic and social situation in NWE has drastically changed. The current programme wears the marks of the aftermath of the bank- and economic crises and -on the other hand- was not drafted yet with migration issues in mind. The economic situation certainly improved and, in some sectors and regions there seems even to be a shortage of labour instead of a shortage of jobs. In the meantime, the gap between the rich and the poor has increased, which combined with the ever-lasting trend of urbanisation has led to deepening of social issues and a persisting urban – rural divide.

Environment

Compared to the previous periods the emphasis of the programme has shifted from pollution and climate adaptation towards climate mitigation and resources. At any rate, climate change and energy are higher on the public agenda than at the start of the current programme.

Geography

A. Brexit

As we draft these Terms of Reference (ToR) the situation around the Brexit remains unsolved. Therefore, the territorial analysis should be flexible enough to deal with different scenarios.

B. Swixit

Switzerland will no longer be a third participating country of the NWE Programme for the new period. Participation in projects should still be possible on a case by case basis.

Budget

In absolute terms the NWE Programme has the biggest transnational budget (m€ 396). However, per capita, the Programme could well be one of the smallest, as it covers more than 180 million inhabitants and thus only a bit more than € 2 per person.

At the moment, the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF 2021-2027) for the whole of the EU has not been decided, but a reduction of budget for Cohesion and Interreg and individual programmes seems unavoidable.

As -furthermore- the budget is allocated via a Member State's key related to the number of inhabitants and NWE faces a shrinking area, the programmes' budget would be lower in all scenarios.



NWE task force (NTF)

In the context of these uncertainties it is still expected that in the period 2021-2027 a new Interreg NWE programme will exist. For this reason, the responsible ministries of Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands and the UK have decided to set up a preparatory taskforce. This taskforce has allocated the Managing Authority (MA) responsibility to the Region Hauts de France (Lille, FR). For the support of the MA a legal entity (GECOTTI-PE) is set up which is hosting the Programme Joint Secretariat (JS).

Article 2 – Object of the services

This tender is related to the recruitment of a service provider that will carry out:

- Initial task: the territorial analysis of the NWE area
- Optional tasks: drafting of the Cooperation Programme, consultations with stakeholders and finalising the Programme documents

Article 3 – Tasks to be performed

INITIAL TASK

The SWOT analysis should seek to define:

- Disparities within and challenges for NWE, with attention to specificities laid out in Art. 17 of the draft ETC regulation 2018/0199 (COM), including:
 - Economic, social and territorial disparities;
 - Joint investment needs and complementarity with other forms of support;
 - Lessons learnt from past experience;
- Needs for the territory and need for change, taking into account the relevant Country Specific Recommendations of the NWE Member States, assessed against the five ERDF Policy Objectives:
 - a **Smarter Europe**, through innovation, digitization, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses
 - a **Greener, carbon free Europe**, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change
 - a **more Connected Europe**, with strategic transport and digital networks
 - a **more Social Europe**, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare



- a **Europe closer to citizens**, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.
- And also assessed against the 2 Interreg specific policy objectives:
 - a **better Interreg governance** - support for capacity building, addressing cross-border legal and administrative challenges - support for institutional capacity to support macroregional strategies - support for trust-building, people-to-people, civil society.
 - a **safer and more secure Europe** - external borders: support for border crossing management, mobility and migration management, including the protection of migrants.
- Needs of the NWE stakeholders to absorb the funding provided by the Programme, covering target groups and partners (public and private) which can benefit from transnational cooperation projects under the five Policy Objectives and two Interreg Specific Objectives.
- Find commonalities on which regions and countries can cooperate transnationally.
- Define the specific niche (or comparative strength) of the NWE programme and look for synergies with relevant EU programmes.
- The SWOT/Territorial analysis should be flexible due to the uncertainty around the Brexit and provide views taking into account a few scenarios when the UK expresses its intention to continue to participate as a third participating country or when the UK doesn't want to participate in NWE anymore.

The required outcome of the INITIAL TASK is a report with

- A consistent territorial analysis of NWE against all 5 ERDF Policy Objectives and the 2 Interreg objectives responding to the art.17 of the draft ETC regulation.
- A definition of recommended functional geographical area and target groups of particular focus, based on the assessment of needs and the stakeholder/ target group/partner analysis, with regard to the three categories of the Cohesion Policy investments for less-developed, transition and more-developed regions, taking into account the specificities of urban, intermediate and rural areas and also central versus peripheral areas.
- An identification of the recommended key thematic areas for Programme intervention, based on the needs assessment and the five ERDF Policy Objectives and the two Interreg Objectives, together with accompanying justification.



In other words, **the key question** the territorial analysis should answer is:

-seen the 7 policy objectives from the draft EC regulations (ERDF and ETC), seen the changing and uncertain geography and budget, seen the changing economic and social situation- what type of territorial projects would deliver added value to European Territorial Cohesion through transnational cooperation?

OPTIONAL TASKS

*Please note: The external support for the following tasks is **subject to a further decision** to grant these tasks to the winner of the "INITIAL TASK".*

1) Drafting phase

After the decision on the general thematic focus of the future Programme, drafting the programme strategy, priorities and specific objectives based on inputs from the NTF and MA/JS (for planning the offer please take sections 1 and 2 of the Cooperation Programme (CCI2014TC16RFTN006) for the 2014-2020 funding period as reference point);

2) Consultations with stakeholders

Assist the MA/JS in collecting feedback from National Authorities and thematic experts on draft priorities by means of surveys and interactive workshops (for planning the offer contributions to one survey and three workshops should be assumed);

3) Finalising NWE Interreg Programme document.

Based on external and internal feedback, redrafting Programme texts, in several revision rounds (for planning the offer three revision rounds should be assumed);



Article 4 – Sources of information

- Major statistical data (demographic data, GDP, etc. to grasp the main socio-economic characteristics of the territory)
- ESPON data and territorial analyses performed to date, including the Territorial Impact Assessment envisaged by NWE for the first half of 2020
- Commission draft regulations, European Parliament position and Council Workgroup documents.
- Commission NWE Orientation Paper (to be issued in November 2019)
- Commission Border orientation papers
- Territorial analyses / SWOTs from the previous programming periods (IIIB, IVB and VB)
- Territorial Agenda for the EU.
- Territorial Cohesion Story lines (Spatial Foresight brief)
- Existing documents relevant to the territory (Country Specific Recommendations, relevant policy frameworks and documents like Regional Innovation Monitor Plus, etc. but also documents from the VB period, e.g. the implementation evaluation of the NWE Programme, the gap analysis and Annual Implementation Report 2018, to define a specific niche for the transnational NWE programme in the 2021-2027 period and build on the lessons learned from the previous programme)
- 7th Cohesion Report, positions of EU institutions on the future cohesion policy, etc.
- The transnational practitioners' "Interreg overlaps" paper (oct.2019).
- Relevant regional and national territorial strategies and policies
- Any other study or source of information about the NWE area.

Article 5 – Practicalities

A. PROJECT AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT.

Upon assignment of the contract, the successful candidate shall discuss in detail the work plan for the execution of the service within an inception meeting.

The assignment shall be performed in an interactive way between the contractor and the MA/JS. Accordingly, regular exchanges on the study advancements should be foreseen.

The contractor is expected to adapt the scope and approach of its assignment according to the developments of the policy framework for Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, including negotiations of the legislative package and changes in the programme geography.



The quality of the deliveries must be in line with the quality standards expected by the MA/JS. In case that the outputs of the service are not in line with such standards, the MA/JS may ask for improvements free of charge.

B. DELIVERABLES AND TIMING

The successful candidate shall start immediately after the award of the service contract and commit itself to the following deliveries and timeline.

The main deliverable for the initial task is a report covering the needs as described. The report shall be written in a concise and easy to understand style and shall present contents in an attractive and visual way (through maps, charts, pictures, etc.) which allows its communication and dissemination to different programme stakeholders. The report shall include an executive summary.

The main deliverables for the optional tasks are a draft of the first parts of the programme document, a report on the outcome of the consultations with stakeholders and a final version of the NWE Interreg Programme document.

Indicative time line:

INITIAL CONTRACT TASK

Review phase

Kick off meeting	January 2020
Participation in NTF meeting	February 2020
Intermediate report	March 2020
NTF 'Input workshop'	March 2020
Draft report	April 2020
Participation in NTF meeting	April 2020
Final SWOT report	June 2020

OPTIONAL CONTRACT TASKS

Drafting phase	starting September 2020
Consultations with stakeholders	November 2020
Finalising NWE Interreg Programme document.	December 2020

Delays with the above timeline shall be granted only in exceptional cases and shall be previously authorised by the MA/JS.