

EN

ANNEX

INTRA-REGIONAL MULTIANNUAL INDICATIVE PROGRAMME FOR OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES FOR THE PERIOD 2021-2027

1. Overall lines of EU international cooperation

The 13 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) are located all around the world, from the Caribbean, Arctic, North Atlantic, Indian Ocean to the Pacific. As part of the European Union's commitment to further strengthening its relationships with these territories, the [Decision on the Overseas Association including Greenland \(DOAG\)](#) of October 2021 has allocated envelopes for territorial and regional cooperation, including a dedicated intra-regional envelope of EUR 15 million.

Mounting global challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics or food insecurity and a quest for genuinely sustainable development with enhanced connectivity as envisioned by the EU's [Global Gateway](#), more than ever call on OCTs to co-operate with their neighbours, other OCTs, outermost regions (OR) and third countries alike. Regional and intra-regional cooperation have strong potential to underpin this endeavour by creating economies of scale, synergies to address common challenges and by establishing platforms to foster dialogues, mutual understanding and peer learning. This is also an opportunity for enhancing the regional integration of OCTs in their respective region.

Intra-regional cooperation is a vital aspect of the EU's approach to OCTs, as it promotes closer ties and collaboration notably with neighbouring countries, outermost regions, and regional organizations through pilot actions. This type of cooperation is at the core of the EU's work, and the funding allocated should encourage the OCTs to work more closely with their neighbours to address common challenges and seize opportunities for joint initiatives for mutual benefit. It should be noted that the funding for non-OCT partners of such intra-regional cooperation must be additional and proportional to the funds for the OCTs.

This new approach to cooperation builds upon previous attempts under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), such as the collaboration between 'Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises' (TAAF)/Mayotte or Saint-Martin/Sint Maarten and should further strengthen the partnerships between OCTs and their regional neighbours. It allows to pilot innovative actions demand-driven on a wide array of themes (see below under 5) including those not covered by the priority areas of the territorial and regional cooperation.

The intra-regional Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) also takes into consideration the achievements of the previous programmes funded by the 11th EDF (such as the thematic programme Green Overseas) and by horizontal EU programmes. Opportunities exist to coordinate and combine funding with Interreg cooperation programmes managed by the

Commission¹. In the Pacific regions, an example which could inform intra-regional cooperation is the ongoing KIWA initiative², co-financed in large parts by the EU and France with the objective to support nature-based solutions for biodiversity and climate change adaptation in the Pacific (third countries and OCTs).

2. Process

Implementing intra-regional cooperation requires setting out concrete initiatives through individual action documents to be adopted via individual Commission decisions.

Technical assistance in designing concrete initiatives can be made available through the Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) and coordination will be ensured through the creation of a focal points network, with one focal point per OCT, who serves as contact for the Commission during the implementation steps. With the help of the focal points, a community of intra-regional cooperation practice could be established.

The Commission holds the overall coordination, supported by the EU Delegations and offices who manage EU-OCT cooperation programmes.

The implementation of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) could go beyond 2027, but implementing actions have to be adopted by Commission decision before end of 2027 at the latest in order to secure funds.

The first intra-regional actions (in the format of Action Documents) should be adopted as soon as possible in 2024 and EUR 2 million have tentatively been reserved to that end.

Priority is given to projects under the Global Gateway, which could be implemented, for instance, as part of Flagship projects and Team Europe Initiatives. The maturity of the proposal and the degree of innovation, as well as sustainability, will all be considered in the prioritisation of targeted projects.

The operational duration of an Action should not, in principle, exceed five years.

3. Eligibility

A minimum of one OCT and at least one non-OCT entity (a country, including neighbouring African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACPs), outermost region or regional organisation) need to cooperate to be eligible for intra-regional funding.

Article 84 of the DOAG set out the eligibility criteria for (intra-) regional financing.

Regarding geographic eligibility, Article 84(2) states that:

¹ This is notably the case in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean regions, where a number of OCTs already participate actively in Interreg programmes managed by some of the outermost regions. Further north, Greenland is an active participant in the Interreg “Northern Periphery and Arctic” programme and Saint Pierre et Miquelon is interested in taking part too.

² [Multi-Donor Climate Resilience Fund - Kiwa Initiative](#)

“Within the regional allocation, an intra-regional allocation may be used for operations benefitting and involving:

(a) one or more OCTs and at least one of the following:

(i) one or more outermost regions referred to in Article 349 TFEU;

(ii) one or more neighbouring ACP and/or non-ACP States or territories;

(iii) one or more regional bodies of which OCTs, or ACP States or one or more of the outermost regions are members;

or

(b) one or more entities, authorities, or other bodies from at least one OCT, being members of an EGTC³, and one or more outermost regions and/or one or more neighbouring ACP and/or non-ACP States or territories.”

Regarding criteria of funding, Article 84(3) states that:

“The funding to enable participation of the ACP States, outermost regions and other countries and territories to OCT regional cooperation programmes shall be additional to funds allocated to the OCTs under this Decision.”

4. Requirements for participating beneficiary partners: Proportionality and reciprocity

All participating beneficiary partners need to contribute not only with ideas but also with financial resources to the Action. In kind contributions are possible. For the OCTs, the funding source will be the intra-regional envelope.

Article 84(4) of the DOAG states that:

“The participation of ACP States, outermost regions and other countries or territories in programmes established pursuant to this Decision shall be envisaged only to the extent that:

(a) equivalent provisions exist in the framework of relevant Union’s programmes or in the relevant funding programmes of third countries and territories not covered by Union programmes; and

(b) the principle of proportionality is respected, taking into account the capacities of stakeholders, in particular their financial capacities under instruments of the Union for cooperation with other countries”

Reciprocity: It is set out in relevant EU programmes, or it is foreseen by the rules and regulations of the partner entities, and written in its law/procedures to co-fund such an intra-regional project.

³ European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

For example, on the EU side, three EU cooperation instruments foresee intra-regional cooperation:

- DOAG
- NDICI-Global Europe: (Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument) for EU external action with third countries including ACP states. Managed by Commission services and the EEAS.
- ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) for economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU. Interreg is the ERDF instrument for cooperation across EU regions and countries, including outermost regions and is managed by the Commission.

Proportionality: this is a way to protect the smallest partner; in most of the cases it will be an OCT. The funding has to be proportionate. It implies that all partner entities to an intra-regional Action will have to contribute with funds. While it does not necessarily mean that all partners have to provide the same amount of funding, proportionality should, however, reflect the extent of the envisaged benefits from the project the partners derive as well the financial capacity of the partners.

Therefore, one of the first steps would be for an OCT to identify partners (third countries, OR or regional organisations) having (i) a funding programme at their disposal, (ii) express their mutual interest to engage and (iii) are ready to proportionally contribute with funds.

5. Priority areas

Intra-regional cooperation allows to pilot innovative demand-driven actions on a wide array of themes including on issues not covered by the priority areas of territorial and regional cooperation. For the intra-regional envelope, priority shall be given to cooperation in areas of mutual interest, as listed in the article 5(2) of the DOAG (see below). These areas include all the priority areas of the Global Gateway, such as Green Deal, digital, jobs and growth, education, as well as more specific priority areas concerning OCTs such as ocean, raw materials or disaster risk reduction.

The intra-regional MIP could complement territorial, as well as regional cooperation in terms of priority areas. A large flexibility is therefore available in the choice of cooperation areas, which may or may not be linked to the territorial MIP, or the regional MIP.

“DOAG General Provisions

Article 5(2) Mutual interests, complementarity and priorities

Priority shall be given to cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as:

- (a) the sustainable diversification of OCTs’ economies, including their further integration in world and regional economies; in the specific case of Greenland, the need to increase the skills of its labour force;*
- (b) fostering exchange, cooperation and partnerships for accelerating the achievement of the SDGs;*

- (c) education and training, public health, tourism and culture;*
- (d) the promotion of a green and blue economy;*
- (e) the sustainable management of natural resources, including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services;*
- (f) mitigation of climate change and adaptation to the impacts of climate change;*
- (g) the promotion of disaster risk reduction;*
- (h) the promotion of research, innovation and scientific cooperation activities;*
- (i) digital accessibility;*
- (j) the promotion of social, cultural and economic exchanges between the OCTs, their neighbours and other partners;*
- (k) the social sector, mobility of the workforce, social protection systems, food safety and food security issues;*
- (l) Arctic issues;*
- (m) the development of regional cooperation in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic and the Pacific;*
- (n) the development of intraregional cooperation in the Arctic, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic and the Pacific.”*

6. Financial allocation

The allocation for the intra-regional envelope is set out in the legal basis, the DOAG 2021-2027:

“ANNEX I - UNION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Article 1 - Allocation between the OCTs

(c) EUR 76 000 000 shall be allocated to support OCT regional programmes of which EUR 15 000 000 could support intra-regional operations, Greenland being eligible only for the intra-regional operations.”

In a first step, it is envisaged to allocate the total current available amount (EUR 15 million) by the number of OCT (13). In this case, each OCT would have the possibility, in a first phase to plan an intra-regional project, with an amount from its side of EUR 1.15 million.

Given the limited amount, it would be preferable to use it per OCT at once, to ensure bigger Actions with higher impact. If there is a pooling of OCT’s contribution, it may be possible to have several projects, even if dissemination should be avoided.

Several OCTs, even if they are not from the same region, could pool their fundings from the intra-regional envelope in one action with one or more partner entities (country, OR or regional organisation).

Additional funds could at a later stage be made available from EIB reflows (once a good take-up of the intra-regional approach has been demonstrated), and be re-allocated to the intra-regional envelope, for example, to top-up an ongoing intra-regional project, via an amendment of the relevant financing decision.

As there will be a limited number of years to present an intra-regional project Action (four years until 2027 to have Annual Action Plans), if an OCT has not presented to the Commission a concrete proposal before 31 December 2025, funds may be reallocated to another OCT that has demonstrated concrete intra-regional project's needs.

Regarding rules of implementation, they will be flexible when working with other Union programmes, as procedures from the other Union programmes could be chosen as mentioned in Article 74 of the DOAG:

“Article 74 - Financial resources

The Union shall contribute to the achievement of the association's overall objectives through the provision of

c. Where appropriate, other Union programmes may contribute to actions established under this Decision, provided that the contributions do not cover the same costs. This Decision may also contribute to measures established under other Union programmes, provided that the contributions do not cover the same costs. In such cases, the work programme covering those actions shall establish which set of rules shall be applicable.”

7. Objectives, indicators

The general objective is to foster quality intra-regional projects, that will respond to the global challenges of the OCTs in an integrated manner and with new partners.

3 indicators are proposed:

- To have at least seven OCTs involved in intra-regional project(s);
- To have at least one project with gender equality as a significant objective;
- To have at least one project related to the Global Gateway.