

# Mid-Term Evaluation of the INTERREG IIIB North-West Europe Programme

## Evaluation Report

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## 1 Executive Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

A mid-term evaluation is a legal requirement for all structural funds programmes.

**Mid-term evaluation  
legal requirement**

Rupprecht Consult – Forschung & Beratung GmbH has been appointed to carry out this mid-term evaluation of the INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme. The mid-term evaluation team has followed an iterative approach in developing its conclusions in close consultation with those involved in the Programme – beneficiaries, applicants, Programme staff, NGOs etc. Programme development so far has been assessed, then recommendations have first been drafted and discussed widely, interviews and questionnaires have provided feedback against which the original ideas have been tested and modified (see chapter 3 on methodology).

**Iterative approach  
to recommendation  
development**

In general, this mid-term evaluation process has taken place in a very supportive and constructive environment, in which the recommendations will certainly be discussed widely.

The evaluator provides the Programme stakeholders and the European Commission with suggestions for a variety of short-term, medium-term and long-term actions (31 in total) which show how a total of ten recommendations could be implemented. In general, the evaluation team has tried to focus on

- a) what should be improved immediately (within 2003),
- b) what should be changed during the remainder of the Programme after the mid-term evaluation (2004-2006) and
- c) what should be considered when setting up a successor Programme after 2006.

**Short-, medium-,  
and long-term  
recommended actions**

The Project Monitoring Committee (PMC), which is in charge of accepting or dismissing the recommendations, as well as the other readers of this Report, will first of all find suggestions concerning the strategic orientation of INTERREG IIIB NWE, also taking into account implications for a possible INTERREG IV (recommendation 1).

In recommendation 2, changes in the management structures of INTERREG IIIB NWE are suggested.

The next section (recommendations 3-9) is concerned with Programme implementation, whereas the focus of recommendation 10 is on the implementation of the suggested actions.

The recommendations as well as the process and assumptions of developing them, budget implications and the implementation timeframe are described in detail in chapter 11 of this Report. On the next page, there is an overview of the recommendations and the related actions suggested by the mid-term evaluation team.

**Implementing  
recommendations**

**Table 1: Overview of Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations and Actions**

Recommendations	Actions
<p><b>1 Focus the strategic orientation of NWE Programme and pave the way ahead</b></p> <p>Provide better focus and guidance in future Calls, enable NWE to take account of changes in North-West Europe and beyond, analyse in light of the Programme objectives and incorporate findings in a “Road Map” for future Calls.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Review Programme priorities &amp; streamline for future Calls.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Create an NWE observatory.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Develop a “Road Map” for future Calls.</p>
<p><b>2 Streamline Programme structures and procedures</b></p> <p>Reduce overlaps between NWE committees by more clearly defining and separating tasks; provide for a more balanced representation of Committees and increase the efficiency of their work.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Separate project development and proposal assessment.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Develop JTS profile as “NWE service provider”.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Balance and increase efficiency of NWE committee structures.</p>
<p><b>3 Provide for effective project development</b></p> <p>Eliminate overlaps in project development tasks and responsibilities; introduce procedures which lessen the administrative burden on project applicants; provide training structures and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Raise profile of CP’s to become the main supporters for applicants and project partners.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Apply rules and procedures which reduce the administrative burden of applicants and project partners.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Provide training for CP’s and project development opportunities.</p>
<p><b>4 Increase “quality” of proposal assessment and selection</b></p> <p>Utilise the expertise of Programme-external specialists in the proposal assessment process; adjust PSC voting procedure in order to reduce the vetoing power of one individual member state; streamline PSC meeting procedures; adjust project selection criteria.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Add external proposal assessors.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Restructure PSC meeting procedures.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Adjust selection criteria.</p>
<p><b>5 Increase efficiency of project monitoring and support</b></p> <p>Provide support to project partners (in questions of project administration, evaluation, dissemination, exploitation, etc.) and establish a project monitoring system that includes visits to project and partner sites</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Offer training seminars and thematic workshops to all project partners.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Encourage the submission of short &amp; concise reports.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Incorporate site visits as an integral element of project monitoring activities.</p>

## **6 Strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects**

Establish an Evaluation Initiative; define baseline indicators and few, but common, key indicators on the measure level to provide the basis for sound project and Programme evaluation; recognise the importance of evaluation early on in the application process

- 6.1** Establish an Evaluation Initiative.
- 6.2** Improve baseline data availability.
- 6.3** Strengthen commonality.
- 6.4** Reduce complexity & strengthen relevance.
- 6.5** Make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of the Fifth Call for Proposals.

## **7 Increase awareness of the Programme - communication & dissemination strategy**

Increase awareness of the Programme and establish specific communication strategies to address specific groups, in particular potential “new” applicants and “multipliers”; Make use of all communication media; organise further events to bring together various NWE stakeholders

- 7.1** Increase awareness of the programme.
- 7.2** Identify target groups and address them with specific communication strategies.
- 7.3** Hold a “Conference of the Regions”.

## **8 Exploit results on a European level**

Focus efforts and budget now on carrying over and utilising project and Programme results after the end of the Programme

- 8.1** Focus on “project sustainability” after NWE funding.
- 8.2** Compare “Good Practices” with other IIIB Programmes.

## **9 Create synergies between projects & policies**

Create opportunities for co-operation and exchange on all levels, including NWE stakeholders, regions, politicians, staff members of Programme secretariats, project partners, and experts in specific areas

- 9.1** Create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE.
- 9.2** Involve politicians and other decision makers.
- 9.3** Cluster projects thematically.

## **10 Implement Recommendations**

Distribute and discuss mid-term evaluation recommendations widely; provide a structure within the Programme to review and, if necessary over time, adjust the recommendations

- 10.1** Distribute Evaluation Report widely.
- 10.2** Frequently review mid-term evaluation recommendations.
- 10.3** Allocate “miscellaneous budget line” to implement mid-term recommendations.

## 2 Guide to the Reader

This Evaluation Report is the concluding documentation of the INTERREG IIIB mid-term evaluation<sup>1</sup> in the North-West Europe (NWE) region.

The core of the mid-term evaluation is the assessment of how well the Programme is performing in reality. The overall aim of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the establishment and initial results of the various forms of assistance and to make recommendations for any changes needed to ensure they achieve their objectives.

**Assessment of  
Programme  
performance**

The Evaluation Report covers in a comprehensive manner the evaluation methodology used (chapter 3), a description of previous Programme activities (chapter 4), observations and assessments concerning the Programme's priorities (chapter 5), evaluation framework (chapter 6), management (chapter 7), implementation phase (chapter 8), European Added Value (chapter 9), and a comparison with other INTERREG IIIB Programmes (chapter 10). The Evaluation Report culminates in conclusions and recommendations (chapter 11).

Recommendations are provided as a separate annex to this document. The reader may choose to print out this table and use it as a parallel document when reading the Evaluation Report.

It is anticipated that, in addition to other readers interested in the mid-term evaluation results, this report will primarily be of interest to:

- Project partners
- Project applicants (current and potential)
- Programme stakeholders<sup>2</sup>
- The European Commission
- Newcomers to INTERREG IIIB NWE

**...five different  
reader types**

Each reader type will be interested in different aspects of the Evaluation Report. Therefore, "customised" reader guidelines for navigating through the document are provided.

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<sup>1</sup> A mid-term evaluation is a legal requirement for all structural funds programmes. The aims are to "... examine in the light of the ex-ante evaluation, the initial results of the assistance, their relevance and the extent to which the targets have been attained. It shall also assess the use made of financial resources and the operation of monitoring and implementation" (Art. 42 of General Regulations).

<sup>2</sup> Programme stakeholders include INTERREG IIIB NWE committee members, Spatial Vision Working Group members, Contact Points, employees of the Joint Technical Secretariat as well as INTERREG stakeholders in the member states and the Swiss Confederation.



### Who should read what?

**Project partners** may be most interested in the observations and assessments provided in chapter 5.2 dealing with the orientation of already approved projects towards the Programme objectives. Furthermore, project partners should read chapters 8.3–8.6 of the Evaluation Report which focus on the support, monitoring, and evaluation of ongoing projects as well as the publicity, dissemination and exploitation of project results.

**Current and potential project applicants** will ultimately want to see their project proposal approved. Therefore, project applicants may be most interested in reading about observations and assessments concerning the Programme's strategic priorities (chapter 5) as well as its project development and assessment phases (chapters 8.1 and 8.2). In addition, some background information about INTERREG IIIB NWE is provided at the end of this chapter.

**Programme stakeholders** include Committee members and decision makers of the Member States and the Swiss Confederation who will decide upon the Programme's strategic orientation after the mid-term mark of the Programme. In addition, this reader group includes members of the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and Contact Points (CP's) who carry most of the operational (day-to-day) activities within the Programme. The different Programme stakeholders should read chapters 5-10. In addition, they should study the recommendation chapter 11 and here in particular the short-term recommendations intended to come into effect within the lifetime of the Programme.

**The European Commission** will be most interested in the comprehensive results of the mid-term evaluation. Therefore, the European Commission should concentrate most on the recommendations provided in chapter 11. Among the various actions suggested for each of the ten recommendations, those that are envisaged to come into effect in the long-term, i.e. after the completion of the current Programme in 2006, may be of particular interest to the European Commission in setting up a possible "INTERREG IV". In addition, the methodology chapter 3 as well as chapters 9 concerning the European Added Value of the Programme and 10 which provides a comparison of INTERREG IIIB Programmes should be of interest to the European Commission.

**Newcomers to INTERREG IIIB NWE** may be most interested in a description of the Programme activities in order to better understand what the Programme is about. Furthermore, a brief explanation of INTERREG IIIB NWE is provided as an introduction to chapter 4 which may be especially interesting for newcomers and other readers not actively involved in the Programme

**Long-term  
recommendations to  
consider for set-up of  
possible INTERREG IV**

### 3 Methodology

A "pragmatic mix" of methodologies and tools was used in order to capture the wide-ranging aspects of the mid-term evaluation.

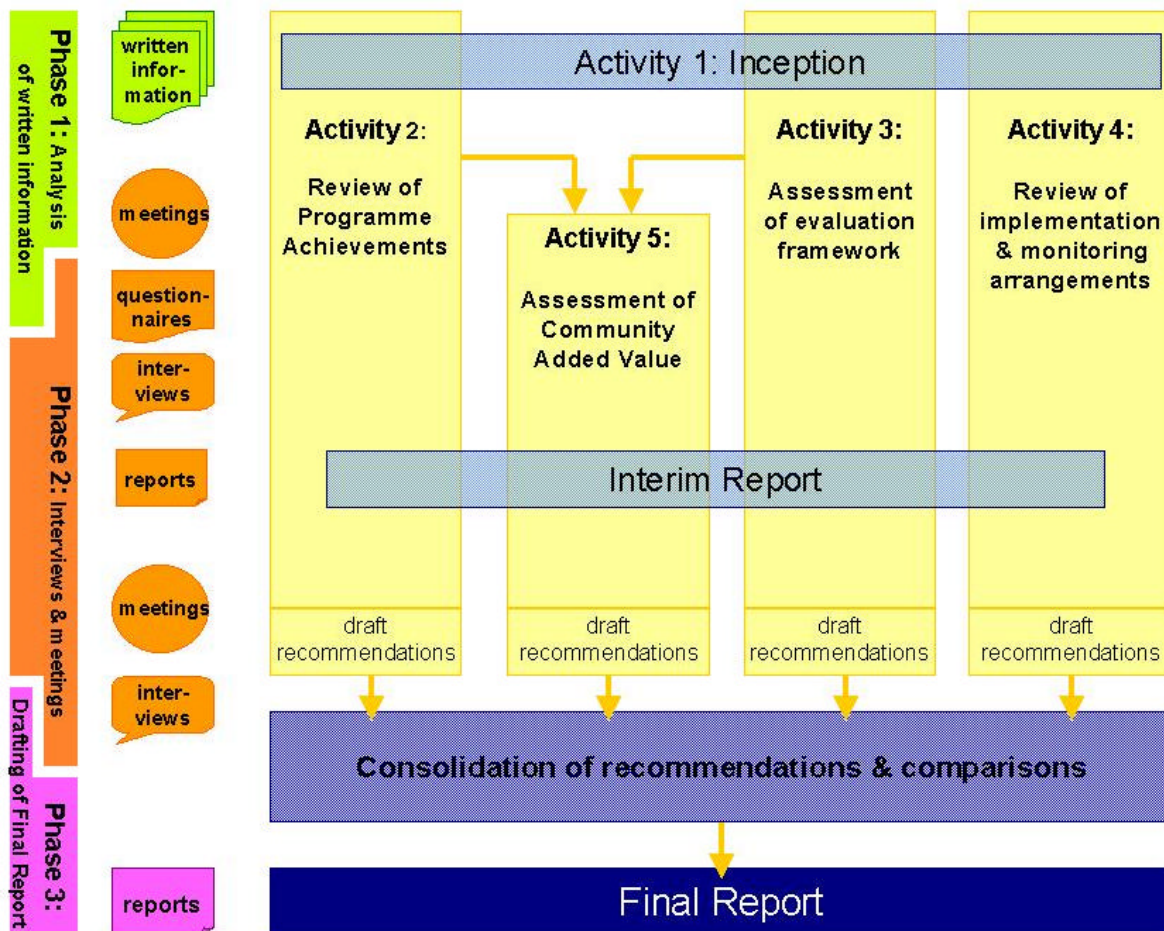
**“Pragmatic mix” of methodologies and tools**

The basis of the mid-term evaluation was a thorough analysis of a wide range of written information. Furthermore, a broad stakeholder involvement was an essential component of the evaluation methodology. The evaluators gained significant added value from close interaction and wide consultation with INTERREG stakeholders in all areas of the NWE Programme through the following tools:

- a mid-term assessment workshop and other meetings
- structured face-to-face interviews and
- a stakeholder questionnaire

Tools and activities of the mid-term evaluation are graphically depicted in figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Activity Framework**



A workplan was laid out including the following individual activities carried out by the mid-term evaluation team:

**Evaluation exercise following a detailed workplan**

Activity 1: Inception

Activity 2: Review of Programme achievements

Activity 3: Assessment of evaluation framework

Activity 4: Review of implementation and monitoring arrangements

Activity 5: Assessment of Community added value

Activity 6: Consolidation of results and recommendations

## Tools

### Meetings

As part of the evaluation exercise, the mid-term evaluators attended a variety of Programme-internal and external meetings listed in table 2.

**Table 2: Meeting Attendance of the Mid-Term Evaluation Team**

Meeting	Location	Date
PSC 3	Cardiff	3-4 June 2003
Priority 3 Workshop "Water Resources & Flood Damage Prevention"	Bonn	16 June 2003
Fifth European Conference on the evaluation of the Structural Funds (Theme: "Challenges for Evaluation in an Enlarged Europe")	Budapest	26-27 June 2003
Mid-Term Assessment Workshop	Lille	1 July 2003
First Evaluation Working Group Meeting	Lille	2 July 2003
Telephone-Conference with Mid-Term Evaluation Teams of the North Sea-, the Baltic Sea-, and the Alpine Space Region	---	22 September 2003
Second Evaluation Working Group Meeting	Lille	29 September 2003
PMC 4	Brussels	23 October 2003

The evaluators organised and moderated a "Mid-Term Assessment Workshop" in Lille in July 2003. The workshop reflected on key questions regarding future programming of NWE in view of changed circumstances, actual contributions from projects, and availability of funds. Participants were encouraged to offer non-institutional (but personal) views in this respect. Confidentiality of statement at the workshop was guaranteed as was the case for all personal information received.

A wide representation of stakeholders was achieved. More than twenty-six stakeholders came together for this full-day event, including members of the Mid-Term Evaluation Working Group, representatives from the PMC and PSC, CP's, members of NGO's, local partners of active NWE projects, a member of the ex-ante evaluation team as well as the NWE Spatial Vision Working Group.

**High-level stakeholders shared their views in mid-term assessment workshop**

The main part of the mid-term assessment workshop concerning NWE Programme priorities was organised in parallel sessions, namely:

Parallel Session A: Changed circumstances since adoption of the NWE Programme

**Two parallel workshop sessions**

Parallel Session B: Contribution of projects towards NWE objectives

In addition, Programme development and European Added Value were individual agenda items.

### Interviews

The mid-term evaluation team carried out 34 interviews following a structured interview guideline with a common section and stakeholder-specific parts. For the interviews, full confidentiality was ensured.

**Interviews following a structured guideline**

Out of the 34 interviews, 24 were face-to-face. The remaining ten interviews were carried out via telephone. Interviews were held in all four NWE languages, i.e. in Dutch, English, German, and French. Stakeholders from all seven NWE Member States as well as the Swiss Confederation were interviewed. A wide representation of interviewees was ensured which included:

- Contact Points (9)<sup>3</sup>
- NWE Committee Members (8)
- JTS Employees (8)
- Project Partners (3)
- ESPON (1)
- European Commission (1)
- Managing Authority (1)
- Paying Authority (1)
- Regional Representative (1)
- Municipal Representative (1)

**Wide representation of stakeholders from all member states and the Swiss Confederation**

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<sup>3</sup> The Programme has ten CP's in the various NWE regions. Nine of them were interviewed; the evaluators were not able to get in touch with the Flemish CP in time to schedule an interview within the mid-term evaluation exercise period.

Questionnaires

The mid-term evaluation team developed and designed a brief (two-page) stakeholder questionnaire targeted at NWE Project representatives.

The fully anonymous questionnaire contained a mix of open and closed questions. On the basis of JTS contact data, it was emailed to 853 NWE stakeholders on 30 July:

- 481 project partners
- 280 submitters of project ideas
- 92 “Programme stakeholders”

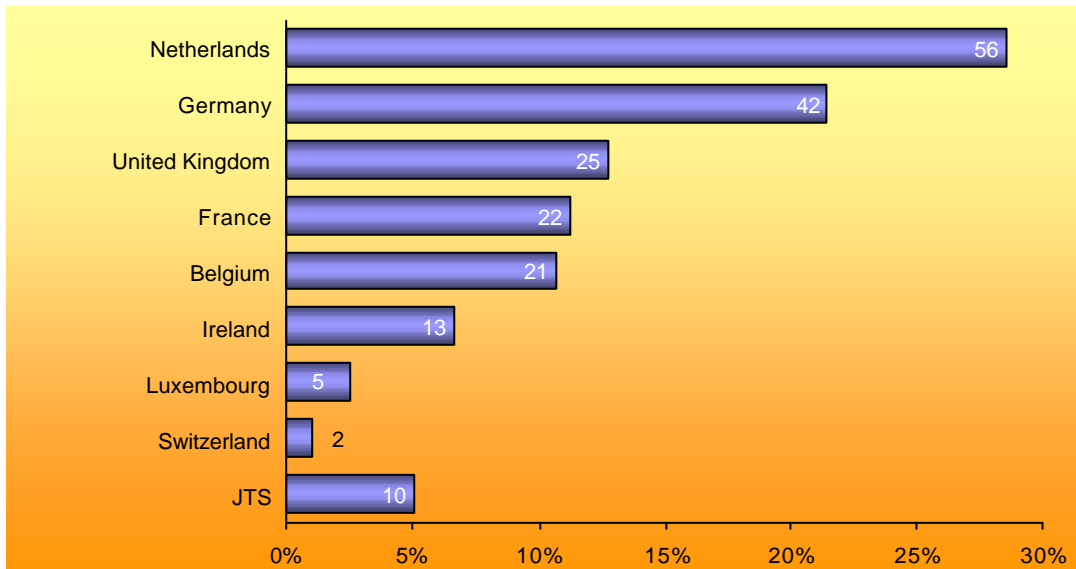


In order to ensure a high response rate, the mid-term evaluators emailed a reminder on 27 August. Furthermore, multipliers were utilised to boost the response. Lead Partners were asked to encourage the completion of the questionnaire among their project partners and national co-ordinators of several Member States prepared “supporting letters” in the national languages.

Despite the unavoidable obstacle of sending the questionnaire during the summer holiday period as well as more than 70 “undeliverable addresses”, 187 questionnaires were received by the 5-September deadline. The last questionnaire was received on 2 October 2003, resulting in a total of 199 questionnaires to be analysed.

**199 questionnaires returned**

**Figure 2: Regional Context of Questionnaire Respondents**



n=196

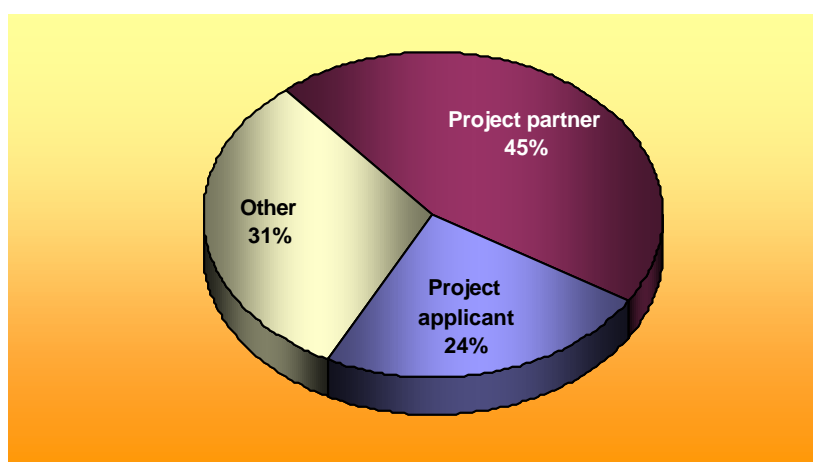
As depicted in figure 2, questionnaires were received from all Member States, the Swiss Confederation as well as employees of the JTS.

More than half of all questionnaires were submitted from the Netherlands and Germany.

While only a limited amount of project partners (three) could be interviewed within the scope of the mid-term evaluation exercise, the questionnaire was directed primarily at project stakeholders to allow this important group to also voice its opinion.

After completion of the questionnaire campaign and a return of 199 questionnaires, project partners accounted for 45% of all submitters, project applicants for 24%. Other Programme stakeholders sent in the remaining 31% of the questionnaires.

**Figure 3: Role of Questionnaire Respondents in the Programme**



n=198

### Assessment of Evaluation Report

According to the Terms of Reference of the mid-term evaluation, it is a formal requirement for evaluators to assess the “strengths and weaknesses” of the Evaluation Report, i.e. the present document.

The mid-term evaluation exercise was carried out half-time through the Programme which runs from 2001 until 2006. However, due to delays in the implementation phase, the Programme’s mid-term mark in operational terms had not yet been reached. Due to delays in the implementation phase of the Programme, a very limited amount of project and, thereby, Programme results became evident. Only fourteen projects were approved in Calls 1 and 2 and by the time of the mid-term evaluation. Only nine activity reports and payment claims from the projects could be analysed by the evaluators. It is, therefore, recommended to the European Commission to have mid-term evaluations of future Programmes carried out not before one-third of the budget has already been claimed by projects.

The Evaluation Report put priority on the formulation of recommendations. After having provided an early draft report, the mid-term evaluation team had a chance to gather feedback on its draft recommendations in meetings with the Programme’s Mid-Term Evaluation Working Group. Furthermore, a large amount of valuable

**Delays in Programme implementation**

**Recommendations to initiate discussion among stakeholders**



feedback and comments was provided by various actors involved in INTERREG IIIB NWE. By triggering such numerous feedback often including the exact opposite ends of the opinion range, the recommendations and (new) ideas already reached one of their important goals, namely to initiate discussion among stakeholders.

Strategic decisions in the NWE Programme are made by representatives from seven Member States and the Swiss Confederation. In many cases, compromises need to be made to reach strategic decisions in consensus. The evaluators decided to formulate a set of recommended actions which are often interlinked. The set of recommended actions is balancing short-term feasibility (what can be achieved within the life-time of the Programme) and long-term goals (what should be considered in setting up a future NWE INTERREG initiative).

**Recommendations  
balancing  
short-term feasibility  
and long-term goals**

### **Obstacles encountered**

The Evaluators were able to carry out the mid-term evaluation exercise in a supportive and co-operative environment. JTS employees as well as CP's, Committee members and other Programme stakeholders in the Member States and the Swiss Confederation were generally very helpful and responsive to the requests of the evaluators. Access was provided to a large amount of Programme documentations relevant for the mid-term evaluation. One exception was a report by the Lille-based consultants VRA on internal management structures and personnel-related issues at the JTS which has not been made available.

The JTS provided contact information for interview candidates and questionnaire recipients. The JTS databases of Programme Committee members, project partners, and project idea submitters provided for the purpose of the questionnaire mailing needed to be "cleaned" and validated. In particular, the data for project idea submitters seemed to be outdated as invalid addresses and many responses of members of this questionnaire recipient group indicated.

Interview scheduling as well as the questionnaire campaign were impeded by the summer holiday period. Nevertheless, the evaluators were able to conduct 34 interviews and received 199 questionnaires providing a good empirical data basis for the mid-term evaluation.

## 4 Description of INTERREG IIIB NWE Activities until Programme Mid-term

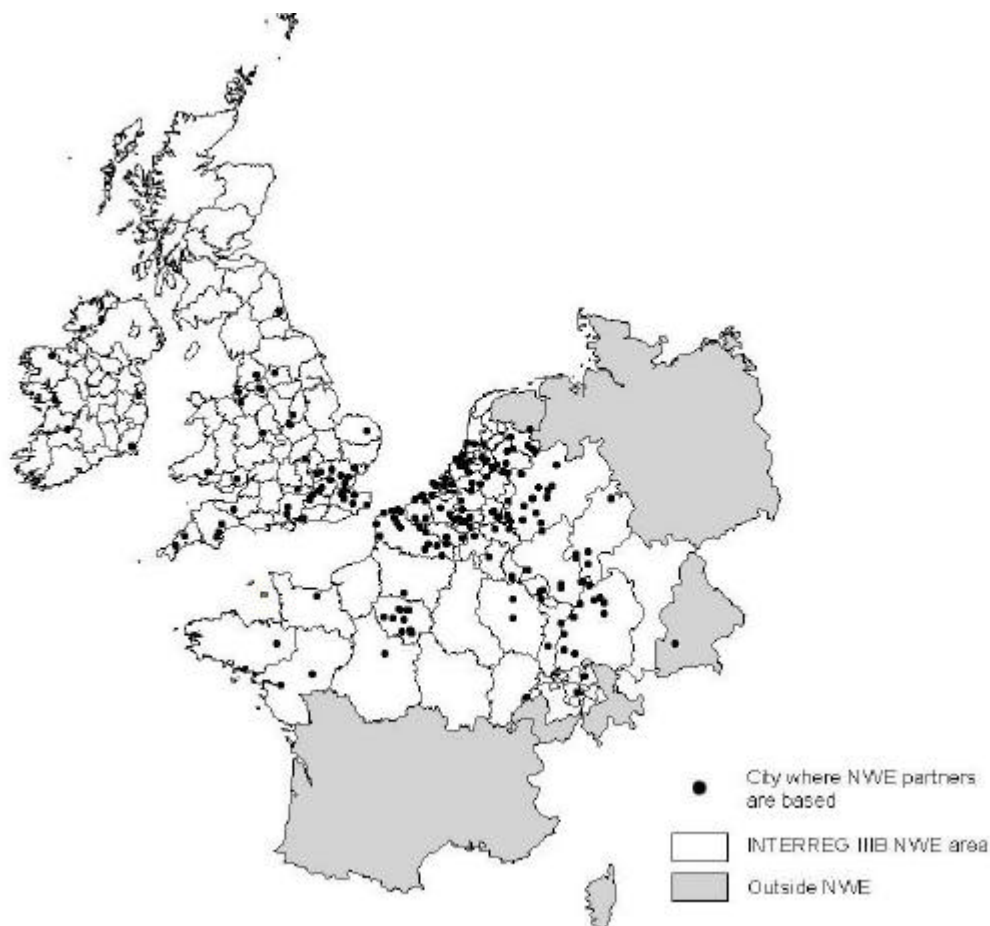
### Background

In March 2002, the European Commission adopted the Community Initiative Programme (CIP) "Sustainable territorial development in the North West of Europe – towards long term transnational co-operation" in the framework of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB.

The total budget for the Programme is €655.79 million making NWE the "largest" of the INTERREG programmes; out of the total budget €329.679 million is EU-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and €326.11 million national funding from the seven participating Member States (Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and the Swiss Confederation.

**NWE largest  
INTERREG IIIB region  
in terms of budget**

**Figure 4: INTERREG IIIB NWE Geographical Distribution of Project Partners**



The NWE Programme is directed by a Monitoring Committee (PMC) composed of representatives of national and regional authorities of the seven participating Member States, the Swiss Confederation and the European Commission. A Steering Committee (PSC) has been



entrusted with the selection of projects. A Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), based in Lille, France, is responsible for the administration and day-to-day management of the Programme, including assistance to project applicants and communication and publicity strategy tasks. The NWE CP's offer further assistance to project applicants and assist in Programme promotion.

Strand B of the NWE Programme intends to promote transnational co-operation in the field of spatial development. The Programme strategy revolves around five priorities which projects are expected to address (for more details see chapter 5):

- Priority 1: an attractive and coherent system of cities, towns and regions
- Priority 2: external and internal accessibility
- Priority 3: water resources and the prevention of flood damage
- Priority 4: other natural resources and cultural heritage
- Priority 5: enhancing the maritime functions and promoting territorial integration across seas

**Strategic  
Programme  
priorities**

### Approved projects

Twice a year, a Call for Tender for INTERREG IIIB NWE is launched. Under the three Calls realised so far, 42 of 84 submitted project proposals have been approved (details on the 42 approved projects are provided in Annex 2).

With each Call, the percentage of accepted projects and of approved ERDF funding has risen considerably (see table 3). The main reason for the large number of approved projects and the ERDF funding in Call 3 is the so-called "n+2 rule" which is described at the end of this chapter. At the time of the mid-term evaluation, about M€169, i.e. more than half of the overall available ERDF funding, had been allocated to projects.

**Table 3: Overview Approved Projects and Funding under First Three INTERREG IIIB NWE Calls**

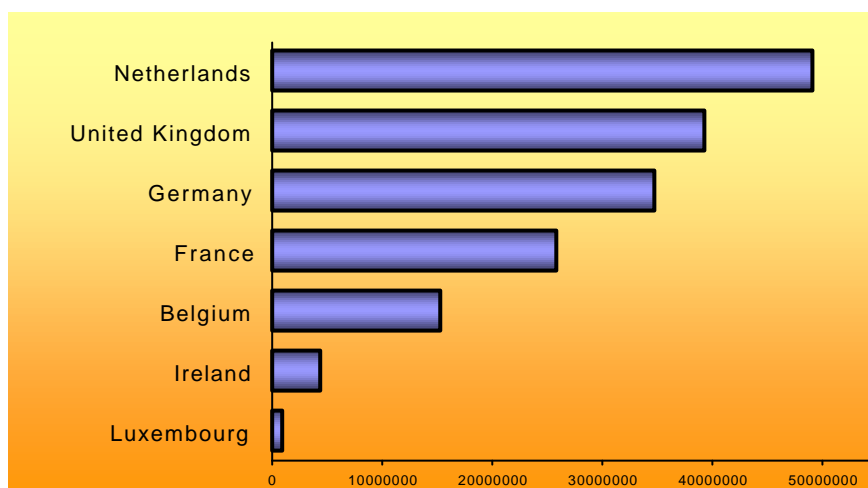
	First Call	Second Call	Third Call (including 3bis)	Total
Applications received	22	25	37	84
Approved projects	4	10	28	42
% of approved projects per call	18%	40%	76%	50%
ERDF funding approved (in €)	13,488,365	29,527,871	125,641,155	168,657,155
% of approved funding of total ERDF budget	4%	9%	40%	54%

Source: PMC4 material provided by JTS

As intended by the Programme's strategic orientation, most of the approved projects are action projects (35); there are a few investment and study projects (4 and 3 respectively).

Distribution over the participating countries (where project partners are based) is very diverse; i.e. partners from the Netherlands receive nearly one third, Luxemburg 0.5% of the approved funding (see figure 5 below).

**Figure 5: Approved ERDF Funding per Country (in Euro)**



Source: Approved ERDF funding after PSC3bis, 42 projects

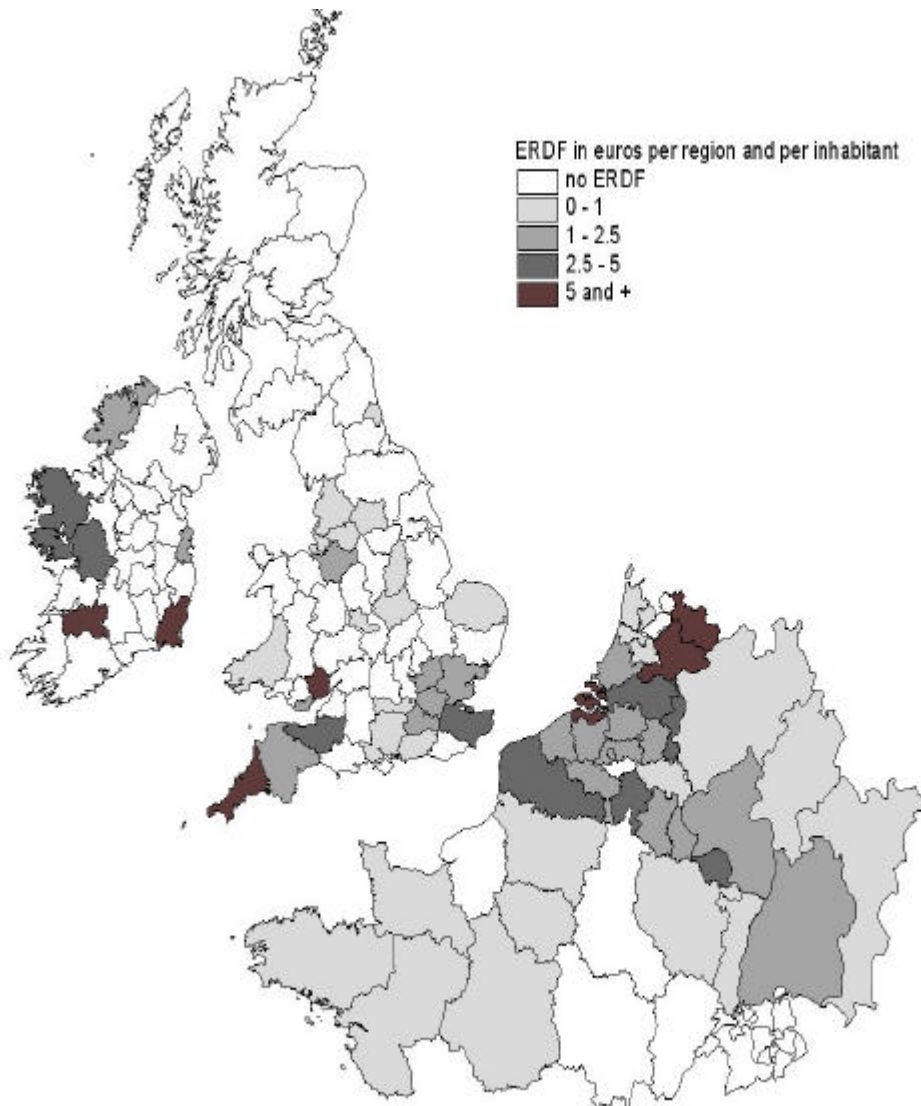
Respectively, the distribution of ERDF funding per inhabitant and region (see figure 6) shows which regions benefited from INTERREG IIIB NWE until Call 3. The map also shows which of the NWE regions have not yet received any ERDF. It is eye-catching that none of the regions in Scotland or Northern Ireland received funding, nor did for example three regions in Eastern France.

#### Activity Report

Twice a year (on 30 June and 31 December), the Lead Partner of a project has to submit an Activity Report to the JTS, accompanied by a Payment Claim. The Report needs to specify details concerning:-

- the Action Plan submitted with the original application, and
- all planned project milestones.

**Figure 6: ERDF Funding per Inhabitant and Region**



Source: Approved ERDF after PSC3bis; 42 projects

### Status

Nine Activity Reports (as well as their assessment by the JTS) from Call 1 and 2 projects were available for analysis by the mid-term evaluation team.<sup>4</sup> The reports were submitted by the projects FAR, Hospital co-operation, HST Platform, JAF, LIRA II, REURBA II, SAIL II, SAUL and SCALDIT (see table 4 below).

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<sup>4</sup> All activity reports that were available by 15 August 2003 were included in the evaluation.

**Table 4: Project Details Based on Activity Reports**

Project	Start	Grant Offer Letter	End	Total cost in €	ERDF total in €	Preparation cost in €	1 <sup>st</sup> cost claim in €
LIRA II	1.9.2001	24.4.2003	30.5.2005	1,981,680	990,840	25,941	25,624
HST Platform	1.10.2001	24.3.2003	1.10.2004	585,000	292,500	30,000	3,561
JAF	1.1.2002	13.3.2003	30.6.2006	15,797,846	7,058,370	27,790	230,608
SAIL II	3.5.2001	24.1.2003	31.10.2005	12,050,935	5,146,656	28,359	575,223
SAUL	1.1.2002	21.3.2003	30.6.2006	16,348,150	8,174,075	33,000	117,780
REURBA II	1.2.2002	7.3.2003	1.8.2006	9,927,194	2,447,968	23,220	164,156
Hospital co-operation	1.10.2001	15.4.2003	31.12.2007	2,999,976	1,499,988	15,226	8,436
SCALDIT	1.1.2002	30.6.2003	31.12.2005	6,054,063	3,252,032	21,524	31,867
FAR	1.1.2002	8.5.2003	31.5.2004	776,000	348,000	8,377	169,079

### Assessment

Due to the late "legal" start of projects (see date of Grant Offer Letter in table 4), only nine activity reports were available for the mid-term evaluation. The analysis revealed that the standard format for the Activity Report was used very differently by the lead partners. Some provided detailed information supported by several documents; others were limited to a sentence per action/topic only.

Not the Activity Report form itself (except part VII. Monitoring of output indicators, expected results and impacts), but the way it was filled out by the projects reveals problems and should be streamlined. Short and concise information needs to give real insight into the project status (see recommendation 5.2).

Respectively, the assessment of the Activity Reports (and Payment Claims) needs to follow clear guidelines, resulting in comparable documents. Up to now, the degree of detail of the comments by JTS assessors has varied considerably.

### **The “n+2 effect”**

The so-called “n+2 rule” was introduced for the programming period 2000-2006. It stipulates that any sum approved by the Union for a programme and which has not given rise, by the end of the two subsequent years, to a payment claim in respect of expenditure carried out on the ground is automatically de-committed. (Art. 31.2 of Regulation 1260/1999)

NWE is facing the risk of automatic decommitment of significant ERDF funds following the application of the “n+2 rule”. After three Calls for Proposal and the approval of 42 projects, the risk of decommitting ERDF on 31 December 2004 amounts to about 28M€ provided that project spending will continue as planned. After the first two Calls, the decommitment risk was even higher (52M€ as calculated for Supervisory Group meeting 3) due to delays in the implementation of new projects and, in particular, low numbers of selected projects in the first and second Calls.

At its meeting in December 2002 (PMC 2), the PMC suggested a list of possible actions to reduce the risk of de-commitment, including the possibility for projects to submit payment claims twice a year and a reduction of the response time for conditionally approved projects to fulfil conditions from four to two months. The PMC decided that the Programme should aim for a zero-decommitment, while maintaining the quality of projects.

The pressure to commit more Programme budget became evident, in particular before and at PSC 3. In order to achieve zero-decommitment (or at least to reduce the risk of decommitment), NWE was in need of many and preferably high and quick-spending projects. The percentage of approved projects (out of all proposals) increased sharply in Call 3 (76%) compared to the two previous Calls (18% and 40%). An interim PSC meeting was held in September 2003 (PSC3bis in Lille) to decide upon the approval of project proposals that scored “fair” in the assessment of the JTS. At PSC3 and PSC3bis alone, a Programme budget in excess of 125M€ was committed representing 40% of the total ERDF foreseen for all (ten) Programme Calls.

There is evidence from interviews that the previously (in Calls 1 & 2) obtained image of a fair and objective proposal assessment process suffered in Call 3. It could not be finally established whether the quality of proposals had significantly increased or whether the strongly felt (political) need to avoid decommitment of funds resulted in a very high acceptance ratio at PSC 3.

While it may be applicable for other strands of INTERREG, the “n+2 rule” is less appropriate for the demanding context of transnational co-operation. In many thematic areas of INTERREG IIIB, co-operation structures do not yet exist and it is often difficult to fulfil eligibility criteria in this regard. Therefore, the European Commission is encouraged to allow for more flexibility concerning the “n+2 rule” and the claiming of (ERDF approved) expenditures in future Programmes.

## 5 North-West Europe and the NWE Programme Priorities

The NWE Programme priorities and measures (see table 5) are the result of a thorough transnational consultation between October 1999 and May 2001<sup>5</sup>. As a part of this programming process an ex-ante evaluation was undertaken, which included a SWOT<sup>6</sup> analysis.

North-West Europe is a very dynamic part of Europe. New developments (e.g. EU enlargement, emergence of the knowledge society) will influence not only NWE's society and economy, but also transnational co-operation. In the light of the changes ahead, the mid-term evaluation assessed the Programme priorities and in how far progress has been made towards their achievement.

Strategic issues  
under scrutiny

**Note for stakeholders who are not directly involved in NWE:**

All projects are required to contribute to "a breakthrough towards a new culture of strategic planning and action in the NWE area" [NWE CIP, p. 29] by addressing the following "cross-cutting themes":

- a) Building of a better knowledge base of the NWE area as a whole and of its relationships with other parts of Europe.
- b) Deeper involvement of civil society and promotion of public-private partnerships.
- c) The search for increased coherence and synergy between territorial development objectives and the application of EU sectoral policies within the NWE area.
- d) Embedding of co-operation within the respective national and regional territorial development structures
- e) Promoting transnational co-operation through concrete action with clear benefits.

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<sup>5</sup> A summary of the analysis leading to the definition of priorities is included in the Community Initiative Programme (CIP) chapters 1 and 2, pp. 5-25.

<sup>6</sup> SWOT stands for Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats; the input data mainly referred to 1999.

**Table 5: INTERREG IIIB NWE Priorities, Measures and Objectives**

<b>PRIORITY 1 - An attractive and coherent system of cities, towns and regions</b>	
<b>1.1 More attractive Metropolitan areas in the global and European context</b>	<b>1.2 Coherent and polycentric pattern of complementary cities, towns, rural areas, coastal and peripheral regions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the global position of NWE;</li> <li>• Promoting a more balanced growth and polycentric pattern of territorial development;</li> <li>• Promoting sustainable metropolitan development;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on metropolitan systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting a more balanced growth and spatial development patterns and equal access to opportunities across NWE;</li> <li>• Increasing competitiveness through a more complementary distribution of functions among regions, cities and towns;</li> <li>• Promoting more sustainable urban development, in particular of medium -sized and small towns;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on territorial structure within NWE and improvement of co-operation and planning efficiency.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 2 - External and internal accessibility</b>	
<b>2.1 Sustainable mobility management</b>	<b>2.2 Improved access to the Information Society</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting a more balanced and sustainable external accessibility of NWE;</li> <li>• Promoting internal accessibility while contributing towards greater territorial cohesion through sustainable transport;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on external and internal accessibility;</li> <li>• Improving transnational and cross-sectoral co-operation and greater involvement of the general public in the attainment of the above-mentioned objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to knowledge and information and promotion of communication technologies in fields relevant for territorial development;</li> <li>• Promoting, through the development of ICT, greater opportunities and universal service in less favoured regions of NWE;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on the potential of ICT for territorial development in NWE;</li> <li>• Improvement of transnational and cross-sectoral co-operation and greater involvement of the general public in the attainment of the above-mentioned objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 3 - Water resources and the prevention of flood damage</b>	
<b>3.1 Land use and water systems</b>	<b>3.2 The prevention of flood damage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the integrated and sustainable management of water quality and quantity in order to prevent pollution, protect and enhance habitats and minimise resource extraction;</li> <li>• Promoting integrated and sustainable management of river basins in NWE;</li> <li>• Integrating water systems and resource issues into the strategies, techniques and tools of territorial planning;</li> <li>• Improving awareness, knowledge and co-operation on issues related to water systems in the NWE area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimising the damage from river and coastal flooding;</li> <li>• Raising and improving awareness, knowledge and co-operation on flooding issues in NWE.</li> </ul>

<b>PRIORITY 4 - Other natural resources and cultural heritage</b>	
<b>4.1 Stronger ecological infrastructure, reduced ecological footprint</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting the environment, in particular local and global ecosystems, and improving the natural environment and the quality of life;</li> <li>• Promoting nature conservation and biodiversity;</li> <li>• Drawing up integrated strategies for a more sustainable management of territories;</li> <li>• Improving knowledge on environmental resources and issues.</li> </ul>	<b>4.2 Promoting co-operation between sea and inland ports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving, protecting and improving the built environment and cultural heritage of the NWE region;</li> <li>• Promoting the conservation and renovation of the built heritage as a tool for sustainability and promoting an understanding of the identity of regions;</li> <li>• Drawing up integrated strategies for sustainable development combining economic prosperity and social inclusion with a high degree of environmental</li> <li>• Improvement of the knowledge base on the cultural heritage of NWE.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITY 5 - Promoting territorial integration across the seas of NWE</b>	
<b>5.1 Protection and creative enhancement of the cultural heritage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the sustainable development of maritime functions within NWE</li> <li>• (better balance within the NWE port system);</li> <li>• Strengthening sustainable relationships between seaports and their hinterland;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on maritime and hinterland transport systems in NEW.</li> </ul>	<b>5.2 Facilitating co-operation across and between maritime and inland regions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving sustainable connections between the islands and the mainland of NEW;</li> <li>• Developing co-operation between coastal regions (tourism, trade, logistics, marine and maritime technologies, research, culture);</li> <li>• Improving the transnational management of natural resources of seas and coastal areas;</li> <li>• Improving the knowledge base on maritime issues.</li> </ul>

Priority 6 “Technical assistance for management, implementation, monitoring, content and other expenditure” is not included in the table above. In chapter 11.5 of this report, the evaluators are explaining the implications of their recommendations on the priority 6 budget.

## 5.1 Changed Circumstances Since Adoption of the Programme

It has been the task of the mid-term evaluation team to re-assess the continuing relevance and the consistency of the strategy of the INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme. Therefore, the existing strategy had to be assessed in light of changed circumstances since adoption of the Programme.

Interviews as well as the stakeholder questionnaires confirmed an interest in including such diverse topics as “maritime safety”, “multi-modal transport”, and “social inclusion” in the definition of future priorities. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was generally seen as a horizontal Programme issue comparable to the concept of sustainable development.



## Key challenges

In the mid-term assessment workshop in Lille on 1 July, a number of key challenges for future NWE programming were identified by the workshop participants (see the Table overleaf).

They can be grouped under the following headings:

- **Economic changes**  
(including increased interregional competition and social implications)
- **Information Technologies**  
(seen as challenge rather than threat, allowing for more flexibility and changes in spatial patterns due to the growing number of Internet users, e-commerce, e-government, tele-working, etc.)
- **Governance**  
(a critical approach was put forward with an emphasis on the perceived regionalisation and nationalisation of interests rather than transnational decision making)
- **Transport, mobility**  
(including social segregation as a consequence of decreasing accessibility; urban sprawl; no real international transport policy)
- **Enlargement**  
(making NWE a more “peripheral” area, having economic effects on the Structural Funds, causing social instability, but also perceived as a chance to bring people in NWE closer together, making them act as a group)
- **Tourism**  
(perceived here as a chance – accessibility and flexibility are enhanced by decentralisation, there are no longer 5 major airports in NWE, but quite a few smaller hubs, bringing tourists to the regions and encouraging short-term trips rather than long vacations on sunny islands)
- **Safety**  
(after September 11, the safety issue is certainly high on the agenda, although NWE has not necessarily become more unsafe since then; perception is different from status quo)
- **Public finance**  
(budgets are reduced, human resources are limited; as NWE funding complements local/ national finances, it largely depends on this “counterpart”)

## Assessment

The Programme strategy continues to be relevant and consistent. There is little evidence that a major revision of NWE priorities is required. Current priorities and measures are formulated in a broad manner, thereby, however, enabling NWE to consider and respond to any changes and emerging key challenges.

## Broad priorities and measures

While priority changes are not necessary, there are clear indications that future Calls need to set priorities more clearly and integrate measures more strongly. In addition, the tangibility of the transnational dimension tangible and the contribution to cross-cutting themes have, so far, been limited.

The involvement of stakeholders in the Programme has been inadequate. In particular, in the process of reviewing priorities, NWE would benefit from establishing an inclusive process in order to create a better knowledge base.

Much more analysis and consultation is needed for the review of Programme priorities and the determination of the foci of future NWE Calls than was feasible in the mid-term evaluation. Therefore, the mid-term evaluation team is proposing a process rather than "ready-made" solutions (see recommendation 1).

**Table 6: Key Challenges for the Future of NWE Identified at Mid-Term Assessment Workshop**

<p><b>Economic changes – low dynamics in NWE region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural and cyclical downward development success history - increased interregional competition, gaps widen</li> <li>• No longer high growth in service sector</li> <li>• Major restructuring, concentration, fewer (foreign) investment</li> <li>• Social implications (structure of regional GDPs connected to demographic factors)</li> <li>• Regulation vs. deregulation as means of economic growth</li> <li>• Impacts on regions arrive faster than in the past</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transport, Mobility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility in general decreasing, increasing for a few</li> <li>• Low impact of policies on transport-related problems</li> <li>• Social segregation</li> <li>• Extension of PT furthering urban sprawl</li> <li>• Little progress in intermodality, Institutional problems in the way</li> <li>• International transport policy tackling major issues insufficiently</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air line deregulation – decentralisation (hubs)</li> <li>• More affordable inner-NWE tourism (weekend trips)</li> <li>• New (sustainable) tourism increases attractiveness vs. “Florida-syndrome”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information Technologies (IT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High number of NWE Internet users – flexibility</li> <li>• Increased use of e-commerce, e-government, teleworking, etc.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE CHALLENGE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunity population density =&gt; NWE = large laboratory</p> <p style="text-align: center;">=&gt;To co-operate transnationally, learn from each other, but adapt the lessons to local/ regional realities</p>	<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difference between real safety threats in NWE and generally perceived threats (mainly resulting from recent terrorist attacks)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transnational decision- and policy-making as priority although national administrative units do not even co-operate with each other; little public-private partnership</li> <li>• “Short-termism” in decision-making (lack of resources)</li> <li>• Revival of putting national interests first; regionalisation</li> <li>• Little involvement of citizens; outsourcing of government functions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enlargement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NWE peripheral instead of central; impacts unclear</li> <li>• Impact on Structural Funds, more funds to “the East”</li> <li>• Social instability</li> </ul>	<p><b>Public finance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of budgets</li> <li>• Administrations reluctant to invest</li> <li>• Limited number of human resources (qualification, too)</li> <li>• NWE supplementing local/ national finances</li> <li>• Promote cheap public credit</li> <li>• Competition laws</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Orientation of Projects Towards Programme Objectives

The NWE Projects are the major delivery mechanism for achieving the objectives of INTERREG IIIB in North-West Europe. To assess in how far progress has been made towards the achievement of the Programme priorities, the mid-term evaluators reviewed the results of the approved projects (for project details see also chapter 4).

**Projects results <->  
Programme Objectives**

### Status

For each measure concrete target values<sup>7</sup> are defined. Annex 3 (table "Output Indicators, Expected Results and Impacts") demonstrates the defined target values for project outputs at the example of measure 1.1. Within the first three INTERREG IIIB Calls, four projects have been approved under measure 1.1. Based on the values (specified in the application form) that the projects expect to achieve, the majority of target values would already be (over) achieved. The expected values lie well beyond 100% when for example referring to the number of government bodies (314%) and third sector organisations involved (2813%) and the size of population reached by awareness raising campaigns (1700%), thereby questioning the relevance and meaningfulness of these values.

**Target value analysis**

A more meaningful, but nonetheless superficial, indication of achievements by priorities is provided by the so far approved ERDF funding (table 7 below).

**Table 7: ERDF Budget Approved After First Three INTERREG IIIB NWE Calls**

	Measure										Total
	1.1.	1.2.	2.1.	2.2.	3.1.	3.2.	4.1.	4.2.	5.1.	5.2.	
<b>Total number of approved projects</b>	3	8	5	2	5	7	3	5	2	2	42
Approved ERDF in M€	20.797	18.051	27.785	2.380	11.120	38.489	13.072	20.150	5.373	11.441	168.657
<b>Total ERDF budget (2001-2006) in M€</b>	<b>47.105</b>	<b>31.403</b>	<b>38.534</b>	<b>25.689</b>	<b>30.816</b>	<b>46.224</b>	<b>25.751</b>	<b>25.751</b>	<b>21.967</b>	<b>21.967</b>	<b>315.209</b>
<b>ERDF already attributed (in %)</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>

(Source: PMC4 preparation material prepared by JTS)

A large share (78%) of the ERDF budget allocated to priority 4.2 "Protection and creative enhancement of the cultural heritage" has already been approved for just five projects. Under priority 3.2 "The prevention of flood damage", seven projects received 83% and under

**ERDF funding  
analysis**

<sup>7</sup> The target values were laid down in the Programme Complement, page 78ff.

priority 2.1 “Sustainable mobility management” five projects received 72% of the available ERDF funding. On the other hand, almost the entire budget (91%) of measure 2.2 “Improved access to the Information Society” has yet to be spent.<sup>8</sup>

### Assessment

The delays in the implementation of projects resulted in the availability of few tangible results by the time of the mid-term evaluation. Due to the problems concerning monitoring output indicators mentioned above and the availability of only nine activity reports, the basis to assess the contribution of the projects towards achieving the Programme objectives was very limited.

**Few tangible results**

The total ERDF funding allocated to the Programme amounted to €315,209,262. As a consequence, there is only a total amount of €146,551,872 (46%) or €20,935,982 on average left for each of the remaining seven Calls for Proposal until the end of 2006.

**Table 8: NWE Project Funding Plan (assuming zero decommitment)**

NWE Call (PSC date)	Approved ERDF funding (€)	Remaining ERDF funding (€)
1 (July 2002)	13,488,365	301,720,897
2 (Nov. 2002)	29,527,871	272,193,026
3* (June 2003)	125,641,155	146,551,872

**Fewer funding available per future NWE call**

\* including PSC3bis approved projects

An even spending across the remaining Calls would allow NWE some degree of flexibility and ability to react to unforeseen developments (see also chapter 11.5). For the same reason, re-allocations of ERDF across measures may be considered only after two-thirds of the Programme have been completed (at the end of 2004),.

The evaluators are emphasising that a financial analysis alone is neither sufficient to decide upon budget re-allocations nor to properly monitor the progress of projects. What is needed as complementary information to make these decisions are useful project data derived from commonly applied indicator sets (as described also in the following chapter 6 “Programme Evaluation Framework”).

<sup>8</sup> A workshop on measure 2.2 was held in Cork on 26-27 June with over 80 participants as part of the project promotion within INTERREG IIIB NWE.

## 6 Programme Evaluation Framework

Evaluation of impacts relies firstly on a sufficient amount of valid data. Ensuring the availability of such data on the project and the Programme level is, therefore, instrumental for a meaningful evaluation. Secondly, a sound and common evaluation methodology is required to carry out an evaluation exercise. Currently, NWE has neither sufficient data nor a sound evaluation methodology in place.

It is highly relevant for the Programme to put more emphasis on evaluation, both on the project and the Programme level. INTERREG is now in its third consecutive Programme period and still no baseline data and real operational guidelines for common evaluation are available.

A large and sophisticated indicator framework exists. However, the Court of Auditors Report (p.18) already stated that “information on the indicators is stored at measure level in an Excel file without any structure to make it possible to aggregate them towards indicators at a higher level”. The mid-term evaluators perceive the operational relevance of the NWE indicator framework as limited.

It is one of the most crucial recommendations of the mid-term evaluation to “strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects”. In chapter 11, this recommendation 6 is described in detail.

In the present chapter, the evaluators are offering solutions to two shortcomings of the Programme’s evaluation framework, namely:

- the lack of a common NWE data pool and an accompanying data acquisition methodology and
- the lack of key common indicators defined in an operational manner.

**Lack of data and  
common indicators**

On the basis of these shortcomings, recommendation 6 “strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects” is proposed. In order to provide further explanation on this recommendation and the five corresponding suggested actions<sup>9</sup>, the evaluators have been asked to provide further detail and background on how it could be implemented.

### Data Acquisition Methodology

The evaluators are proposing a data acquisition methodology for NWE as illustrated in figure 7 below. The two Programme bodies responsible for data acquisition are proposed to be the NWE observatory (see recommended action 1.2) and the Evaluation Initiative (see recom-

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<sup>9</sup> The five actions of recommendation 6 are: 6.1: “establish an Evaluation Initiative”; 6.2: “improve baseline data availability”; 6.3: “strengthen commonality”; 6.4: “reduce complexity & strengthen relevance”; 6.5: “make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of the fifth Call for Proposals”

mended action 6.1). As an initial activity, both bodies would complete co-operation agreements:

- The JTS in their observatory role with ESPON; Eurostat, other IIIB (and IIIC) Secretariats, national, regional, and local authorities Regional statistical offices, and other professional associations.
- The Evaluation Initiative with NWE projects.

**Co-operation  
agreements**

In a second step, data would be acquired from the above-mentioned co-operation partners. Moreover, the Evaluation Initiative would engage in its own data acquisition and work closely with individual NWE projects and project clusters (see recommended action 9.3) to make project-level data available for the Common NWE Data Pool.

**Data from projects  
and project clusters**

The Common NWE Data Pool would gather different kinds of (initially raw) data, including core indicators for the priority and measure areas of the Programme, data from outside the NWE territory, and basic data such as general structural and demographic data.

It would be the task of the NWE observatory to index the acquired data.

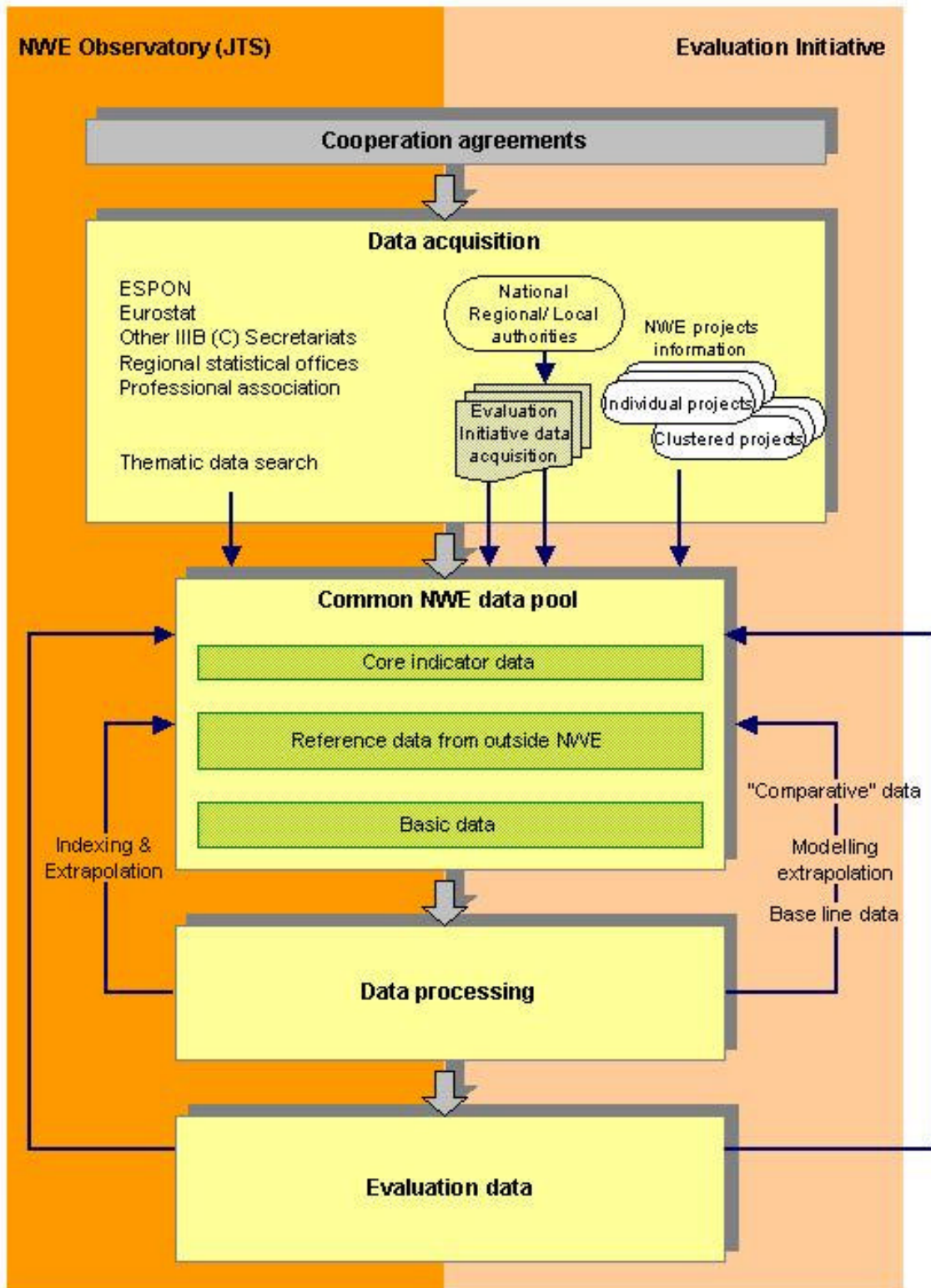
The NWE observatory and the Evaluation Initiative would both be charged with the extrapolation of non-NWE data to NWE data. If, for example, French national data were acquired, extrapolation (and modelling) should be used in the data processing phase to “break down” these data to the French NWE regional level.

In the data processing phase, the Evaluation Initiative is also foreseen to generate baseline data as well as “comparative” data. The latter data is “soft” data not generated commonly, such as modal split data. Cities would use different methods and units across Europe to derive their modal split (percentage of cars, buses, two-wheelers, pedestrians, etc.).

**Data processing  
to generate  
baseline data**

All processed data would finally be available not only to the NWE observatory and Evaluation Initiative to carry out Programme level evaluations, but also to the projects for their own evaluation activities.

Figure 7: Data Acquisition Methodology





### **Key common indicators**

The mid-term evaluation is confirming the lack of key common indicators defined in an operational manner. It should be one of the tasks of the Evaluation Initiative (as described above) to generate baseline data usable for project and Programme evaluation.

**Evaluation Initiative  
supporting generation  
of baseline data**

One “tool” for the identification of indicators are indicator fact sheets which describe in a comprehensive manner (commonly agreed) indicators. Table 9 below provides an example of a common indicator, “average modal split”, used by nineteen cities involved in the European Commissions CIVITAS Initiative for cleaner and better transport in cities.

In order to allow for an operational indicator “measurement”, the different sections of an indicator fact sheet should be described in detail and followed in carrying out the actual evaluation. The fact sheet includes:

**Indicator fact sheets**

- a description of the core indicator and the context in which data will be acquired,
- relevance of the indicator towards, for example, measuring an impact,
- the method of measurement, including the tools used to gather data and operational units of measurement
- a definition of target values and baseline values
- references (literature), if available

**Table 9: Example of Indicator Fact Sheet**

Evaluation Category:	Transport
Evaluation Sub-category:	Transport System
Impact:	Modal Split
Number:	26-27
<b>Core Indicator:</b>	<b>Average Modal Split (vehicle and passenger)</b>
Related Core Indicators:	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 25
Description of the core indicator:	<p>The indicator measures vehicle kilometres and passenger kilometres per transport mode.</p> <p><u>Modal split</u>: the number (or percentage) of vehicle and passenger km per year that is carried out by each transport mode.</p>
Context:	<p>Motorised vehicles pose a burden on the environment in terms of emissions, noise, congestion, etc. Alternatives should be systematically encouraged, and the performance of the corresponding measures should be monitored through the dynamics of modal split. In particular, the modal shares of non motorised modes are directly relevant for short distance trips, while long distance trips lend themselves to shifts towards public transport</p> <p>Overall, it is essential to monitor how the modal split develops during awareness campaigns, improvements of public transport, improvements of bicycle paths and other campaigns for the promotion of non motorised modes, etc.</p>
Relevance:	This indicator is probably one of the most used ones since it gives insight in the entire travel picture and it enables easy comparisons (among target groups, different areas and so on).
Methods of measurement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Unit</b>: % of pkm and vkm per transport mode per year.</li> <li>- <b>Frequency</b>: measurements must cover all week days spread over four quarters until the end of the project.</li> <li>- <b>Accuracy</b>: a standard error of 1% with a probability of 95% per transport mode is acceptable.</li> <li>- <b>Source</b>: survey and model. Data can be collected by personal interviews, counts (by using camera, road sensors or –loops, counting tiles, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Target group:</li> <li>▪ Spatial scale: city or demonstration area (<u>to be indicated by the cities</u>).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Target and baseline:	Data on individual baseline and targets <u>to be provided by the cities</u> .
References:	

Source: METEOR Deliverable D2 – Assessment Framework and Evaluation Guidelines for Data Collection, 2003

## 7 Programme Management

In this chapter, the evaluators are offering a reflection on the status and an assessment of the Programme's main "groups" and committees, namely the Managing Authority, Paying Authority, Programme Management Committee (PMC), Supervisory Group, Programme Steering Committee (PSC) as well as the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and the Contact Points (CP's) in the eight countries involved in INTERREG IIIB NWE.

The evaluators are providing a summary of the main institutional aspects of the NWE Programme management. In their analysis, they have laid particular emphasis on reviewing tasks and responsibilities of the above described "groups" and committees and, in the respective recommendation 2 "streamline Programme structures and procedures", made an effort to eliminate or, at least, reduce unfavourable overlaps in (task) responsibilities between these.

**Unfavourable overlaps  
in responsibilities**

Formal and legal elements of the Programme management have not been the focus of the evaluator's analysis.

The relevant information for the assessment of the Programme management was collected through participation in committee meetings, interviews and questionnaires.

For the Programme level, the evaluators conclude that NWE has a management structure in place which has, to the most part, proven to work efficiently and which has allowed for a fairly smooth operation of the Programme until its mid-term mark. Status and assessment of the individual NWE groups and committees are provided below.

### Managing Authority

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council in Lille, France, has been appointed as the Managing Authority. Tasks and responsibilities of the Managing Authority have been laid out in the Community Initiative Programme (CIP, Chapter VI.1, pp. 78-79). According to the Programme Complement, these tasks<sup>10</sup> would instead be carried out by the JTS under the supervision of the Managing Authority and the Supervisory Group. In practice, the Managing Authority has, therefore, delegated most of its day-to-day obligations while it continues to be ultimately responsible in legal terms for:

**Managing Authority  
delegated most of its  
day-to-day obligations**

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Community Initiative Programme (CIP, chapter VI.1, pp. 78-79), tasks and responsibilities of the Managing Authority are: a) the collection and transmission of reliable financial and statistical information on the implementation of CIP measures; b) the modification of the Programme Complement; c) the preparation of the Annual Implementation Report, presentation of the Report to the PMC for approval before final submission to the European Commission; d) the organisation of the mid-term evaluation; e) installing a separate accounting system or adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to ERDF assistance; f) the correctness / legality of operational payments and Technical Assistance budget, including internal controls and corrective measures; g) compliance with Community regulations; h) the promotion and representation of the Programme within and outside the NWE region; i) information and publicity relating to measures; j) liaison with the implementing authorities and other interested parties, as appropriate; k) liaison with the European Commission, including accompanying the Member States to annual review meetings (examination of results for the previous years) and implementation of any agreed Commission recommendations for changes in monitoring and management procedures.

- Ensuring the respect of Community regulations
- Ensuring accuracy and legality of payment transactions, including internal control
- Implementing the information and publicity related to measures of the CIP
- Liaising with the European Commission and the implementing authorities

It is unclear who, in practice, is bearing the responsibility for supervising the JTS. This is a potential task of the Managing Authority, the PMC or the Supervisory Group which would need to clarify this issue among each other.

**Task of supervising  
JTS to be clarified**

In addition, NWE could consider to more strongly involve the Managing Authority in the operational management of the Programme

### **Paying Authority**

The Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Office of the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignation in Lille, France, has been appointed as the Programme's Paying Authority. It is responsible for

- Establishing and submitting payment claims to the European Commission
- Certifying the accuracy of payment certificates presented to the Commission
- Receiving funds from the Commission
- Making payments to Final Beneficiaries
- Ensuring that the MA fulfils its financial responsibilities

The evaluators have not detected any violation of rules and regulations. However, the Programme could consider a special audit of financial issues, if deemed necessary.

### **Programme Management Committee & Supervisory Group**

The PMC is a sovereign Programme body responsible for the implementation of the NWE Community Initiative Programme (CIP). It consists of representatives from the Member States and the Swiss Confederation and is supported by representatives of the European Commission, the Managing Authority as well as the Paying Authority. The Presidency and Vice Presidency of the PMC are rotating annually among the eight NWE countries.

In addition to agreeing with the Managing Authority and the (PMC) Presidency on the supervision of the JTS, the PMC remains responsible for approving:

- the Programme Complement and its amendments, including indicators,
- project selection procedures, including criteria, and
- the JTS work plan.

It has been envisaged in the Community Initiative Programme that the PMC would provide strategic guidance to the Programme. However, until the mid-term mark of the Programme, it has too often been caught up in the management of administrative Programme issues.

**Strategic guidance by  
PMC**

There are two alternative options in order to enable the PMC to better fulfil its role of providing strategic guidance to the Programme:

- A: The Supervisory Group would become the executive Programme body.
- B: The Managing Authority would be more strongly involved in the operational management of the Programme.

The Supervisory Group has been set up as a “sub-group” to the PMC in order to supervise the JTS and the CP’s on behalf of the PMC. It consists of the PMC’s previous President, its Vice-President (and thereby future President), one representative of each Member State and the Swiss Confederation as well as a delegate of the Managing Authority in an advisory capacity.

The low as well as the frequently changing participation in (previous) Supervisory Group meetings has made them inefficient and is threatening the “existence” of this Group. Only if a constant personal membership and presence at Supervisory Group meetings could be ensured, would the Supervisory group be in a position to take on a more complementary and pro-active role between PMC meetings.

**Need to ensure  
constant personal  
membership in  
Supervisory Group**

Should it become apparent that the Supervisory Group could not guarantee constant personal membership and, therefore, take up the envisaged role, NWE could consider option B, i.e. to more strongly involve the Managing Authority in the operational Programme management.

### **Programme Steering Committee**

The PSC was set up by the PMC at its first meeting. It is responsible for selecting projects as well as for co-ordinating the monitoring of implemented projects. Each Member State and the Swiss Confederation has been allowed to have up to three representatives present in PSC meetings. Decisions are reached in consensus with each country having one vote.

Until September 2003, there have been three PSC meetings plus one additional meeting (PSC3bis) to decide upon the approval of projects under the third Call for Proposals.

The evaluators were present at the PSC3 meeting in Cardiff in June 2003. This meeting as well as interviews and questionnaires revealed some inefficiencies in carrying out PSC meetings (large number of observers, sub-optimal voting procedure, etc.) which led the evaluators to formulate recommended action 4.2 "restructure PSC meeting procedures".

Another possibility to improve the efficiency of PSC meetings would result from consequently applying the two-step application procedure which the evaluators suggest as part of their recommended action 3.2 "apply rules and procedures which reduce the administrative burden of applicants and project partners". Following an assessment by the JTS, the PSC would decide which Expressions of Interest (Eol's) were considered to have the potential to become high-quality projects.

**PSC decisions on  
Expressions of  
Interest**

In order to avoid undue delays for proposers it is recommended that the PSC meets also in between the regularly scheduled meetings in order to short-list Eol's. It should be sufficient for these additional PSC meetings to convene in a smaller group, i.e. to have only one representative from each Member State and the Swiss Confederation present.

### **Joint Technical Secretariat**

The NWE JTS in Lille, France, is operating under an efficiently working management structure.

The JTS is headed by a Programme Manager. It is organised in three main units, namely the Finance Unit, the Project Development Unit and the Communication Unit. The Finance and the Project Development Unit each comprise one Head of Unit and four Officers. The Communication Unit is run by two Officers who originally reported directly to the Programme Manager, but who are now part of the Project Development Unit. Administrative support is provided by one Office Manager and two Assistants.

NWE is the largest of the thirteen INTERREG IIIB Programmes (in terms of budget). Its JTS is also the largest in terms of employees. Currently, the JTS has sixteen employees. In comparison, the JTS of the Alpine Space Region is employing four people (however, with an intention to add staff soon) and the JTS of the North Sea Region thirteen people. While sixteen employees is small in terms of an international organisation and large in comparison with other INTERREG IIIB Programmes, it appears to represent the right size for

**16 staff members at  
NWE JTS**

an NWE JTS. The evaluators considered this assessment in the formulation of their recommendations which suggests that the JTS operates with the same work force in the second half of the Programme (see also chapter 11.5).

In addition to carrying out day-to-day operational Programme management activities, the JTS has been responsible for:

- Implementing and the following-up of PMC and PSC decisions,
- Preparing and providing all necessary information to the Managing Authority and the Paying Authority to allow them the fulfilment of their responsibilities,
- Developing project ideas and promoting NWE in collaboration with CP's,
- Providing project development support, including technical and financial advice,
- Assisting Lead Partners and Project Co-ordinators during project implementation, and
- Implementing the publicity strategy approved by the PMC.

Even though, in the early phase of the current NWE Programme, some staff resources were bound in the completion of the preceding IIc Programme, the JTS has efficiently fulfilled the above described tasks. Thereby, the JTS has been able to establish a strong position within the Programme as well as towards the Member States and the Programme committees and groups.

For the second half of the Programme, it would be desirable if the JTS and its highly qualified staff would be more strongly involved in Programme horizontal tasks such as public relations, evaluation, and dissemination. In this context, tasks of the JTS in order to develop a profile as "NWE service provider" are described in chapter 11 under recommended action 2.2.

**"NWE service  
provider"**

The JTS staff is also well qualified to provide training (in particular finance training) to CP's. While they would have been beneficial from the start of the Programme, such training sessions have started only recently.

Monitoring of projects has so far been limited to the assessment of activity reports. JTS staff is expected to include site visits (with support of external experts) in their project monitoring activities; see also recommended action 5.3.

Any overlaps with tasks and responsibilities of CP's in project development and project monitoring should be avoided. The JTS should concentrate project development efforts on proposals which already passed the first step of the two-step application procedure (while CP's focus more on the supporting project development until submission of an Expression of Interest).

## Contact Points

Most CP positions were filled only during 2002, i.e. only when the Programme had been operational for several months. At this time, NWE had already issued Calls for Proposals while CP support was not available in all participating countries. In the meantime, CP's are in place in all Member States and the Swiss Confederation.

**Delays in filling  
CP positions**

CP's are working well and represent the crucial link and source of information between projects and the Programme. They are operating in a network-like structure allowing quick exchange of information among them. CP's are also in a position to have excellent knowledge about potential project partners from their country: In addition, they know the institutional environment well and share the language of their country. For these reasons, CP's are predestined to be the main supporters of proposing consortia and concentrate on the initial project development phase from project idea generation until the submission of proposal drafts to the JTS.

**Main supporters of  
project consortia**

Project development tasks will diminish in the second half of the Programme. The evaluators are emphasising that, despite this fact, CP's are expected to provide valuable services in supporting ongoing projects, in promoting the Programme in their country, and in the preparation of a successor Programme ("INTERREG IV") until the end of the current Programme period. Their list of tasks includes:

- Advising candidates in the preparation and implementation of projects
- Acting as ambassadors for transnational co-operation, at the local and regional level
- Advising candidates to improve the transnational characteristics of their project and pro-actively stimulate the project development process
- Facilitating international partner searches
- Assisting the JTS in the development and implementation of the publicity strategy

The proposed role as the main supporters of project consortia would not go along with CP's being involved in project monitoring activities. The JTS, supported by external experts, is foreseen as the monitoring body and an involvement of CP's would represent another overlap of responsibilities and tasks. Even more importantly, those who provide information to project partners and function as their main advocates should not also be the ones who control (or monitor) their activities.

**No CP involvement in  
monitoring**



## 8 Programme Implementation

In this chapter, the adequacy of the implementation and monitoring arrangements is analysed. All Programme implementation phases are addressed, i.e. the entire project life cycle:

**Adequacy of implementation**

- development of new projects (chapter 8.1)
- project selection process (chapter 8.2)
- project support and monitoring (chapter 8.3)
- project evaluation (chapter 8.4)
- publicity and dissemination of results (chapter 8.5)
- exploitation of results (chapter 8.6)

In institutional terms, JTS and CP's share most tasks related to Programme implementation; the PSC is responsible for formal project selection.

**JTS and CP's share most Programme implementation tasks**

### 8.1 Project Development

Recommendation 3 "provide for efficient project development" is referring to this chapter.

The success of a Programme is ultimately based upon the results of the projects it has funded. The foundation for a successful project itself lies in a thorough project development, i.e. the very first step of the project life cycle.

**Foundation for a successful project**

In examining project development, the mid-term evaluators have investigated whether and to what extent:

- mechanisms for project development support are working and
- obstacles to generating high impact transnational projects still exist.

#### Status

NWE has structures in place to support project applicants in the development of their project. In fact, this support has been provided in a two-fold manner until the mid-term mark of the Programme. Within the JTS, a project development unit (PDU) consisting of up to four officers and one Head of Unit supports applicants during this phase of the project life cycle. In addition, in each member state as well as in

the Swiss Confederation at least one Contact Point (CP) is carrying out project development tasks.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to offering project development support, the JTS also assesses project proposals. The JTS claims that project development and proposal assessment tasks for one project are never carried out by the same employee of the PDU.

Delays in filling CP positions had resulted in the unfortunate situation that the Programme had already issued Calls for Proposals while CP were not available in all participating countries to support projects in their development phase (see also chapter 7).

#### Project development support

The evaluators have investigated whether the respective roles of the JTS and CP's in project development were clear to applicants and project partners and whether adjustments become necessary under a more targeted programming approach.

The stakeholder questionnaires revealed that 42% of project partners and applicants disagreed when asked whether the roles between the JTS and CP's were clearly defined.

Nevertheless, the majority of stakeholders agreed that the support during project idea generation by CP's (62%) and the JTS (54%) as well as during project development (CP's 81%; JTS 75%) was useful.

#### Obstacles

32% of all questionnaire submitters found that language posed a problem in the development of their project. Among respondents from countries where English is not the national language, 35% saw language as a barrier in project development. Apparently, 20% of the respondents from Ireland and the U.K. took account of their project partners' language problems when stating that language was a problem in the development of "their" project.

As one questionnaire submitter stated, application forms are seen to be "too heavy, too complex, very discouraging for project promoters". For 63% of project partners and 60% of project applicants, the understanding of rules was a barrier in the development of their project. In addition, 74% of project partners and 71% of project applicants responded that the complexity of forms posed an obstacle to project development.

#### **Assessment**

##### Project development support

Project development support as such is an excellent service which is not available in other Programmes outside the Structural Funds context.

**Separation of roles  
between JTS and CP's  
insufficiently clear**

**Language a barrier  
for every third  
stakeholder**

**Understanding of  
rules a major barrier**

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<sup>11</sup> Each country participating in the Programme has one CP, the exceptions being Belgium, which has one CP in the French-speaking Wallonia and one in the Dutch-speaking Flanders, and the U.K. where due to the size of the country one CP for the Northern part and another for the Southern part are in place. In total, there are ten CP's within IIIB NWE.

The evaluators have strong reservations allowing any single organisation to carry out both project development and proposal assessment tasks – even if different employees are involved in the tasks. In NWE, the JTS is responsible for supporting project development and it is also responsible for assessing project proposals.

The fact that the JTS also shares the project development task with the CP's in the Member States and the Swiss Confederation contributes to the confusion among many project partners and applicants concerning the definition of roles between the JTS and the CP's.

The CP's are closer to the project applicants in their region not only in geographical terms, but also because they share the same language and are aware of the specific circumstances (match funding, national programmes, etc.) in their region. CP's should become the (only) advocates of projects. By making use of their network structure, they are well suited to develop and support transnational partnerships.

**CP's main  
advocates of  
projects**

In order to fulfil the role of an advocate of projects and to support them in project development, CP's will need to have or gain the required knowledge in all areas, including administrative and financial issues, by means of training seminars, and the participation in information events. Ultimately, the knowledge of the CP's needs to be communicated to the applicants. In this regard, "thematic workshops" focussing on a specific Programme measure have proven to be a good project development opportunity for applicants where they also have the opportunity to meet potential project partners.

#### Overcoming obstacles

A large amount of information, in particular legal and financial information, is required to assess and monitor a project. The Programme needs to make every attempt to (further) simplify rules and procedures as much as possible. This includes for instance the provision of "good examples" of high-quality applications which are not attributable to a concrete project.

In order to reduce the high efforts necessary to develop a project proposal, the evaluators propose a two-step application procedure described in detail in chapter 11 under recommended action 3.2. Ambitious proposals may not be submitted due to the risk of not receiving any compensation for the proposal preparation in case of failure. Therefore, the two-step application procedure should be combined with "seed funding" for proposing project consortia in need of financial assistance.

**Two-step  
application procedure**

In NWE, four official languages exist, namely Dutch, English, German, and French. However, the pre-dominant working language in INTERREG IIIB NWE as in most other European Programmes is English. Considering that still one out of three stakeholders perceives language as a barrier in project development, every attempt should be made to reduce the language barrier, for example, by providing more translated (administrative) material to applicants and project partners and conducting (more) training and information events in national languages. On the contrary, it is encouraging that 2/3 of all stakeholders do not seem to have a particular problem with English being the "first" language in a transnational Programme.

## 8.2 Project Selection

Recommendation 4 “increase quality of proposal assessment and selection” is referring to this chapter.

The project development phase (see chapter 8.1) ends with the submission of the proposal by the applicants to the JTS. Each year, two Calls for Proposal are issued in NWE.

The JTS is carrying out the assessments of all proposals based on a set of eligibility and selection criteria. The JTS then provides a ranking of the “quality” of all proposals (averaging the individual assessment grades of the selection criteria) to the PSC together with an explanatory briefing note for each project.

**JTS assessment,  
PSC decision**

The PSC, comprised of up to three representatives from each Member State and the Swiss Confederation, decides about the approval of a project proposal. In this decision process, each participating country has one vote. Decisions have to be reached in consensus.

A proposal is approved, conditionally approved, rejected (for not fulfilling one or more eligibility criteria) or referred back to a later Call. A positive assessment of a proposal by the PSC usually results in a “conditional approval”. In this case, the project consortia are informed about the decision and the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to finally approve the proposal.

In the first three Calls for Proposal, the NWE PSC approved 42 projects; 4 in the first Call, 10 in the second, and 28 in the third (see also chapter 4 for a detailed break-down of projects).

### Assessment

#### Selection criteria

Some adjustments to the selection criteria are necessary, partly due to the implementation of some mid-term evaluation recommendations. Selection criterion 9 “the provision of good prospects for long-lasting activity and leverage for extra investment” does not place sufficient emphasis on the exploitation and replication potential of a project.

**Few adjustments to  
selection criteria**

Selection criteria are not recognising clear and concise plans to carry out evaluation activities (formulation of an evaluation “workpackage”, plans for a well-structures evaluation methodology, clear definition of project targets and operational indicators, etc.) in order to reflect the importance of evaluation for the Programme as well as for projects.

Clear justifications for the level and nature of costs are not provided in proposals. This is particularly relevant for (large) investment projects. Hence, modification to the set of selection criteria is required for judging “good value for money” and infrastructure costs.

#### External proposal assessors

Interviews of the mid-term evaluation team revealed that the JTS image of executing fair and objective assessments of proposals which it established during the first two Calls for Proposal suffered in Call 3. By seeking the assistance from external assessors to complement the qualifications of the JTS staff, an additional element of independence

**External proposal  
assessors provide  
additional element of  
independence**

would be added to the assessment process. The JTS was already supported by experts in the assessment of “water projects” under priority 3. It should use this positive experience also for the assessment of proposals under other measures and priorities; also as a means to emphasise the independence of its assessments towards stakeholders.

#### PSC meeting procedures

Two members of the mid-term evaluation team were present at the PSC 3 meeting in Cardiff on 23 June 2003. Based on their observations as well as suggestions provided in interviews, a variety of procedures should be restructured in order to increase the efficiency of PSC meetings. The following procedures are described in detail in chapter 11 under recommended action 4.2:

- Project introduction by the JTS  
(and not also by representatives of the Lead Partner’s country)
- Proposal discussion by priorities and measures  
(rather than by JTS assessment ranking)
- Avoiding replication and covering gaps
- Majority voting  
(rather than unanimity to reach PSC decisions)
- Limiting the number and “influence” of observers
- Managing conflicts of interest

**Majority voting  
recommended to  
reach PSC decisions**

### **8.3 Project Support and Monitoring**

Recommendation 5 “increase efficiency of project support and monitoring” is referring to this chapter.

Once a project is in operation, efforts of the Programme towards the projects shift toward support and monitoring. It is the aim of NWE to ensure the continuing (high) quality of the ongoing projects until the end of the project life cycle.

#### **Status**

The Programme’s efforts are not yet concentrated on project support and monitoring, since in light of the n+2 rule project development tasks had priority over most other tasks. With project development activities expected to decrease in the second half of the Programme, efforts will shift towards project support and monitoring.

**Efforts shifting towards  
project support and  
monitoring**

## Assessment

### Support versus monitoring

It is envisaged that CP's will become the main advocates of projects. In this role, they would support project partners, for example, in financial and administrative matters. Helping to draft activity reports and cost claims could be part of this task. The stakeholder questionnaire revealed that, among project partners, 30% found it difficult to prepare activity reports and 53% to prepare payment claims.

There would be a clear conflict of interest if CP's would be involved in project monitoring activities as well. Monitoring of projects should be the task of the JTS. The JTS is planning to , but has not yet conducted site visits in order to get a clear picture of the actual achievements of the projects at the project or partner sites.

**Monitoring of projects a JTS task**

### Reporting

The mid-term evaluation team had available only nine activity reports. The level of detail provided in these reports varied considerably from one project to the other indicating that, even though there may be guidelines for reporting in place, they are interpreted differently by project partners. In its own (monitoring) interest, the JTS should make sure that reports will be comparable in the future (recommended action 5.2 was formulated in this context).

It became evident that no assessment of project risks, in particular related to implementation, were included in the activity reports. The JTS should ask project partners to describe any risks to a successful project delivery and to provide contingency plans in upcoming activity reports.

**Risk assessment and contingency plans**

### Training

Project partners have been supported by training seminars and thematic workshops. These means of project support offer the opportunity for knowledge transfer and exchange and are a good platform to get in contact, discuss and network with partners from other (NWE) projects.

A wider level of co-operation (or integration) on the project level with other strands of INTERREG, mainstream Structural Fund projects, or thematically related research and development initiatives has not yet been realised through mutual training seminars.

**Training seminars beyond NWE**

Support mechanisms for the "horizontal" project tasks of evaluation, dissemination and exploitation of results are described in the respective chapters 8.4 to 8.6.

## 8.4 Project Evaluation

It is one of the most crucial recommendations of the mid-term evaluation to “strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects”. In chapter 11, this recommendation 6 is described in detail. Furthermore, chapter 6 offers suggestions to improve the acquisition of (common) data and the definition of (common) indicators.

Projects are setting goals or objectives in proposals for funding. Once approved, it has to be examined by means of an evaluation whether and to what extent these goals/objectives have been met after completion of the project.

### Status

In the stakeholder questionnaires, 87% of project partners and applicants stated that evaluation was an important activity within their project, yet a far lower percentage had actually included a thorough description of evaluation activities in their project proposals.

**Evaluation an  
important project  
activity**

There is no requirement for projects to engage in any evaluation activities which go beyond the “reporting” of basic indicator data which, moreover, are of questionable practical usefulness.

The Programme is lacking a structured evaluation methodology in order to determine project goal achievement and, thus, ultimately Programme achievements.

### Assessment

Considering the importance of providing results at project end, the Programme should consider strongly encouraging projects to include evaluation elements, such as clear objectives with related indicators, an evaluation methodology, an independent evaluator, if feasible, or even an evaluation “workpackage”. In this context, the evaluator is proposing recommended action 6.5 “make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of the fifth Call for Proposals”.

**Evaluation mandatory  
for future applications**

In addition, it is up to the Programme to establish evaluation support mechanisms for projects, such as an Evaluation Initiative (see recommended action 6.1) which could take up the main support role in working closely with projects and other institutions, authorities, etc. and in generating evaluation data.

In future Calls for Proposal, it will be important to more strongly emphasise the need for evaluation on the project level. NWE could consider allocating additional funds to projects (already running) to carry out evaluation activities where necessary.

## 8.5 Publicity and Dissemination of Results

Recommendation 7 “Increase awareness of the Programme - communication & dissemination strategy” is referring to this chapter.

According to the relevant Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1159/2000 on information and publicity measures concerning the Structural Funds, the aim of information and publicity measures is mainly to inform potential and final beneficiaries as well as possible multipliers about the opportunities offered by these Funds, but “the general public” should also be informed “about the role played by the European Union in co-operation with the Member States in the assistance concerned and its results.”<sup>12</sup>

**Commission  
Regulation on  
information and  
publicity**

The relevant measures have to be laid down in a communications action plan in the respective Programme Complement. In the case of INTERREG IIIB NWE, this section of the Programme Complement received its final revision (at the request of the Member States) in June 2003, i.e. at a time when the mid-term evaluation was already underway. However, many of the measures laid down in this communications action plan have of course already been implemented.

**Communications  
action plan**

According to the Programme Complement, “the overall aims of the Communication and Publicity Strategy are

1. to contribute to the Project Development strategy market by attracting a wide number of potential project partners and generate new applications
2. to promote the Programme particularly towards decision-makers at all levels (EU, national, regional) both to help project promoters obtain match funding more easily and raise their awareness on the positive impacts of approved projects”.<sup>13</sup>

In order to implement the objectives of the Programme Complement, the JTS founded a separate communication unit with two communication officers under the direct responsibility of the Programme Manager. In early 2003, the JTS was reorganised, the communication unit was put under the responsibility of the Head of the Project Development Unit, since it was felt that communications issues were closely related to project development.

**JTS  
Communication  
Unit**

According to the Programme Complement, various communication tools had to be prepared. The status of their implementation is summarised in a table hereafter.

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<sup>12</sup> Annex, subtitle 2 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1159/2000 of 30 May 2000 on information and publicity measures to be carried out by the Member States concerning assistance from the Structural Funds

<sup>13</sup> Programme Complement – INTERREG IIB Community Initiative North West Europe, June 2003, p. 60



**Status****Table 10: Communication Tools and Their Status of Implementation**

<b>Communication tool</b>	<b>Status</b>
Corporate identity	Stationery, website, brochures, infopack etc. all follow the same design
Targeted database of contacts (key players)	has been set up by JTS and CP's; work on it is continued; partly outdated as became evident during questionnaire mailing
Programme website	has been set up by the JTS with the help of a web agency, updated continuously; relevant documents can be downloaded; restricted area for Programme Management, showing Activity reports and cost claims for the current reporting period; website language is English, translations of parts are being discussed
NWE newsletter	First issue published in July 2003
Online newsletter	First issue in July 2003
Targeted events	Five partner search events (project development days), a spark-off event, five Lead partner seminars, three thematic workshops and two infodays have taken place in 2003, plus seven external workshops and infodays in 2002, plus one project fair, one partner search event and one workshop on Key Issues in Project Development in 2002; more events have been scheduled; an event for regional representations in Brussels is also planned
Mid-term event	One or two such events (NL/UK) planned for 2004, but not yet agreed
Media relations	General "sample" press releases have been prepared for Lead partners; the media have been contacted on a number of occasions either by the JTS or project partners; there is a folder with press clippings at the JTS; press relations will possibly be contracted out, a PR agency will then be asked to define an overall press strategy for 2003-2006
Promotion literature/ material	Posters, exhibition stands, delegate packs, a Programme brochure and flyers etc. have been produced, most of them in all four NWE languages (Dutch, English, French, German); Communication Pack for Lead Partners on CD-ROM, including a standard Power Point presentation, a generic press release and print files of promotion material; applicants' infopack on paper (can also be downloaded from the website)

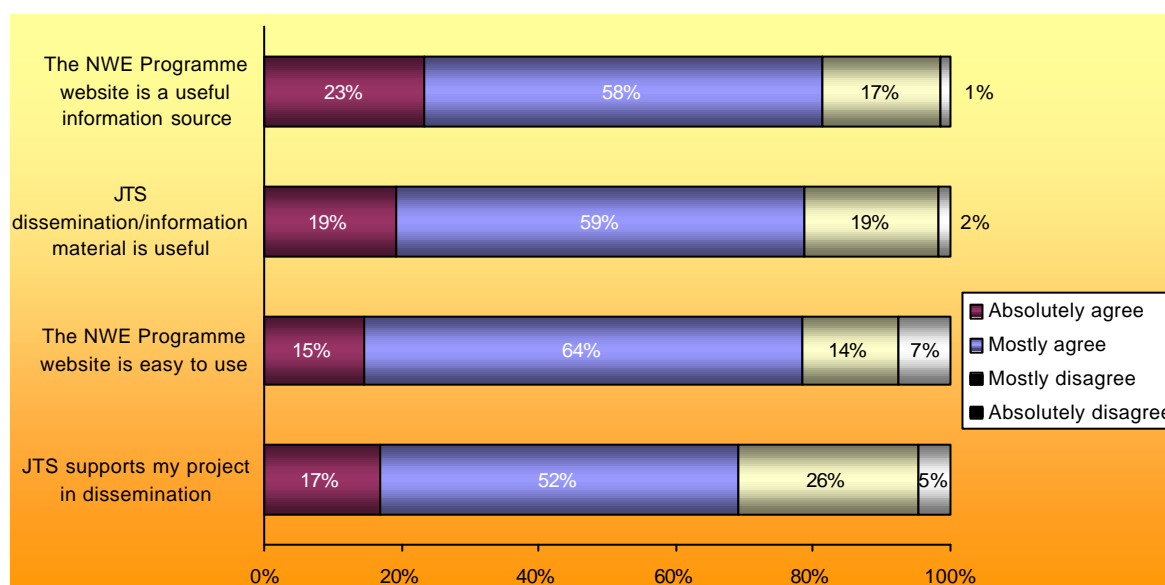
## Assessment

INTERREG IIIB NWE has started work almost two years ago and despite the fact that the JTS staff was heavily charged with the “closing” of INTERREG IIc in 2002, a lot has been achieved in terms of communication activities. However, the results of the questionnaire survey and the interviews carried out by the mid-term evaluation team show that some of the issues require particular attention, although the communication strategy was not questioned in general. Respondents mostly seemed to feel that it is on the right track, but has to be taken further.

Asked whether the NWE Programme website was easy to use, and whether it was a useful information source, four out of five respondents gave a very favourable judgement – they either agreed or absolutely agreed with these statements.

**Website useful information source**

**Figure 8: Publicity and Dissemination of Results**



n=154

Despite this good judgment, there are still some drawbacks. The website was revised in April/May 2003, supposedly to become more user-friendly, also including new features. In some sections, information is still missing today, in some it is even wrong. The site is somewhat confusing in its navigation, it is not possible to navigate easily back and forth between different menu items, and the navigation changes as the user opens up a new page. When looking at project information (which is not at all easy to find), users have to click through all the info on one project before they can get an overview of another etc. It is difficult to relocate information seen at one point in time when visiting the site (where to find it, in which of the submenus? They are not always self-explanatory). The project idea database is not up to date, some so-called project ideas have become approved projects in the meantime.

When compared to other INTERREG IIIB websites (North Sea, Baltic Sea, Alpine Space, CADSES, Atlantic Area, South West Europe), the

NWE website may not be as functional as for example the Baltic Sea website in its navigation, but it is definitely more up-to-date and has more to offer than some of the other sites. Some have nice tools (such as a map of where project Lead partners come from, showing upon request where their project partners live), or offer different language versions of the site, but when put to test, the limitations become clear quite soon, i.e. you find a Spanish list on the French part of a site etc. However, this does not mean the NWE website could not be improved. The drawbacks mentioned above have to be eliminated, "private sections" for project partners should be added to allow for the exchange of sensitive project information, discussion fora should be added to make the website more interactive and to give all those interested the opportunity to share their views of NWE.

Project communication strategy is another important issue. Projects have to indicate their planned communication strategy in their project application, this is an important selection criterion.<sup>14</sup> However, some projects have been very evasive in explaining what their communication strategy would really include (apart from "a project website, a brochure and e-mails between partners"), but they have been selected anyhow. Fortunately, when looking at the activity reports handed in by projects in June-July 2003, a different picture can be seen. The activity report template does not explicitly require a section on communication, but a section on each activity that was foreseen in the application. Apparently, the projects feel more committed to communication aspects now or the JTS has made respective demands. The activity reports handed in so far mostly include rather detailed information on ongoing communication activities.

78% of the questionnaire respondents who answered the respective question stated they found the JTS' dissemination/ information material useful.

Only about one third of the questionnaires analysed provided answers to the question whether the JTS supported the respondent's project in dissemination, of these, about 70% answered favourably, but 4% disagreed and 27% strongly disagreed. Apparently, there is not much to disseminate yet, but there seems to be a strong discrepancy in perception, probably depending on when and how the project asked for JTS support.

Once they are tangible, project results will have to be publicised widely, also in order to attract further applicants, but due to the late approval of projects, there are hardly any project results available up to now. The mid-term event(s) are supposed to present project clusters, showing an aggregated possible impact of a number of projects in a certain area.

Communication also means communication between stakeholders within INTERREG IIIB NWE. Open answers to the mid-term evaluator's questionnaire included the statement that communication between JTS, CP's, project promoters and project partners has to be improved. "Information and goals of the programme differ sometimes depending on when you ask(ed) and whom you ask." Hopefully, this

**Project  
communication  
strategy**

**Communication  
between  
principal partners**

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<sup>14</sup> Core selection criterion 8 of 11, "The project has an effective communication strategy. The results and experience acquired by the project will be transferable and clearly communicated", Programme Complement, p. 56.

issue has improved with the – according to many of the CP interviewees and those from the JTS – improved co-operation and sharing of responsibilities of JTS and CP's. But in general, there seems to be a lack of information exchange as to who is doing what when with regard to communication.

CP's were asked by the JTS to provide national communication plans, so far only two CP's sent drafts. Although this finding suggests that communication is not always seen as an important issue, quite a number of interviewees with very different backgrounds (CP's, JTS, project partners etc.) have stressed its importance and the need to put more emphasis on communication.

As stated earlier, the current communication strategy seems to go in the right direction, but has to be taken further.

**Good communication  
strategy to be taken  
further**

The information material is adequate in general, there have been no particular complaints. There are means to produce further material if needed or specific project-related dissemination material if requested since the 2001/2002 communication budget has been underspent.

The JTS wants to contract out press relations and to hire a PR agency to define an overall communication strategy for 2003-2006. This strategy should be more focused, based on the experiences made so far clearly identifying target audiences and providing a "message" for each. When identifying target audiences and further developing the stakeholder database, synergies with other IIIB Programmes should be taken into account. One questionnaire respondent mentioned that "probably every IIIB Programme is developing the same database". Furthermore, good practices have not yet been identified and publicised in order to encourage other (potential) projects to follow positive examples.

The thematic seminars and workshops organised by the JTS have received favourable comments and seem to be helpful in producing project applications. The more projects are accepted, the more project results will eventually be available, showing how INTERREG IIIB NWE can have a territorial impact. The JTS plans on building thematic project clusters, the results are supposed to be presented i.e. at trade fairs, "big players" will have to be contacted (using personal contacts), the marketing dimension of INTERREG IIIB NWE will have to be shown.

There has not yet been a "Conference of the Regions" as held by the Alpine Space Region in July 2003 in Marcy-l'Etoile, France. Such a conference could be held together with another INTERREG III Programme. The JTS has been discussing such an event already, there is even the possibility of INTERACT (co-)funding. As an event of this kind would attract an audience beyond that of the planned mid-term event(s), both types of conferences should be envisaged, if possible.

Last but not least, there should be a clear communication strategy for the JTS, the CP's and the project promoters and project partners in order for each to know what the others are doing (to avoid double work). National INTERREG IIIB NWE websites, if felt to be necessary at all, should be clearly interlinked with the Programme website [www.nweurope.org](http://www.nweurope.org). It is, however, more desirable to have just one website – preferably in all four languages, since language barriers

were an important topic in the open questions of the questionnaire. It has to be born in mind, though, that there are not only “foreign” languages, but “Eurospeak” as well, as one respondent put it. Another one added that “eurocracy language is difficult to understand for some partners”.

## 8.6 Exploitation of Results

Recommendation 8 “exploit results on a European level” is referring to this chapter.

The last stage of the project life cycle is the exploitation of results. The exploitation of results is closely linked to evaluation. While evaluation is a means to determine whether pre-defined goals have been met and to describe the project results, exploitation is making use of these project results in the future.

Exploitation implies that results achieved and lessons learned during the project life-time are taken up and used by others (individuals, organisations, institutions, other projects, etc) or that the project and its results continue as part of an organisation’s mainstream activities. Hence, exploitation is not necessarily a “commercial” activity.

### Status

Until the mid-term mark of the Programme, exploitation of results was not on anyone’s agenda. NWE has no structures for exploitation in place and no apparent efforts have been devoted so far by projects (or the Programme) to exploit any results that may be achieved.

Projects are currently not enabled to carry over their results into the future and, therefore, NWE is not assuring the desirable sustainability of project funding.

### Assessment

Planning for exploitation of results is an important long-term impact task not to be left for the very end of the Programme period. Hence, (project result) continuation and take-up should already be prepared during the Programme life-time in order to carry over results into the future, i.e. after NWE funding runs out.

Once fewer projects would be generated (because a major share of the funding budget has been committed to projects), the Programme would be able to shift efforts towards supporting ongoing project as well as exploiting project results after the end of projects.

It is proposed that the JTS takes up the task to support projects in their exploitation efforts. This could, for example, be done by finding a sustainable “business” & institutional model for continuation after funding runs out, providing or organising training in business development, putting emphasis on institutional co-operation and helping to develop private-public-partnerships (PPP’s).

**Long-term view on taking-up and using project results**

**Exploitation not on anyone’s agenda yet**

**Shifting Programme efforts towards exploitation**

## 9 European Added Value

European Added Value is an important assessment criterion for projects as well as Programmes as a whole. The term, however, often remains rather abstract and is seldom clearly defined. European Added Value has to be seen in close relation to the principle of subsidiarity, which states that actions undertaken by the Union are intended to complement those undertaken by the Member States. Hence, the programme needs to demonstrate that it addresses problems and potentials not or not sufficiently tackled by national, regional or local policies. After Programme completion in 2006, INTERREG IIIB NWE will be assessed according to its achievements in terms of European Added Value. Considering the current shortcomings in the Programme evaluation framework, NWE should establish structures that will allow for a meaningful evaluation (see also recommendation 6 “strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects”).

**Beyond the national scope**

**Need to strengthen evaluation**

At the mid-term mark of the Programme, it was difficult to provide a well-founded assessment of NWE's Added Value. Very few tangible results were already available due to the late implementation of the Programme and, in consequence, the delayed start of projects and the availability of only nine activity reports for the mid-term evaluation.

The Programme has approved some promising projects. Now, it needs to be proven that they can also deliver (high-quality) output.

The final Programme evaluation will need to examine the project's contributions to the cross-cutting themes of NWE. i.e.

- building a better knowledge base of the NWE area,
- involving civil society and public-private partnerships more deeply,
- increasing coherence and synergy between territorial development objectives and EU sectoral policies,
- embedding co-operation within the respective national and regional territorial development structures
- promoting transnational co-operation through concrete action with clear benefits

**Contribution to cross-cutting themes**

Furthermore, European Added Value can be expected from the development of actual synergies within the project region (e.g. on the urban/ regional level). In this context, the Programme should consider the evaluator's recommendation 9 to “create synergies between projects & policies”.

After the end of the Programme, it will also need to be ensured that measures implemented by projects will be sustainable without continued European funding and that genuine transnational co-operation structures continue beyond the project (and Programme) end date (see recommended action 8.1).

## 10 Co-operation of the NWE Programme with other INTERREG IIIB Programmes

Co-operation between INTERREG IIIB Programmes has been limited thus far. While contacts between Secretariats exist, there has not yet been a well-organised exchange of good practices among Programmes or among the projects of the respective Programmes.

Some “good practices” from other Programmes have been included in the Evaluation Report, such as the recommended “Conference of the Regions” from the Alpine Space Region and “thematic workshops” taken up from the North Sea Region.

The evaluators contacted the mid-term evaluation teams of three other INTERREG IIIB Programmes, namely the North Sea Region, the Baltic Sea Region, and the Alpine Space Region.<sup>15</sup> In a telephone conference on 22 September 2003 and in individual phone conversations, experiences and some key Programme issues were discussed.

It became evident that the mid-term evaluators detected similar key concerns in their respective Programmes. Most importantly, a mutual concern was expressed concerning evaluation and, in particular, the use of the current indicator sets which were perceived as being of limited use to demonstrate the quality and the progress of projects.

**Mutual concerns  
about lack of useful  
indicators**

The North Sea, Baltic Sea, and Alpine Space Programmes have a combined ERDF of M€ 286 available which is about M€ 53 less than the ERDF of the NWE Programme alone. While NWE is facing a de-commitment risk at the end of 2004 in the amount of M€ 27.7 (after the third Call for Proposals), the North Sea Region and also the Alpine Space Region are facing de-commitment risks to a lesser extent. In September 2003, the Baltic Sea Region did not foresee any n+2 related risks due to the speedy selection of a large amount of projects (62) until then.

**Different  
experiences with  
n+2 rule**

The mid-term evaluator of the Alpine Space Region suggested that the EC should consider an “n+3 rule”. Such a rule was perceived to be more useful (and fair) to the Programme which, similar to NWE, had faced considerable start-up problems.

For the NWE evaluators it was interesting to hear about the experiences in other Programmes concerning the separation of project development and proposal assessment. While the Baltic Sea Area does not have any CP’s (only national sub-committees), the North Sea and the Alpine Space Programme have a similar task-sharing set-up between JTS and CP’s with respect to project development and proposal assessment tasks as in NWE. However, neither of the two mid-term evaluation teams perceived this potential overlap of responsibilities as a problem.

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<sup>15</sup> Within the scope of the mid-term evaluation exercise, it was not feasible to exchange experiences with mid-term evaluation teams of all thirteen IIIB Programmes. The mid-term evaluation team established contact with the evaluators of the North Sea, Baltic Sea, and Alpine Space Regions, i.e. with Programmes which have a relatively large ERDF and Programme budget available and which are geographically close to the NWE Region. The mid-term evaluation team of the Atlantic Area was also contacted. An exchange of experiences was not possible due to confidentiality reasons on the side of the “Atlantic team”.



There is a total of **13 INTERREG IIIB Programmes**:

**Alpine Space:** 119 M€ total budget including 59.7 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Austria, France, Germany and Italy in the European Union, and Slovenia, Switzerland and Liechtenstein

**ARCHI-MED:** 118.1 M€ total budget including 78.7 M€ ERDF; co-operation between Italy and Greece with Cyprus, Malta, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya and Turkey

**Atlantic Area:** 203.9 M€ total budget including 119 M€ ERDF; co-operation between France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the U.K.

**Azores-Madeira-Canary Islands:** 170.7 M€ total budget including 145.1 M€ ERDF; co-operation between these islands of Portugal and Spain

**Baltic Sea Region:** 186.5 M€ total budget including 97.1 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Denmark, North-East Germany, Sweden and Finland in the European Union and Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Belarus

**CADESSES** - Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space: 237.5 M€ total budget including 129 M€ ERDF; participating areas are Austria, Greece, the Eastern and Southern Länder of Germany and the Eastern regions of Italy in the European Union, the seven candidate countries Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania and the seven non-Member States Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania, Moldavia and Ukraine

**Caribbean Space:** 24 M€ total budget including 12 M€ ERDF; covering France's overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana

**Northern Periphery:** 36 M€ total budget including 21.3 M€ ERDF; co-operation between Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, the Faeroes and Greenland

**North Sea Region:** 254.4 M€ total budget including 129.2 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and the U.K.

**North-West Europe:** 655.8 M€ total budget including 329.7 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the U.K. and Switzerland

**Réunion:** 5.9 M€ total budget including 5 M€ ERDF; co-operation area centred around Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean

**South-West Europe:** 109.9 M€ total budget including 66.2 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Spain, France, Portugal and the U.K.

**Western Mediterranean:** 194.3 M€ total budget including 103.8 M€ ERDF; participating countries are Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar in the U.K.

The North Sea, Baltic Sea, Alpine Space, and NWE mid-term evaluators agreed that the INTERREG IIIB Programme Secretariats are not currently disseminating good (and bad) practices between the Programmes in a systematic way. In this regard, the NWE evaluators formulated recommended actions 8.2 ("compare good practices with other IIIB Programmes) and 9.1 ("create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE").

**No systematic good practice exchange between Programmes**



Only the most important key issues were compared across the four Programmes. A formal and thorough comparison of mid-term evaluation findings would be encouraged. Therefore, the mid-term evaluators of INTERREG IIIB NWE put forward a proposal to the European Commission for an exercise comprising of:

**Formal analysis of all IIIB  
mid-term evaluations  
proposed to the EC**

- a) Comparative analysis of mid-term evaluations in order to provide a summary of the respective observations and recommendations
- b) identification of good and bad practices
- c) formulation of recommendations for future INTERREG programming

If put into action, such an exercise would allow for a structured analysis of all mid-term evaluations carried out and the formulation of a well-founded set of recommendations for the future set-up of successor INTERREG Programmes.

## 11 Conclusions & Recommendations

The mid-term evaluation of INTERREG IIIB NWE was carried out by an independent evaluator during May to November 2003. Following intensive consultations with Programme stakeholders and analyses of a wide range of information and data, the mid-term evaluation exercise resulted in the formulation of ten recommendations and a total of thirty-one recommended actions.

**10 recommendations  
and 31 actions**

In this final chapter of the Evaluation Report, the process of developing recommendations (chapter 11.1), the underlying assumptions of the mid-term evaluators (chapter 11.2), basic future aims of NWE (chapter 11.3), an overview and detailed descriptions of recommendations and actions (chapter 11.4) are provided as well as an explanation of the envisaged budgetary implications (chapter 11.5) and, finally, the implementation timeframe of the mid-term evaluation recommendations (chapter 11.6).

### 11.1 Process of Developing Recommendations

During the mid-term evaluation process, the evaluator has applied an iterative process of developing the final recommendations:

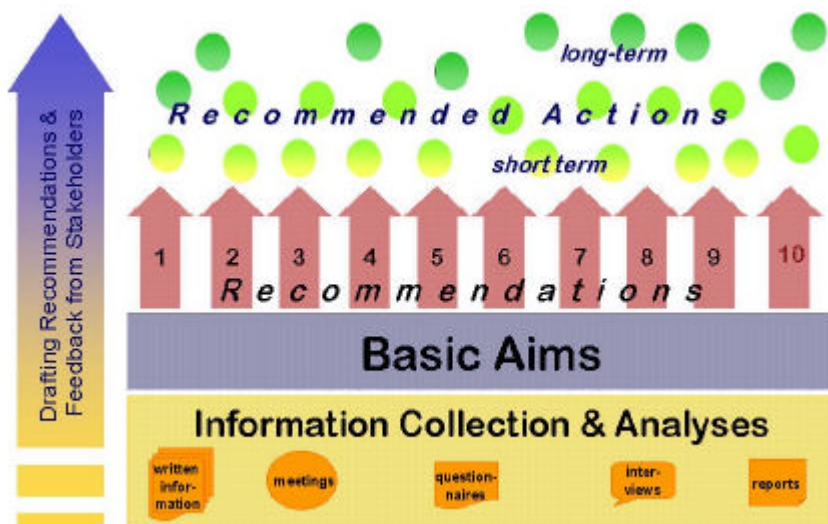
**Iterative comment-  
revision process**

- After the general information had been collected, an initial set of (very basic) recommendations was developed. During interviews these were "tested" in the form of questions put to interviewees.
- A mid-term evaluation workshop was held in Lille on 1 July where a wide range of stakeholders was invited to respond to questions and to discuss issues of future importance. Again valuable feedback was collected on the feasibility of the initial recommendations.
- During August/ early September a more mature draft of recommendations was prepared. Interviews were continued and occasionally very specific questions were asked in addition to the general interview guideline.
- The first "official" draft of recommendations was presented to the NWE Mid-Term Evaluation Working Group on 29 September (and was circulated widely, as expected). The content and direction of these recommendations was intentionally controversial. Valuable feedback on this draft document was received during and after the meeting on 29 September.
- The final draft of the recommendations (this document) was presented to the PMC on 15 October to be discussed at its meeting in Brussels on 23 October.
- Following the PMC discussions, the final document was issued on 19 November.

This iterative process of drafting, collecting feedback, redrafting has been very valuable. It has provided the mid-term evaluation team with a wide range of positions from NWE stakeholders regarding the feasibility and relevance of its recommendations and the evaluators believe (or at least hope) that it has also triggered a process of evaluating options for the future of NWE by Programme stakeholders on a wide basis.

**Feedback covering wide range of opinions**

**Figure 9: Process of Developing Recommendations**



Nonetheless, it should be noted that

- the evaluators have neither been able nor willing to reconcile all expectations on the direction of the final recommendations,
- the evaluators take full responsibility for the final recommendations, and no attempt of influencing their development was made (nor would have been accepted),
- the responsibility for implementing recommendations lies entirely with the NWE institutions, especially the PMC.

**PMC responsible for implementing recommendations**

## 11.2 Assumptions

The recommendations of the NWE mid-term evaluation are based on the following basic assumptions:

**Assumption 1:** NWE will continue to issue Calls for Proposals beyond Call 5 and will not commit the most significant part of its budget at PSC4 and PSC5 meetings.

**Calls for Proposal  
until end of  
Programme**

Several remarks indicate that it is being assumed by some NWE committee members and other stakeholders that only a marginal, or even no budget will be left after 2004, except for Priority 6 (Technical Assistance). This would follow a very questionable concept of "efficiency" and

- would result in a situation where NWE would be unable to react to new circumstances to be addressed by transnational projects,
- there would be a long funding gap for institutions interested in transnational co-operation, and
- the entire principle of mid-term assessment would be questioned, as its real impact would be marginalized.

This assumption has also been formalised in recommended action 1.3.

**Assumption 2:** Irrespective of the concrete nature of future structural funding for transnational and regional co-operation in North-West Europe, it is assumed that at least some of the issues currently addressed in NWE will be of continued relevance in a successor programme to INTERREG IIIB. Therefore, the evaluation team has taken a long-term perspective of providing recommendations beyond the current programming period until 2006.

**Successor  
Programme to  
IIIB NWE**

The evaluators accept that several of the draft recommendations (as provided during the final consultation process) would be difficult to implement in the short term for legal, financial or (mostly) institutional reasons. However, the evaluators also recommend strongly bearing in mind the need to build sustainable structures and processes for transnational co-operation well beyond 2006.

**Short-, medium-,  
and long-term  
recommendations**

Wherever applicable the evaluators have, therefore, indicated what NWE should aim for in the medium or long term, and which actions should be implemented in the short term.

**Assumption 3:** The mid-term evaluation team is aware that the proposed recommendations require procedural and institutional changes, some may even call for financial and legal adoptions. It has been tried to minimise short-term changes with heavy administrative procedures as far as possible.

The NWE stakeholders should however appreciate that one of the purposes of the mid-term evaluation is to contribute to the change management process.

**Contribution to  
change management**

**Assumption 4:** A very large number of issues was identified in the Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Evaluation of NWE, and additional (unexpected) points appeared during the evaluation. In view of the short amount of time (even shortened by the holiday period) and restrictions in budget, the mid-term evaluation team had no choice other than focusing on those issues which it considered to have the greatest relevance for the future of NWE. In some cases the level of detail is lower than initially envisaged, whereas some areas, which were rather implicitly contained in the initial briefing of the evaluators, are covered more prominently.

Focus on issues with greatest relevance to NWE

Beyond these practical restrictions, the evaluators have refrained from providing "ready-made" solutions (e.g. a list of new priorities for future Calls) where they believe that the actual process of jointly defining these solutions within NWE will strengthen the transnational element of co-operation, improve the rooting of NWE among the stakeholders, or contribute to a broader common knowledge base.

### 11.3 Basic Future Aims of NWE as "Guiding Principle" of Recommendations

On the basis of the observations and analyses presented in the previous sections of this report, the mid-term evaluation team has identified a number of basic aims which are the "guiding principles" of the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation:

Six guiding principles for recommendations

- **Transnationality:** build transnationality more deeply into the programme and the entire project life cycle
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** increase the efficiency and effectiveness of decision making, support activities and monitoring
- **Focus:** provide a stronger focus for programme priorities
- **Accountability:** increase the accountability of the projects and the NWE Programme towards its goals
- **Durability:** strengthen the durability of Programme actions after funding ends
- **Exchange:** facilitate exchange across institutional "boundaries" (within the Programme as well as in the actual Programme area)

There may be little general disagreement on these basic aims in principle. It is equally clear, however, that there are differences in opinion on how to best transform them into concrete recommendations and how to implement these.

The evaluator's aim has been to provide a well-balanced set of recommended actions, many of which are closely interlinked. When deciding on the parts to be eventually implemented, the PMC should take care to re-balance as necessary - and to take a long-term perspective of transnational co-operation in North-West Europe.

Well-balanced set of recommended actions

## 11.4 Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations and Actions

The mid-term evaluators formulated ten recommendations and thirty-one recommended actions for stakeholders of INTERREG IIIB NWE as well as the European Commission.

An overview table is provided below followed by more detailed explanations for each of the recommendations and recommended actions.

The complexity of the INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme is also reflected in the actions recommended by the mid-term evaluators. Almost all actions are interlinked with each other. A decision to implement an action could have direct or indirect effects on other actions. Therefore, the mid-term evaluators noted all related recommended actions at the end of each action description.

It is the PMC which is ultimately bearing the responsibility to decide upon the implementation of the mid-term evaluation recommendations. The actual responsibilities for carrying out recommended actions would usually be with the various Programme bodies, groups, and committees such as JTS, PMC, Supervisory Group, PSC, NWE Spatial Vision Working Group, Managing Authority, CP's. In some cases, the Member States and the Swiss Confederation would be involved in completing a recommended action, in other cases the envisaged Evaluation Initiative or external assessors. The mid-term evaluators identified clear responsibilities who or which Programme body should be charged with completing each of the respective actions.

In addition, the evaluators made suggestions for the optimal implementation time.<sup>16</sup> In general, distinctions were made between short-, medium-, and long-term recommended actions. In this context, short-term actions are those that should be implemented immediately, i.e. within 2003, medium-term actions should be implemented during the remainder of the Programme, i.e. between 2004 and 2006, while long-term actions should be considered when setting up a successor Programme after 2006.

**Responsibilities  
for completing  
actions identified**

**Optimal implementation  
time for each action  
identified**

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<sup>16</sup> The implementation schedules for the individual actions was summarised in a Programme implementation timeframe presented in chapter 11.6.

**Table 11: Overview of Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations and Actions**

Recommendations	Actions
<p><b>1 Focus the strategic orientation of NWE Programme and pave the way ahead</b></p> <p>Provide better focus and guidance in future Calls, enable NWE to take account of changes in North-West Europe and beyond, analyse in light of the Programme objectives and incorporate findings in a “Road Map” for future Calls.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Review Programme priorities &amp; streamline for future Calls.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Create an NWE observatory.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Develop a “Road Map” for future Calls.</p>
<p><b>2 Streamline Programme structures and procedures</b></p> <p>Reduce overlaps between NWE committees by more clearly defining and separating tasks; provide for a more balanced representation of Committees and increase the efficiency of their work.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Separate project development and proposal assessment.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Develop JTS profile as “NWE service provider”.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Balance and increase efficiency of NWE committee structures.</p>
<p><b>3 Provide for effective project development</b></p> <p>Eliminate overlaps in project development tasks and responsibilities; introduce procedures which lessen the administrative burden on project applicants; provide training structures and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Raise profile of CP’s to become the main supporters for applicants and project partners.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Apply rules and procedures which reduce the administrative burden of applicants and project partners.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Provide training for CP’s and project development opportunities.</p>
<p><b>4 Increase “quality” of proposal assessment and selection</b></p> <p>Utilise the expertise of Programme-external specialists in the proposal assessment process; adjust PSC voting procedure in order to reduce the vetoing power of one individual member state; streamline PSC meeting procedures; adjust project selection criteria.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Add external proposal assessors.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Restructure PSC meeting procedures.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Adjust selection criteria.</p>
<p><b>5 Increase efficiency of project monitoring and support</b></p> <p>Provide support to project partners (in questions of project administration, evaluation, dissemination, exploitation, etc.) and establish a project monitoring system that includes visits to project and partner sites</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Offer training seminars and thematic workshops to all project partners.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Encourage the submission of short &amp; concise reports.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Incorporate site visits as an integral element of project monitoring activities.</p>

## **6 Strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects**

Establish an Evaluation Initiative; define baseline indicators and few, but common, key indicators on the measure level to provide the basis for sound project and Programme evaluation; recognise the importance of evaluation early on in the application process

- 6.1** Establish an Evaluation Initiative.
- 6.2** Improve baseline data availability.
- 6.3** Strengthen commonality.
- 6.4** Reduce complexity & strengthen relevance.
- 6.5** Make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of the Fifth Call for Proposals.

## **7 Increase awareness of the Programme - communication & dissemination strategy**

Increase awareness of the Programme and establish specific communication strategies to address specific groups, in particular potential “new” applicants and “multipliers”; Make use of all communication media; organise further events to bring together various NWE stakeholders

- 7.1** Increase awareness of the programme.
- 7.2** Identify target groups and address them with specific communication strategies.
- 7.3** Hold a “Conference of the Regions”.

## **8 Exploit results on a European level**

Focus efforts and budget now on carrying over and utilising project and Programme results after the end of the Programme

- 8.1** Focus on “project sustainability” after NWE funding.
- 8.2** Compare “Good Practices” with other IIIB Programmes.

## **9 Create synergies between projects & policies**

Create opportunities for co-operation and exchange on all levels, including NWE stakeholders, regions, politicians, staff members of Programme secretariats, project partners, and experts in specific areas

- 9.1** Create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE.
- 9.2** Involve politicians and other decision makers.
- 9.3** Cluster projects thematically.

## **10 Implement Recommendations**

Distribute and discuss mid-term evaluation recommendations widely; provide a structure within the Programme to review and, if necessary over time, adjust the recommendations

- 10.1** Distribute Evaluation Report widely.
- 10.2** Frequently review mid-term evaluation recommendations.
- 10.3** Allocate “miscellaneous budget line” to implement mid-term recommendations.



## Focus the strategic orientation of the NWE Programme and pave the way ahead

Provide better focus and guidance in future Calls, enable NWE to take account of changes in North-West Europe and beyond, analyse in light of the Programme objectives and incorporate findings in a "Road Map" for future Calls.

The NWE Programme priorities and measures are the result of a thorough consultation process during the end of 1999 and early 2001, including an ex-ante evaluation in 2000, using mostly data from 1999. There is little evidence that a major revision of the priorities is required, but a clear indication that the defined priority areas are too broad and in need of focusing.

North-West Europe is a very dynamic part of Europe, but the empirical data basis for monitoring socio-economic and policy changes is weak. The challenges of new developments (e.g. EU enlargement, knowledge society) on the future of transnational co-operation in NWE are not systematically considered.

### Rationale

### Actions

#### 1.1 Review Programme priorities & streamline for future Calls.

Much more analysis and consultation is needed for the review of Programme priorities and the determination of the focus of future NWE Calls than was feasible in the mid-term evaluation. Therefore, the mid-term evaluation team is proposing a process rather than "ready-made" solutions.

The current priorities and measures are too broad, the transnational dimension needs to become more tangible in projects and a more concrete contribution to the cross-cutting themes is highly desirable. The approach, therefore, should be to streamline and concentrate on fewer and more focussed topics in future INTERREG IIIB NWE Calls and to make use of more integrated packages of measures.

#### Issues for Review

An illustrative list of strategic issues to be considered when reviewing Programme priorities includes:<sup>17</sup>

- specific role of NWE in an enlarged EU; specifying unique qualities of NWE to build upon
- internal balance of NWE (selective concentration of functions)

### Responsibilities

JTS  
PMC & Supervisory Group  
NWE Spatial Vision  
Working Group

<sup>17</sup> Please note that these points are not meant to be new "priorities", but indicative criteria to review current priority sets.

- capacity building and human resource development
- institutional co-operation and involvement of the private sector
- social interpretation of NWE and its transnational aspects
- transnational policy framework for cities
- accessibility of (public) services and essential infrastructures for all (in social and geographic terms)

The results of the discussion on future Programme priorities and an analysis of how the current projects respond to current priorities is contained in chapter 5 of this document.

### Priority Review Process

### Implementation

1. The PMC should decide to review Programme priorities with a view to focus and to stronger integrate measures as from Call 5. This decision should be published widely to potential project proposers; the orientation of Call 4 should (obviously) remain unchanged.

Immediately

2. The PMC should decide to arrange for a two-day "think-tank" seminar with a wide selection of stakeholders (similar in format and representation to the mid-term evaluation workshop on 1 July in Lille). Its task would be to help and identify the key needs of transnational co-operation within NWE in 2004 to 2006 (considering tangible results likely to be produced by current projects).

Immediately

3. The NWE Spatial Vision Working Group, which met for the first time in September 2003, should be requested to

Feb 2004

- reflect on the results of the "think tank" from its strategic perspective,
- suggest more concrete definitions and examples of transnationality to proposers, and
- propose "corridors" of implementation (e.g. in terms of topics, institutional setting, possibly in generic geographic terms) where future projects could more concretely address transnationality.

4. Considering the results of the "think tank", Spatial Vision Working Group meetings, supportive work of the JTS (observatory; see 1.2), and considering input from the CP's (major project proposals currently under preparation), the PMC should decide on a new roadmap for future NWE Programme Calls (see recommended action 1.3).

Apr 2004

*Related recommended actions:* 1.2; 1.3

## 1.2 Create an NWE observatory.

### Responsibilities

JTS

The Programme should remain at the cutting edge and be flexible to respond to key issues. It needs to be ensured that the Programme knows what is happening inside and outside of NWE in territorial development and related fields, including in other European Programmes. NWE needs to take socio-economic and policy trends and developments in North-West Europe (and beyond) into account when reviewing the strategic direction of the Programme, lobbying for its continuation after 2006, and monitoring its contribution towards achieving its original aims.

JTS (PDU) employees appear highly qualified to carry out the tasks involved in running the NWE observatory. Preference is given to keeping this important task within the JTS, rather than charging a "project " or external experts with it, even if some sub-tasks, or specific analyses could well be undertaken by specialised institutions. The JTS should, therefore, fulfil the functions of an "NWE observatory" (or NWE knowledge management centre) responsible for

- analysing changes (trends and developments) in North-West Europe and beyond,
- addressing Programme gaps by suggesting topics for new projects,
- highlighting new trends and identifying new challenges,
- supporting "Road Map" definition through (demand) analyses,
- supporting the collection of baseline data,
- keeping track of forthcoming project results.

Data exchange and co-operation agreements should be sought with national/ regional statistics offices, Eurostat, and INTERACT in order to facilitate efficient data exchange and analysis. A mapping facility should be set up (e.g. standard Geographic Information System software).

It is envisaged that the work load for the "NWE observatory" at the JTS is equivalent to one to 1.5 full-time positions. In order to allow for, as much as possible, a continuous accessibility of the observatory (also during holiday periods or in cases of sick leaves), two to three JTS employees should each devote 30-50 percent of their work to the "NWE observatory". Within the JTS organisational structure, the employees responsible for the "NWE observatory" should directly report to the Programme Manager. Furthermore, a liaison between the "NWE observatory" and the NWE Spatial Vision Working Group, and the PMC should be ensured; a close coordination of activities with ESPON (and INTERACT) will be required.

At its next meeting, the PMC should request the JTS to set up an NWE observatory as described above to become operational before the end of the year 2003.

### Implementation

Immediately

*Related recommended actions:* 1.1, 6.1

### 1.3 Develop a "Road Map" for future Calls.

#### Responsibilities

The Programme needs to take stock now of what has been achieved (or is realistic to be achieved) by its projects and what still needs to meet the Programme aims during the remaining duration. Based on the review of Programme priorities (see recommended action 1.1) as well as the investigative work of the NWE observatory (see recommended action 1.2), the Programme should provide a clear guidance to potential proposers on the crucial transnational issues to be addressed in North-West Europe through new NWE projects.

PMC & Supervisory Group  
JTS

It needs to be emphasised that a total of ten Calls for Proposals were foreseen during the Programme period. It is recommended not to deplete the Programme budget for priorities 1-5 already by Call 5 or 6, but to ensure a rather balanced budget commitment across the seven remaining Calls for Proposal.

A more targeted programming approach is required in order to

- allow for a more structured Programme planning by the PMC,
- increase the quality of proposals (especially their transnational element) by providing clearer guidance on expectations and a reliable timescale of Calls, and
- strengthen the integrative character of projects across priorities and to more directly address the cross-cutting Programme themes.

As the most appropriate tool an NWE "Road Map" <sup>18</sup> of future Calls for Proposals is recommended; it should be defined as part of the Programme review process (see recommendation 1.1).

Without formally changing the CIP, a guidance document should be published, specifying clusters of themes expected to take priority in the remaining Calls. While it should be clarified that the new programming approach does not exclude funding of high-quality projects addressing other themes, the need for stronger and more concrete transnational co-operation, the emphasis on integrative projects, and the emphasis on cross-cutting issues should be stressed.

The "Road Map" should:

- include a sequence of about five targeted Calls (after Call 4),
- follow fewer and more specific priorities,
- guide proposers to submit highly transnational and integrative projects,
- be specific about the goals to be achieved, but leave it to the proposers to define their means of implementation,
- have a focus on (real) action and implementation projects, but focussed topics for studies should be identified for strategic is-

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<sup>18</sup> This practice has successfully been applied in other European Programmes (e.g. throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programmes for Research).

sues,

- indicate roughly the likely budgets by Call/ priority topic,
- put less demanding topics as priority in Calls 5 and 6 and more ambitious themes in the remaining Calls.

A formal (annual) review of the "Road Map", as in other programmes, is not proposed. However, NWE should allow a certain degree of flexibility (in budget and content) in order to be able to accommodate emerging topics during the remainder of the Programme. For example, it could be considered to put a percentage of the budget aside for allocation in the last two Calls.

The principle of defining a "Road Map" of future Calls should be agreed by the PMC at its next meeting. An explanatory note should be published and disseminated widely via CP's and the JTS towards potential proposers.

The "Road Map" should be issued well in time for Call 5. Possibly the timing of Call 5 needs to be adjusted.

The definition of Programme Road Maps is considered as an effective programming approach. It should be based on a wider stakeholder consultation process and adopted in future transnational programmes.

Close monitoring of programme-external factors and road map reviews (or "dynamic road mapping") are recommended for future interregional co-operation programmes.

*Related recommended actions:* 1.1; 1.2; 3.2

### **Implementation**

Immediately

mid 2004

after 2006  
(beyond NWE)

## Streamline Programme structures and procedures

Reduce overlaps between NWE committees by more clearly defining and separating tasks; provide for a more balanced representation of Committees and increase the efficiency and accountability of their work.

NWE follows a common structure for the management, co-ordination and supervision of the Programme implementation. While, in theory, tasks and responsibilities between authorities and committees are well-organised, in practice unfavourable overlaps and imbalances appear which should be reduced to streamline Programme structures and procedures and to ultimately improve the efficiency and accountability of Programme implementation.

The availability of a funded support mechanism for project development is a unique feature (in comparison to other European Programmes) and helps to increase the quality of proposals in INTERREG.

### Rationale

### Actions

#### 2.1 Separate project development and proposal assessment.

The JTS Project Development Unit (PDU) and CP's in the Member States and the Swiss Confederation are sharing the task of supporting project applicants in the development of projects. At the same time, the JTS, as an organisation, is also responsible for the assessment of project proposals. In view of an unbiased task fulfilment and the credibility of the assessment process, support and assessment responsibilities should not be in the hands of one and the same organisation, in particular not a small one like the JTS which currently has sixteen employees.

There may be a strict separation between project development and proposal assessment (and project monitoring) as claimed by the JTS. However, it is apparent that many project applicants and project partners are critical of this separation and may be hesitant to communicate as openly with the JTS as they would with a more "neutral" person, knowing that anything they say may have a negative effect on the assessment of their proposal or the monitoring of their project reports.

It is therefore recommended to strictly separate project development and proposal assessment tasks in the long-term. In a possible INTERREG IV Programme, CP's should become the main project development supporters (and the only ones from the NWE Programme). In the long-term, the JTS should no longer be involved in project development, but concentrate its efforts on its various other tasks and it will be assigned new tasks (e.g. NWE observatory) leading to the JTS becoming the "NWE service provider" (recommended action 2.2).

### Responsibilities

JTS  
CP's

For a successor Programme to INTERREG III, it will be important to ensure continuity in the work force among CP's as well as JTS employees in order to not lose the knowledge gained.

It should also be noted that the recommendation to shift the support of applicants during the project development phase from the JTS to the CP's is by no means to be found in the quality of work by the PDU staff, but in the necessity to strictly separate support and assessment tasks within one organisation.

In view of the considerable experiences gained in project development in the JTS, and the need for a well-coordinated and homogeneous approach to project development, it appears feasible to separate project development and proposal assessment only after the current NWE Programme.

The European Commission is advised to require a formal institutional separation of project development and project support tasks from the proposal assessment and project monitoring functions in future Programmes.

**Implementation**

after 2006  
(beyond NWE)

Although not desirable in principle, it is recognised that, for the remainder of the Programme, there is little alternative to the current practice of sharing project development tasks between CP's and JTS. However, this should be arranged in a more formally structured way:

- CP's should be the main supporters of the proposing consortia and concentrate on the initial project development phase from project idea generation until the submission of proposal drafts to the JTS.
- The JTS should (in an "extended assessment role") concentrate on providing feedback on the eligibility and overall quality in the more matured stages of the development process.

**Implementation**

February 2004

In the short term, JTS and CP's should establish close and regular links for transferring project development know-how and training (see recommended actions 2.2 and 3.3). Clear communication on who fulfils which kind of project development support roles at a given moment is important.

There should be a smooth, but clear shift to the recommended roles also for project proposals under development by the JTS until February 2004.

As another temporary measure, the JTS should - in close co-operation with the CP's - take on the task of strategic project development, i.e. developing ambitious new themes/ project approaches by contacting multipliers and stakeholders, but "hand over" once consortia are stable and ready to start the proposal preparation process.

*Related recommended actions:* 1.2; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1; 3.3

## 2.2 Develop JTS profile as “NWE service provider”.

By taking on the additional task of the NWE observatory suggested under recommended action 1.2, the JTS takes on new responsibilities in evaluation support and baseline data collection. While reducing efforts in project development, the JTS will shift its portfolio to strategic Programme support. This could be summarised under the title “NWE service provider”.

The JTS should fulfil the following roles (\* = new tasks):

- Preparing and following-up all PMC, SG and PSC decisions
- Providing relevant information to the MA, PA and Presidency.
- Promote the Programme
- Project monitoring
- \* Running the NWE observatory to provide information and strategic advice for the Programme review and the “NWE Road Map of Calls” as well as to contribute to the NWE common data pool
- Implementing the publicity strategy approved by the PMC
- Carrying out the operational (day-to-day) Programme management
- Monitoring projects (review of activity reports and cost claims)
- \* Providing training to CP’s (in particular finance training)
- \* Supporting project exploitation

The Managing Authority, in consultation with the PMC, should request the JTS to implement the recommendations to be operational by Dec 2003.

*Related recommended actions:* 1.2; 2.1

## 2.3 Balance and increase efficiency of NWE committee structures.

### **Balance national/ regional element in decision making**

One of the characteristics of North-West Europe is the presence of large cities and their comparatively high degree of independence from national/ regional decision making. This fact is insufficiently reflected in NWE, including the structure of the Programme committees.

A balanced participation of the three tiers of government (national, regional and urban) should be followed in both PSC and PMC. This is for example practised by the Dutch delegation to the PSC and should be followed by all Member States.

Whether one specific city or region represents all cities/ regions from

### **Responsibilities**

Managing Authority  
JTS

### **Implementation**

Immediately

### **Responsibilities**

PMC  
PSC  
(Member States)

### **Implementation**

next PMC/  
PSC meetings



the relevant country or whether a representative institution takes this role should be agreed with relevant stakeholders.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions or a similar body should be invited to join the PMC as observer.

The European Commission should emphasise the need for an adequate representation of all tiers of government (and other important stakeholders) in future programmes.

*Related recommended actions:* 3.3

### **Increase efficiency and accountability**

The **PMC** is the major decision making body within NWE. However it appears to be overburdened with administrative issues, while it should mainly provide strategic guidance and supervision of the Programme.

The **Supervisory Group** should take on a more complementary and pro-active role between PMC meetings.

A fundamental problem of both committees is their frequently changing participation, in particular in the Supervisory Group. A "constant" personal membership needs to be ensured at Committee level.

The **Managing Authority** has delegated most of its day-to-day obligations while it continues to be ultimately responsible in legal terms.

Especially the tasks of supervising the JTS and the decision taking between the PMC meetings appear to be in need of clarification. The PMC, MA, and the Presidency need to find a practical *modus operandi* of these functions. Especially, the role of the Supervisory Group should either be strengthened by means of a more "constant" personal representation and regular (personal or virtual) meetings. Alternatively, the Supervisory Group could be de-facto limited to the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, President-elect, and the Paying Authority.

The Managing Authority is in particular responsible for the JTS, whose employees are an essential resource for NWE. The Managing Authority and the Presidency need to ensure that pending personnel - related issues are resolved quickly.

*Related recommended actions:* 4.2; 6.1; 10.1

### **Responsibilities**

PMC  
Supervisory Group  
Paying Authority  
Managing Authority  
Presidency  
  
JTS

### **Implementation**

agree before next  
PMC/ PSC/ SG  
meetings

## Provide for effective project development

Eliminate overlaps in project development tasks and responsibilities; introduce procedures which lessen the administrative burden on project applicants; provide training structures and opportunities.

Project development is the first, and one of the most important steps of the project life cycle - as well as for laying the foundations of a successful programme.

### Rationale

The Programme has structures in place to support (potential) applicants in the development of their project. This is an important support mechanism which should be retained and strengthened in future programmes.

As described under recommendation 2.1 above, the feasibility of changing the task allocation between the JTS Project Development Unit (PDU) and contact points (CP's) in the Member States in supporting project development is limited in the current programme - even if there were good reasons to do so.

In order to (further) improve the project development process in terms of quality and quantity, obstacles to submitting high-quality projects will need to be further eliminated. These obstacles include language barriers, complexity of the application process, and needs for training and support to projects.

### Actions

#### 3.1 Raise profile of CP's to become the main supporters for applicants and project partners.

### Responsibilities

CP's  
JTS (PDU)

Most CP positions were filled only during 2002, i.e. only when the Programme had been operational for several months and had already issued Calls for Proposals. Meanwhile CP's are in place in all Member States and the Swiss Federation representing the crucial link and source of information between projects and the Programme. CP's are working well, also beginning to make use of a network structure which allows them to quickly exchange information among themselves.

### Implementation

after 2006  
(beyond NWE)

As described under recommendation 2.1 above, the **long-term** recommendation is to charge the CP's alone with project development. The CP's are closer to the project applicants in their region not only in geographical terms, but also because they share the same language and are aware of the specific circumstances (match funding, national programmes, etc.) in their region. At the same time, several of the CP's are directly employed by national or large regional authorities. While this may often have benefits, a more independent role would be desirable in future programmes.

In the long term, it should be the aim to establish CP's as independent

and trusted service providers to applicants and project partners.

In the **short term**, the role and operating framework of the CP's needs to be strengthened, while it should be clear to them that their brief is to develop and support transnational partnerships, even if operating from a national base.

*Related recommended actions:* 2.1

### **3.2 Apply rules and procedures which reduce the administrative burden of applicants and project partners.**

Complaints of the high administrative efforts in European projects are common, and INTERREG IIIB NWE is no exception in this respect. It is out of question that a large amount of information, in particular legal and financial information, is required to assess and monitor a project. However, if the administrative burden for a (potential) project applicant becomes so high that s/he restrains from submitting a project proposal (as evidence from the mid-term evaluation indicates), or mostly "professional proposers" are willing to do so, application rules and procedures should be simplified as much as possible.

#### **Application form**

The first step in this simplification is related to the current application form. The different sections of the application form (and guidance documents) ask for specific information. Still, a high degree of variation is obvious between different proposals, despite support by a joint structure.

CP's and PDU should make a joint effort identifying difficult and superfluous sections and to further improve guidance to proposers through training, and (anonymous) "good examples" of high quality applications (ideally for each measure).

#### **Two-step application procedure and seed funding**

For the long-term, a full separation of proposal preparation support and proposal assessment is recommended. This will mean that the current practice of informal feedback to potential proposers (as part of the support by the JTS) will not be available anymore.

In the short run, the current system of one-step applications has clear disadvantages - mainly for proposers:

- a considerable amount of effort is required to prepare a proposal,
- even after a positive informal evaluation the PSC may take a different position,
- ambitious proposals may not be submitted due the risk of not receiving any compensation for the proposal preparation efforts in case of failure.

Therefore, a two-step application procedure is recommended, even if it may initially be perceived to require additional efforts in support and decision making. In addition, it is recommended that "seed funding" is made available for potential high-quality proposals in need of support.

#### **Responsibilities**

JTS  
CP's

PMC  
PSC

#### **Implementation**

before Call 5

*voluntary:*  
from Call 5  
(beyond NWE)

*compulsory:*  
after 2006  
(beyond NWE)

Step 1:

Following a targeted Programme Call (see recommended action 1.3), a brief Expression of Interest (Eol) is submitted to the JTS for assessment. An Eol should be limited to five pages. It should describe, in a comprehensive manner, the basic project ideas and objectives as well as the set-up of the core project partnership.

Following an assessment by the JTS, the PSC decides which Eol's are considered to have the potential to become high-quality projects. These Eol's are placed on a short-list of project proposals. It needs to be emphasised to the applicants that their proposal being short-listed does by no means guarantee the final project approval. However, for short-listed proposals, the likelihood of success would be much higher compared to proposals submitted under the current application procedure. This would provide an extra incentive to develop a high-quality project.

The approval of an Eol would also be the precondition to receive "seed funding". Receiving seed funding will be determined on the basis of the stated need, rather than as an indication of superior quality to other successful Eol's.

The available budget for seed money should be pre-determined.

Step 2:

As long as the submission of Eol's is voluntary, any project consortium can complete a full-fledged application.

After step 1 has been made compulsory, only successful consortia can proceed.

The advantages for project applicants should also have positive effects on the Programme itself. If such a procedure is applied, the Programme will be able to increase the efficiency of its assessment and decision making procedures. Under the new two-step procedure, fewer full-fledged applications need to be assessed by the JTS and decided upon by the PSC.

In order to avoid undue delays for proposers it is, however, recommended that the PSC meets also in between the regularly scheduled meetings in order to short-list Eol's. It should be sufficient for these additional PSC meetings to convene in a smaller group, i.e. to have only one representative from each Member State and the Swiss Confederation present.

The two steps of the application process should be used to mark the envisaged task separation between CP's and the JTS during project development (see recommended action 2.1). In this regard, CP's should concentrate on the initial project development phase until the completion of step 1. The JTS should then focus its efforts more on the later stages of project development (beginning with step 2).

The NWE Programme should voluntarily apply a two-step application procedure with beginning of Call 5. This will enable NWE to judge whether this is indeed an effective process for future programmes.

*Related recommended actions:* 1.3; 5.2; 6.5

### **3.3 Provide training for CP's and project development opportunities.**

#### **Responsibilities**

JTS  
CP's

#### **Training**

CP's should be trained in all relevant project development areas in order to be able to communicate with project partners on a common knowledge basis and, ultimately, to contribute to high-quality project proposals.

#### **Implementation**

before Call 5

JTS employees should fill the trainer role, in particular for financial and administrative issues. Financial training for CP's was already held by members of the Finance Unit and is intended to be continued in the future. There should also be the opportunity for CP's to participate in events and information days of other European Programmes in order to broaden their horizon.

#### **“Thematic Workshops”**

NWE should continue the so-called “Thematic Workshops” which focus on a specific Programme measure. It has proven to be a good project development opportunity for applicants to not only learn about the specific workshop topic in relation to spatial planning, but also to meet potential project partners.

*Related recommended actions:* 5.3

## Increase “quality” of proposal assessment and selection

Utilise the expertise of Programme-external specialists in the proposal assessment process; adjust PSC voting procedure in order to reduce the vetoing power of one individual member state; streamline PSC meeting procedures; adjust project selection criteria.

The assessment and selection process must ensure above all that:

- the basic eligibility criteria are met,
- projects contribute significantly to the Programme objectives in tangible form,
- the selection process is considered as fair and independent by potential proposers.

**Rationale**

### Actions

#### 4.1 Add external proposal assessors.

The professional quality of proposal assessments should be beyond doubt by any NWE stakeholder, and any party should avoid the impression of trying to influence assessments carried out by the JTS staff. The JTS itself should make clear that it cannot be responsive to such “requests” by its very nature.

It is an observation from interviews that the JTS needs to emphasise its image of executing fair and objective assessments. Due to its continued involvement in proposal preparation, the JTS should continue to seek more strongly the assistance of independent experts (as was already done for “water projects”) in order for them to support the JTS in the assessment of proposal.

As a general rule, one external expert by measure could be called in to support the JTS staff in the assessment process (at JTS premises).

In order to enable the JTS to seek advice at short notice, it should issue an open Call for Experts. Experts would be asked to register themselves (or their organisation) and to provide the relevant information concerning their work experience and expertise (for example in an online database).

*Related recommended actions:* 5.3; 9.1

### Responsibilities

Managing Authority  
PMC  
Supervisory Group  
JTS

### Implementation

before Call 4  
assessments

## 4.2 Restructure PSC meeting procedures.

### Responsibilities

#### Project introduction by the JTS

PSC  
PMC

The practice that both the representative of the Lead Partner country and the JTS (which has assessed the project proposal) introduce a project to the PSC should not be used in future PSC meetings. It is sufficient and time saving if only the JTS or an external assessor introduces a project.

### Implementation

before PSC4

#### Proposal discussion by priorities and measures

In previous PSC meetings, proposals were discussed according to the JTS assessment ranking. It would be more efficient if proposals were to be discussed by priority and measure. This would allow for a better focus among PSC members on the specific (measure) topic as well as a better comparability between proposals of the same measure.

#### Avoiding replication and covering gaps

Rather than only judging projects on their individual merits, the PSC also needs to consider how proposals would – collectively – address the objectives of a specific measure vis à vis ongoing projects in order to avoid replication and to cover gaps in the Programme. The JTS should provide a comparative analysis in this respect.

#### Majority voting

While unanimity should be the rule for any committee decision involving legal matters, majority voting should be introduced in project selection. A 6/8 majority vote is recommended for project selection decisions. This would not allow one member state alone to veto a project. The following basic rules should apply:

- Each country (Member States and the Swiss Confederation) has one vote (“yes”, “no”, or abstaining from voting)
- A proposal or Expression of Interest (Eol) needs at least six votes of approval, including all from the countries with a project partner, and no more than one vote against.
- In order to approve a proposal or to short-list an Eol, all countries having a partner in the project need to vote in favour of a project proposal or Eol.

#### Observers

Based on the experience of PCS 3 in Cardiff, the number of observers per country should be limited to a maximum of two observers in order to increase the meeting efficiency. It needs to be ensured that observers do not participate in any discussions during the meeting. Seating arrangements should be in place which clearly separate (PS) Committee members from observers.

#### Managing conflicts of interest

All PSC members should declare any conflict of interest of their organisation in proposals beforehand in writing and should be asked to leave the room by the president of the meeting while these proposals are being discussed for funding.

*Comment:*

*As a means to tackle the n+2/zero-decommitment issue, the Programme allowed for a so-called “written procedure” which provided the opportunity to submit a project proposal in between Calls 3 and 4. This exceptional procedure was not taken up widely and finally resulted in the conditional approval of one project (ProBois-ProHolz) at the PSC 3bis meeting in early September. This procedure is not considered to be a suitable mechanism, and should not be used in the future.*

*Related recommended actions: 2.3*

**4.3 Adjust selection criteria.**

The implementation of some mid-term evaluation recommendations requires the adjustment or the addition of selection criteria. It would be reasonable to make the following adjustments for Call 5 and beyond:

- The feasibility of a project to continue to have an effect after the NWE-funding phase, i.e. its exploitation and replication potential should be more explicitly recognised in the selection criteria (than now in selection criterion 9).
- The level of subcontracting should be limited. If this is deemed “too high”, the partner commitment could be questioned.
- Plans for project evaluation, including clear objectives, identified indicators, as well as methodologies to gather data should be recognised in the selection criteria.
- Especially for investment projects it will be important to provide clear justification of the required level and nature of costs (especially large investments) in the proposal.

The PMC (in providing guidance to the PSC) and the JTS (in its assessments) must re-emphasise the relevance of eligibility criteria. Before Grant Offer Letters are issued to projects selected at PSC 3 and PSC 3bis meetings, the JTS should take care that:

- recommendations made during the selection process are implemented in project work plans, and
- the transnational dimension of projects is fully exploited.

If in doubt, an “inception report” should be added as a first project milestone in order to address these issues satisfactorily before the project commences in full.

In this context, it is recommended to use eligibility and selection criteria with particular strictness in the assessment and selection of Call 4 proposals.

**Responsibilities**

PMC  
JTS

**Implementation**

before Call 5

Immediately



**Increase efficiency of project support and monitoring**

Provide support to project partners (in questions of project administration, evaluation, dissemination, exploitation, etc.) and establish a project monitoring system that includes visits to project and partner sites

Project support and monitoring aim to ensure the quality of the ongoing INTERREG IIIB projects.

**Rationale**

Twice a year (on 30 June and 31 December), the Lead Partner of a project has to submit an Activity Report accompanied by a Payment Claim to the JTS. The Report needs to specify details concerning:

- the Action Plan submitted with the original application and
- all planned project milestones.

To ensure the continuity of high project quality during the whole project life time, the support and monitoring activities need to be working efficiently.

**Actions**

**5.1 Offer training seminars and thematic workshops to all project partners.**

**Responsibilities**

JTS

Lead Partner (LP) seminars (picked up from the North Sea Programme) have proven to be very beneficial and should be continued. Besides knowledge transfer and exchange, training seminars offer the possibility to get in contact, discuss and network with other INTERREG IIIB NWE projects. It could be considered to organise training seminars (beyond NWE) across IIIB Programmes, for example in the context of thematic clusters. As far as feasible, co-operation with INTE RACT could be possible.

**Implementation**

Immediately

Training should be open to Lead Partners as well as other project members. Issues to be covered should comprise project administration, finances, evaluation and dissemination.

*Related recommended actions:* 9.1

**5.2 Encourage the submission of short & concise reports.**

**Responsibilities**

JTS  
CP's

Nine Activity Reports from Call 1 and 2 projects were available for analysis by the mid-term evaluation team. These Activity Reports are of very different character. Some provide detailed information supported by several documents, others are limited to a sentence per action/topic only.

**Implementation**

Upcoming activity reports in December 2003

Not the Activity Report form itself (except part VII.), but the way it is filled out by the projects poses problems and should be streamlined. Short and concise information needs to give real insight into the

project status.

Respectively, the assessment of the Activity Report (and Payment Claim) needs to follow clear guidelines, resulting in comparable documents. At the moment, the degree of detail of the comments varies considerably.

CP's should provide assistance to project partners in drafting reports, but should have no role whatsoever in their assessment.

Neither in the project application nor in the bi-annual Activity Reports the projects provide a brief assessment of project risks, especially related to implementation. While it might be too early in to be included in the application, running projects should be encouraged to consider risks (and their assessment) as well as contingency plans. It should be mandatory to provide a brief assessment of project risks in the bi-annual activity reports.

*Related recommended actions:* 3.2

### **5.3 Incorporate site visits as an integral element of project monitoring activities.**

A valuable and complementary (to paper reporting) input for monitoring is on-site information. Real achievements (and barriers) are best assessed on site, political and planning structures/arrangements best understood when local conditions can be observed directly and insights are highlighted by (local) project partners.

So far, no site visits have been carried out. To ensure high-quality monitoring, site visits are recommended as an integral element of project monitoring activities. The significant gain in information by carrying out site visits compensates in great parts for (human and time) resources spent.

Whereas the JTS should clearly be the single body to monitor projects, in some cases it may be useful to seek the assistance of independent external experts.

CP's should have no role in on-site monitoring, since their role is to be (become) "advocates of the projects".

Site visits should be co-ordinated with on-site checks of the Member States, even if they are of a different scope.

*Related recommended actions:* 4.1

#### **Responsibilities**

JTS  
Independent external  
experts

#### **Implementation**

First site visits

## Strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects

Establish an Evaluation Initiative; define baseline indicators and few, but common, key indicators on the measure level to provide the basis for sound project and Programme evaluation; recognise the importance of evaluation early on in the application process

Evaluation is a means to investigate a Programme or project to the effect of finding out whether pre-defined goals have been met. In the context of INTERREG IIIB NWE, Programme success will be judged on the basis of the aggregated project results. In addition, project promoters need to know what impacts a project has generated.

### Rationale

Evaluation of impacts relies on a sufficient amount of valid data. Ensuring the availability of such data on the project and Programme level is, therefore, instrumental for a meaningful evaluation.

Commonly applied reference cases, indicators, data gathering tools, and methods of analyses facilitate the comparability across projects and Programmes.

The non-availability of baseline data and real operational guidelines for common evaluation is a major weakness of NWE at present.

### Actions

#### 6.1 Establish an Evaluation Initiative.

### Responsibilities

Following a Call for Tender, the Programme should establish an Evaluation Initiative in order to enable a founded and well-structured Programme and project evaluation.

PMC

It should be the aim of the Evaluation Initiative to:

- Identify common baseline indicators (by measure)
- Gather baseline data (or co-ordinate gathering process)
- Co-ordinate a joint evaluation working group of project representatives and external experts
- Train project representatives
- Identify indicators commonly used by all projects
- Identify core indicators commonly used by project clusters
- Elaborate an evaluation methodology (data gathering tools, see recommended action 6.3 “common toolbox”)
- Analyse data and interpret results
- Develop Programme Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Initiative should be financed as a “service contract” from the priority 6 budget for technical assistance, since an INTERREG IIIB project is not considered to be an appropriate framework for this task.

At its next meeting, the PMC should request upon the establishment of an Evaluation Initiative as described above to become operational before the end of the year 2003. The Evaluation Initiative is expected to be active until 2008 when the last results (of projects approved towards the end of the Programme) will be available.

*Related recommended actions:* 2.3; 6.2 – 6.4; 8.1

## 6.2 Improve baseline data availability.

Baseline or reference indicators are required to put evaluation results into perspective. In the optimal case, all baseline data refer to the same reference year, for example the year 2000 – the first year of the NWE Programme.

The Programme needs to ensure that baseline data availability will be improved. It should first clearly define which data will be required as baseline data. A close co-operation with the Member States’ national as well as with the European Statistics Offices is encouraged. Considering the recommendation to thematically cluster NWE projects, common indicators should be defined by the respective project clusters for which baseline data will have to be gathered (compare data acquisition method described in chapter 6 of the Evaluation Report).

*Related recommended actions:* 6.1; 6.3; 6.4

## 6.3 Strengthen commonality.

The NWE Programme is funding projects in five different priorities and ten different measures. The results of the various projects will vary considerably from one measure to the other, but also within one single measure. In order to allow for a reasonable comparison of results on the Programme level, NWE should strive for commonality in the evaluation of projects. It is recommended to develop a “common toolbox” for projects comprising common indicators and common data gathering tools. The Evaluation Initiative (see recommended action 6.1) will take up the development of a “common toolbox” as one of its main tasks.

*Related recommended actions:* 6.1; 6.2; 6.4

### Implementation

Immediately following PMC4 decision

### Responsibilities

Evaluation Initiative  
JTS – NWE observatory  
Member States and the  
Swiss Confederation  
Project Partners

### Implementation

Immediately

### Responsibilities

Evaluation Initiative  
JTS – NWE observatory  
Member States and the  
Swiss Confederation  
Project Partners

### Implementation

Immediately

#### 6.4 Reduce complexity & strengthen relevance.

In addition to strengthening commonality (see recommended action 6.3), the complexity of evaluation could be reduced by focussing on (a relatively small number of) key indicators. Such key indicators could be identified and defined on the Programme measure level. It would also be possible to identify key indicator sets for project clusters sharing the same topic (but not necessarily the same measure). The Evaluation Initiative (see recommended action 6.1) should take up these tasks.

While the focus should be on few quantitative indicators, qualitative indicators should not be forgotten in a high-quality evaluation.

It is important, in the project set-up, to be clear and realistic in the formulation of project goals, since any results will be put in relation to these goals formulated early on in a project proposal.

*Related recommended actions:* 6.1-6.3; 8.1

#### 6.5 Make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of the Fifth Call for Proposals.

European tax payers have a right to know happens to their money, but also the NWE Programme needs good evaluation results to show its (the Programme's) benefits and added value after completion.

Beginning with the Fifth Call for Proposals, it should be mandatory for projects to include evaluation elements, such as clear objectives with related indicators, an evaluation methodology, an independent evaluator, if feasible, or even an evaluation workpackage.

There should be a "transitional rule" for projects that have already been approved in previous Calls for Proposals (or that have received their Grant Offer Letter) to subsequently include evaluation elements in their project. Projects that have received their Grant Offer Letter should be requested to ensure a state-of-the-art evaluation concept as part of their workplan.

It should be considered to allocate additional funds to projects (already running) to carry out such an evaluation where necessary.

*Related recommended actions:* 3.2

#### Responsibilities

Evaluation Initiative  
JTS – NWE observatory  
Member States and the  
Swiss Confederation  
Project Partners

#### Implementation

Immediately

#### Responsibilities

JTS  
Project partners

#### Implementation

For Call 5

## Increase awareness of the Programme - communication & dissemination strategy

Increase awareness of the Programme and establish specific communication strategies to address specific groups, in particular potential “new” applicants and “multipliers”; Make use of all communication media; organise further events to bring together various NWE stakeholders

Raising awareness of INTERREG IIIB NWE among stakeholders is instrumental for the success and the sustainability of the Programme. Internal and external communication should support Programme promotion in general and project performance in particular.

### Rationale

INTERREG IIIB NWE has been operational for almost two years and various communication tools have been developed and are in use today. General dissemination of the Programme and projects is ongoing. As intended by the JTS, dissemination should be intensified in order to raise the awareness of the INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme, its projects and results as well as attract future applicants.

### Actions

#### 7.1 Increase awareness of the Programme.

#### Responsibilities

The level of INTERREG, and more specifically NWE, awareness in the participating countries varies considerably. Raising the awareness of the Programme is a valuable contribution to informing (potential) project applicants and to creating (more) political backing for the Programme goals. It is recommended that the Programme continues working towards an “NWE Programme identity” and makes use of all communication media, for example website, newsletter and (other) media to raise the awareness of INTERREG IIIB NWE. The website, the main and most easily accessible internal and external communication medium, though considered to be user-friendly by questionnaire respondents, has to be “overhauled” in order to make it easier for users to find particular information; a “document store” should be introduced. Project partners should find a “private section” for sensitive project communication. Discussion fora for various topics should be offered in order to make the website more interactive.

JTS “communication Unit”

#### Implementation

Immediately

*Related recommended actions:* 9.1; 9.2; 10.1

#### 7.2 Identify target groups and address them with specific (targeted) communication strategies.

#### Responsibilities

The Programme should increase efforts to stimulate participation of those regions not yet well represented (see NWE map concerning ERDF funding after three Calls in chapter 4 of the Evaluation Report).

JTS “communication Unit”

#### Implementation

Potential private sector partners could be directly targeted in order to encourage their involvement in the Programme.

Immediately

As outlined in the Programme Complement (selection criterion 7), projects should take into account experience from earlier EU-funded programmes. In the current projects, many partners have already worked together in INTERREG IIC or IRMA projects. To broaden the spectrum of the participating organisations, the Programme should further encourage participation of “new” project clientele (new in the sense of not formerly being involved in INTERREG or even other European projects).

Multipliers, i.e. individuals, organisations/institutions, networks able to support the Programme in disseminating its ideas and outcomes, Members of the European Parliament, etc. could play an important role in the Programme. The contact with multipliers should be further intensified. They should be informed about NWE and encouraged to further disseminate the “ideas” and results of the Programme.

When identifying target audiences and further developing the stakeholder database, synergies with other IIIB Programmes should be taken into account.

Specific communication strategies should be used to address individual target groups. Links from specific website to the Programme website, thematic focus in Programme newsletter, organisation of and presence at targeted events, articles in specialised thematic media, etc. could be considered.

The Programme is already considering many of these aspects and has carried out a number of tasks such as organising targeted events; more of the good ideas have to be translated into action soon, as the budget is available and NWE is already at “mid-term”.

*Related recommended actions:* 9.1; 9.2

### **7.3 Hold a “Conference of the Regions”.**

The INTERREG IIIB Alpine Region held a “Conference of the Regions” in July 2003 in Marcy-l’Étoile, France. NWE should follow this positive example of the Alpine Region, and hold its own “Conference of the Regions”, if feasible, in co-operation with another Programme such as the INTERREG IIIB North Sea Region. A possible theme for a first NWE “Conference of the Regions” could be “Future Challenges of NWE in an Enlarged Europe”. A successful event could foster the participation of “new” regions in the Programme. NWE is discussing such an event, which could probably be co-financed by INTERACT.

Quote from mid-term assessment workshop in Lille: “It is good to finally meet other stakeholders of the Programme”. Considering this statement, it is recommended that NWE concentrates on the already foreseen two mid-term events mainly focusing on politicians and new actors, and envisages a “Conference of the Regions” together with one or more INTERREG III Programme as well.

*Related recommended actions:* 9.1

#### **Responsibilities**

JTS “communication Unit”

#### **Implementation**

2004 –2006 annually or bi-annually in alternation with another IIIB Programme’s “Conference of the Regions”

## Exploit results on a European level

Focus efforts and budget now on carrying over and utilising project and Programme results after the end of the Programme

It is often observed that projects and even Programmes, once finished, do not exploit (utilise) their results. If that is the case, experiences, knowledge or tangible results could be lost with the end of a project or Programme. The NWE Programme and the projects it is co-funding should not run into this danger. Instead, it should provide structures and devote efforts now to being able to exploit any results it may achieve.

### Rationale

### Actions

#### 8.1 Focus on “project sustainability” after NWE funding.

NWE will have provided funding to dozens of projects in the amount of about three hundred million Euros until 2006 – the end of the Programme. The sum of all project results will represent the result of the Programme itself. It is, therefore, in the interest of the NWE Programme to focus on carrying over results of each individual project after NWE funding runs out.

Once fewer projects need to be generated (because a major share of the funding budget has already been committed to projects), the Programme should shift efforts towards exploiting project results. It should be a JTS task to support projects in their exploitation efforts, for example by providing or organising training in business development, putting emphasis on institutional co-operation and helping to develop private-public-partnerships (PPP's).

It should be considered to reserve some Programme budget for exploitation purposes, i.e. to carry over results into the future (after NWE funding runs out).

*Related recommended actions:* 6.1; 6.4; 8.2; 9.3

### Responsibilities

JTS  
Project partners

### Implementation

Immediately

#### 8.2 Compare “Good Practices” with other IIIB Programmes.

Co-operation with INTERACT should be sought in comparing good practices with other IIIB Programmes. Following a generic outline, good practice case (GPC) studies should be developed telling success stories of NWE. At the end of the Programme, a compiled “book” of all GPC's could be promoted as a documentation of NWE successes.

*Related recommended actions:* 8.1

### Responsibilities

JTS

### Implementation

Immediately



## Create synergies between projects & policies

Create opportunities for co-operation and exchange on all levels, including NWE stakeholders, regions, politicians, staff members of Programme secretariats, project partners, and experts in specific areas

During the mid-term evaluation workshop in Lille in June 2003, a participant said that “it is good to finally meet other stakeholders of INTERREG IIIB from NWE”. This statement expresses that there is a lack of exchange opportunities for stakeholders.

### Rationale

### Actions

#### 9.1 Create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE.

The Programme would benefit from the input, experience and information exchange of all Programme stakeholders, including regional representatives, Programme employees, project partners, experts, as well as politicians and other decision makers.

Fora for exchange and transnational co-operation could have various formats and settings:

- Workshops such as the moderated focus group workshop organised by the mid-term evaluation team in Lille in June 2003 offer discussion opportunities for a relatively small amount of people. In general, the participation at focus group meetings should not exceed 15 participants per group in order to allow for efficient discussions.
- Annual Conferences are a platform for a large amount of stakeholders. NWE should consider to follow the example of the IIIB Alpine Space Programme and to hold a “Conference of the Regions” allowing regional representatives to gather, co-operate and exchange in the context of INTERREG IIIB (see also recommended action 7.3).
- Electronic fora or virtual discussions could be envisaged. The Internet as an information exchange medium can potentially reach the largest amount of people, but more importantly, it offers citizens with an interest in INTERREG IIIB a useful forum to share their opinions.
- “Policy Round Tables” as discussed in recommended action 9.2.
- The exchange of staff members, for example between the JTS and national or regional authorities in the Member States or between member state authorities would provide a very practical opportunity for exchange and transnational co-operation.
- “Learning from each other” is an often-stated benefit of transna-

### Responsibilities

JTS Communication Unit  
Member States and Swiss  
Confederation  
CP's

### Implementation

Immediately

tional co-operation. A temporary exchange of employees would allow for first-hand experiences with the culture, language and working habits of the project partner. Several project have already included this idea in their action plan.

*Related recommended actions:* 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 9.1

## 9.2 Involve politicians and other decision makers.

The political backing of the Programme, while different from region to region, generally appears to be weak. NWE should be perceived as a relevant Programme, also concerning lobbying for "INTERREG IV". The involvement of politicians and other decision makers in the Programme, in particular concerning the orientation of the Programme would foster the creation of synergies between project and policies.

It should be the task of the JTS communication unit supported by Member States and their CP's to organise events bringing together politicians, project partners and other stakeholders. Such a "policy round table" could be organised on an annual basis. It should, however, be emphasised that the same politicians and decision makers participate in these annual "policy round tables".

*Related recommended actions:* 7.1; 7.2; 9.1

## 9.3 Cluster projects thematically.

The creation of synergies and the avoidance of duplications between projects could be realised by clustering NWE projects which share the same topic or which belong to the same Programme measure. Even across IIIB projects, it could be considered to cluster projects thematically. Via a co-operation with INTERACT, synergies could be exploited with projects in other IIIB Programmes or even IIIC.

A project "cluster":

- co-operates closely on agreed topics
- without requiring contractual modification of individual projects.

Clustered projects could join efforts to share horizontal tasks, such as evaluation, dissemination. They could also use a common approach to exploiting their (complementary) project results after the end of the projects.

*Related recommended actions:* 8.1

### Responsibilities

JTS Communication Unit  
Member States and Swiss  
Confederation  
CP's

### Implementation

Immediately  
First policy round table in  
early 2004

### Responsibilities

JTS  
CP's

### Implementation

Immediately

## Implement Recommendations

Distribute and discuss mid-term evaluation recommendations widely; provide a structure within the Programme to review and, if necessary over time, adjust the recommendations

There is a danger that, comparable to results of a project after project's end, recommendations of the INTERREG IIIB NWE mid-term evaluation exercise may not carry over into the future if no exploitation or implementation structures are in place.

### Rationale

### Actions

#### 10.1 Distribute Evaluation Report widely.

The INTERREG IIIB NWE mid-term evaluation is a mandatory task for the Programme. There is, however, no formal obligation to implement any of the recommendations formulated by the Evaluation Team. In order to make use of and implement these recommendations they should be discussed and distributed widely among people with an interest in INTERREG IIIB NWE.

Instead of the entire Mid-Term Evaluation Report, a comprehensive "recommendation implementation plan" could be circulated.

*Related recommended actions:* 2.3; 7.1

### Responsibilities

JTS Communication Unit

### Implementation

Throughout the remainder of the Programme

#### 10.2 Frequently review mid-term evaluation recommendations.

Recommendations in this Evaluation Report were formulated by the Mid-term Evaluation Team (based on research findings and a thorough analysis of interviews, questionnaires, Programme documents and Focus Group Workshops).

It will be up to the PMC and the Supervisory Group to initially review these recommendations and the respective timeframes, to prioritise recommendations and to decide which of them (if not all) should be included in a "recommendation implementation plan". In this plan, implementation methods need to be laid out as well.

Until the end of the Programme, mid-term evaluation recommendations should be reviewed frequently and as a fixed agenda item in PMC meetings. Institutional or policy changes may make some recommendations obsolete while others may become a higher priority.

It should be considered to also review and discuss recommendations in (moderated) focus group meeting comprised of a wide range of NWE stakeholders. Such meetings would allow including views and inputs from Programme-external experts in the review and possible adjustment of recommendations.

*Related recommended actions:* 7.1; 10.3

### Responsibilities

PMC

### Implementation

Standing PMC agenda item

### **10.3 Allocate “miscellaneous budget line” to implement mid-term recommendations.**

Out of the NWE budget for technical assistance (priorities 6.1 and 6.2), a total budget of €4.399.000 is available for allocation in the Programme between 2004 and 2008 under the budget line “miscellaneous”.

In allocating the “miscellaneous” budget, emphasis should be placed on the Programme-level co-ordination tasks, in particular:

- Evaluation Initiative and other tasks related to project and Programme evaluation (considering the relevance for the Programme and the urgent need for action, a major part of the “miscellaneous” budget should be allocated)
- Strengthening assessment and monitoring tasks through support of external experts
- Project clustering, good practice case study activities, Conference of the Regions

*Related recommended actions:* 10.2

#### **Responsibilities**

PMC

#### **Implementation**

Immediately

## 11.5 Budget Implications of Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations

In formulating the recommendations provided in this document (see previous chapter 11.4), the mid-term evaluators carefully considered the implications these recommendations would have on the Programme budget.

It was an underlying working assumption to keep the highly qualified labour force at the JTS as well as among the CP's stable until the end of the Programme. Nevertheless, some recommendations would have an influence on the workload of these two groups, namely:

**Stability of  
JTS and CP staff  
intended**

- the envisaged creation of an NWE observatory (recommended action 1.2),
- the clearer separation of project development and proposal assessment (recommended action 2.1),
- the two-step application procedure (part of recommended action 3.2), and finally
- the addition of external proposal assessors before Call 4 assessments (recommended action 4.1).

The evaluators made their recommendations with the intention to offset staff requirements for new tasks with the omissions of tasks in other areas of work. This would, in particular, allow the JTS to keep all of its valuable workforce, but shift responsibilities from, for example, project development tasks towards the operation of the NWE observatory.

The bottom-line results are:

1. The redistribution of tasks among the JTS staff (as described above) has offsetting budgetary effects.
2. Expenditures in the amount of €1,150,600 which were not previously budgeted are to be financed out of the "miscellaneous" Programme budget.

### JTS Staff

The JTS would require 1.5 additional full-time positions for the operation of an NWE observatory. This additional work load would be compensated by fewer staff requirements in project development (0.5 full-time positions) and proposal assessment (0.5 full time positions for the remaining 2.5 years of the Programme plus 0.5 full-time positions beginning with Call 5 assessments). In budgetary terms, expenditures and savings related to staff costs are offsetting.

**Offsetting  
staff changes**

**Table 12: TA Budget and Implications of Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations**

	Total Budget 2001-2008 in €	Remaining Budget after August 2003 in €	Implications of Recommendations	
			Expenditures	Savings
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>28,700,289</b>	<b>23,551,740</b>	<b>1,732,100</b>	<b>255,500</b>
<b>Measure 6.1</b>	<b>24,500,308</b>	<b>20,007,470</b>	<b>641,500</b>	<b>255,500</b>
Staff	11,250,000	8,507,523	255,500	255,500
Office / IT	2,250,000	1,752,601	---	---
Travel and Accommodation	1,530,013	1,448,521	56,000	---
PMC and PSC Meetings	359,883	250,831	---	---
Audit and Spot Checks	360,000	315,000	---	---
Financial Management	1,350,065	1,257,474	---	---
Employer	1,080,017	720,263	---	---
Contact Points	2,937,330	2,407,884	---	---
Miscellaneous	3,383,000	3,347,372	330,000	---
<b>Measure 6.2</b>	<b>4,199,981</b>	<b>3,544,270</b>	<b>1,090,600</b>	<b>---</b>
Publicity	2,258,887	1,845,909	270,000	---
Evaluation and Consultancy Studies	450,047	313,505	---	---
Computerised Systems	450,047	343,856	---	---
Miscellaneous	1,041,000	1,041,000	820,600	---
<b>Total Miscellaneous Budget</b>	<b>4,424,000</b>	<b>4,388,372</b>	<b>1,150,600</b>	<b>---</b>

Source: PMC4 preparatory material and calculations by the evaluators; Calculations are based on the same assumptions described in the remarks section of table 14.

### Miscellaneous Budget Lines

In table 12, the overall and the remaining technical assistance (TA) budget as well as an estimate of additional expenditures versus potential savings resulting from the implementation of recommendations is provided. The implementation of all recommended actions is financially feasible within the remaining TA budget (after August 2003).

In addition to travel costs for JTS staff (for site visits) and publicity-related costs, the implementation of most mid-term evaluation recommendations would need to be financed out of the two miscellaneous TA budget lines. The TA budget of INTERREG IIIB NWE distinguishes between:

**TA budget includes  
two "miscellaneous"  
budget lines**

- measure 6.1 “technical assistance for management, implementation, monitoring and control” and
- measure 6.2 “technical assistance for other expenditures”.

The latter measure includes as one of its objectives the “collection and integrated management of the physical and financial monitoring indicators”. Both “miscellaneous” budget lines were virtually unexploited<sup>19</sup> until the mid-term mark of the Programme leaving room to implement a variety of mid-term evaluation recommendations in the second half of the Programme.

**Room to  
implement variety of  
mid-term evaluation  
recommendations**

€330,000 are foreseen for the implementation of recommended actions under measure 6.1 (see table 14). While this represents about 10% of the total funding available under this budget line, the action implementation under measure 6.2 accounts for 79% of the “miscellaneous” budget line funding. However, it should be a straightforward and easily justifiable activity to shift budget within the two miscellaneous budget lines.

### **Cost of an Evaluation Initiative**

The relatively large expenditures under the measure 6.2 “miscellaneous” budget line account for two evaluation-related actions, namely the “establishment of an Evaluation Initiative” (recommended action 6.1) and the need for a mandatory (independent) project evaluation with beginning of the Fifth Call for Proposals (recommended action 6.5). The most significant share ( €640,600) of this miscellaneous budget would be spent for an Evaluation Initiative. A detailed cost overview for an Evaluation Initiative is provided below.

**Evaluation Initiative  
financed out of  
“miscellaneous”  
budget line**

The justification for evaluation-related expenditures is the urgent need for well-structured and well-founded evaluation on both, Programme and project level. A detailed description of the various tasks of an Evaluation Initiative is provided under recommended action 6.1 in chapter 11.

It is envisaged to keep the Evaluation Initiative operational until 2008, i.e. two years after the Programme will issue its final Call for Proposals. This will allow including results and evaluation data of all projects completed until 2008 in the preparation of the Programme Evaluation Report.

Awarding of the Evaluation Initiative would be subject to a Call for Tenders to be issued by the JTS.

It is envisaged that one person with both, experience in evaluation and knowledge of Structural Funds, in particular INTERREG, would work full-time between 2004 and 2008. Assuming 220 working days per year and a daily rate of €550 per day, the labour costs of the four-year Evaluation Initiative would amount to €484,000.

It is assumed that extensive travelling would be required mostly within the NWE region. Assuming an average of one two-day trip per month for one person at €600, the travel and subsistence budget would add

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<sup>19</sup> Out of the measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line, €23,328 were spent for relocation costs and €12,300 for recruitment until August 2003.

up to €57,600. At this point and until the provider of the Evaluation Initiative service is known, costs for travel and subsistence are only a rough estimate.

The budget for seminars and workshops is estimated to be €99,000. This amount would comprise the organisation of three two-day seminars (€7,500 each) as well as fees (€550 per day) and travel and subsistence cost (total of €600) for fifteen participants per seminar.

The overall costs of an Evaluation Initiative would amount to €640,600.

**Table 13: Exemplary Cost Overview for Evaluation Initiative**

Totals	Cost
Labour	484,000 €
Travel and subsistence	57,600 €
Seminars and workshops	99,000 €
<b>Overall cost*</b>	<b>640,600 €</b>

\* VAT (20.6%) excluded from this calculation.

### Budget Re-Allocations

The JTS asked the PMC4 in October 2003 to “agree to fund the financial controls to be carried out by the Member States (5% checks) out of the TA budget, therefore to allocate 1 Million Euro to the “Audit and Spot checks” budget line from the “miscellaneous” budget line”: The evaluators perceive an amount of 1 Million Euro to monitor about 33 Million Euro excessive. NWE should consider whether independent national (governmental) auditing institutions could carry out this task instead of “private” auditors. An alternative option to reduce the cost of the 5% checks would be to issue a Call for Experts and to award a contract to the most economic offer.

The mid-term evaluators recommend not to re-allocate parts of the TA budget to other priorities (1-5) before at least two-thirds of the Programme duration are completed in order to maintain a high degree of flexibility and ability to react to unforeseen developments and, based on the continuous review of mid-term evaluation recommendations, to be in a position to implement additional actions, if necessary. A PMC decision will be required at the two-third mark of the Programme (end of 2004) to allocate any available surplus funds to other Programme priorities.

**Budget foreseen for  
“5% checks”  
excessive**

**No TA-budget  
re-allocation before  
two-third mark of  
Programme**



**Table 14: Budget Implications of Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations**

Recommendations & Recommended Actions		TA Budget Expenditures in €	TA Budget Saving Potential in €	Remarks
<b>1</b>	<b>Focus on strategic orientation of NWE Programme and pave the way ahead.</b>	<b>280,500</b>	<b>---</b>	
1.1	Review Programme priorities & streamline for future Calls.	15,000 (miscellaneous)	---	Two-day think tank seminar financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line.
1.2	Create an NWE observatory.	255,500 (staff)	---	Additional staff costs for one full-time position of an JTS officers for 2.5 years and a 0.5 full-time position for two years until Programme end in 2006; total employer costs for a JTS officer are €73,000 per annum; Mapping facility (GIS Software) for NWE observatory already in use at JTS.
1.3	Develop a "road map" for future Calls.	10,000 (publicity)	---	Translations of additional guidance document financed out of the measure 6.2 budget line for publicity.
<b>2</b>	<b>Streamline Programme structures and procedures.</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>91,250</b>	
2.1	Separate project development and proposal assessment.	---	91,250 (staff)	Reduced staff costs for project development in the amount equivalent to a 0.5 full-time JTS officer position for 2.5 years until Programme end in 2006; total employer costs for a JTS officer are €73,000 per annum.
2.2	Develop JTS profile as "NWE service provider".	---	---	NWE observatory tasks covered under 1.2; Additional tasks of CP training and project exploitation support to be carried out by existing JTS staff.
2.3	Balance and increase efficiency of NWE committee structures.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
<b>3</b>	<b>Provide for effective project development.</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>73,000</b>	
3.1	Raise profile of CP's to become the main supporters for applicants and project partners.	---	---	No budgetary implications until 2006.
3.2	Apply rules & procedures which reduce administrative burden of applicants & project partners.	100,000 (seed funding - miscellaneous)	73,000 (staff)	Seed funding for potential high-quality proposals to be financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line; potential time savings in proposal assessment due to two-step application procedure resulting in savings of JTS staff costs in the amount of 0.5 full-time positions between 2004 (Call 5) and the end of the Programme; total employer costs for a JTS officer are €73,000 per annum.
3.3	Provide training for CP's and project development opportunities.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.

Recommendations & Recommended Actions		TA Budget Expenditures in €	TA Budget Saving Potential in €	Remarks
<b>4</b>	<b>Increase “quality” of proposal assessment and selection.</b>	<b>83,000</b>	<b>91,250</b>	
4.1	Add external proposal assessors (before Call 4 assessments).	6,000 (miscellaneous)	91,250 (staff)	Call for experts (€6,000) and external assessors (€77,000) financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line (for each of the remaining seven Calls, five external assessors working four days each at an average cost of €550 per day). Potential savings in JTS proposal assessment in the amount of 0.5 full-time positions until the end of the Programme, i.e. 2.5 years; total employer costs for a JTS officer are €73,000 per annum;
		77,000 (miscellaneous)		
4.2	Restructure PSC meeting procedures (before PSC 4).	---	---	
4.3	Adjust selection criteria.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
<b>5</b>	<b>Increase efficiency of project monitoring and support.</b>	<b>128,000</b>	<b>---</b>	
5.1	Offer training seminars and thematic workshops to all project partners.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
5.2	Encourage the submission of short & precise reports.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
5.3	Incorporate site visits as an integral element of project monitoring activities.	56,000 (travel & accomod.)	---	Site visits by JTS staff financed out of budget line “travel and accommodation” assuming 80 site visits (one per project) by, on average, two JTS staff at a rate of €350 for travel and subsistence; Site visits by external experts financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line assuming 80 site visits by external experts at average rates of €350 for travel and subsistence and €550 in salaries per day.
		72,000 (miscellaneous)		
<b>6</b>	<b>Strengthen the evaluation of Programme and projects.</b>	<b>820,600</b>	<b>---</b>	
6.1	Establish an Evaluation Initiative.	640,600 (miscellaneous)	---	Financed out of measure 6.2 miscellaneous budget, the Evaluation Initiative should run four years until 2008. A detailed budget planning forecast is provided in chapter 6, table10.
6.2	Improve baseline data availability.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action. Covered by recommended actions 6.1 & 1.2.
6.3	Strengthen commonality.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action. Covered by recommended actions 6.1 & 1.2.
6.4	Reduce complexity & strengthen relevance.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action. Covered by recommended actions 6.1 & 1.2.
6.5	Make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of 5th Call for Proposals.	180,000 (miscellaneous)	---	Additional funds for already running projects to carry out an evaluation; An average of €3,000 for 60 projects approved until Call 4 financed out of measure 6.2 miscellaneous budget line.

Recommendations & Recommended Actions		TA Budget Expenditures in €	TA Budget Saving Potential in €	Remarks
<b>7</b>	<b>Increase awareness of the Programme – communication &amp; dissemination strategy.</b>	<b>200,000</b>	---	
7.1	Increase awareness of the Programme.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
7.2	Identify target groups and address them with specific communication strategies.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
7.3	Hold a “Conference of the Regions”.	200,000 (publicity)	---	Two Conferences of the Regions (in 2004 and 2006) to be financed out of measure 6.2 “publicity & translation” budget line.
<b>8</b>	<b>Exploit results on a European level.</b>	<b>60,000</b>	---	
8.1	Focus on “project sustainability” after NWE funding.	50,000 (publicity)	---	Exploitation expenditures such as training in business development and supporting the development of private-public-partnerships to be financed out of measure 6.2 “publicity & translation” budget line.
8.2	Compare “Good Practices” with other IIIB Programmes.	10,000 (publicity)	---	Good Practice Case Study Book to be financed out of measure 6.2 “publicity & translation” budget line.
<b>9</b>	<b>Create synergies between projects &amp; policies</b>	<b>60,000</b>	---	
9.1	Create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE.	15,000 (miscellaneous)	---	Two moderated focus group workshops to be financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line. Conference of the Regions covered under recommended action 7.3.
9.2	Involve politicians and other decision makers (first policy round table in early 2004)	45,000 (miscellaneous)	---	Three “policy round tables” until the end of the Programme in 2006 to be financed out of measure 6.1 miscellaneous budget line.
9.3	Cluster projects thematically.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
<b>10</b>	<b>Implement Recommendations.</b>	---	---	
10.1	Distribute Evaluation Report widely.	---	---	Distribution of Evaluation Report part of measure 6.2 publicity budget line.
10.2	Frequently review mid-term evaluation recommendations.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action. Moderated focus group workshops covered under recommended action 9.1.
10.3	Allocate “miscellaneous budget line” to implement mid-term recommendations.	---	---	Budget neutral recommended action.
<b>Budget implications of all recommended actions.</b>		<b>1,732,100</b>	<b>255,500</b>	
<b>Net budget expenditures resulting from recommended actions.</b>		<b>1,476,600</b>		
<b>Budget implications of all expenditures financed out of miscellaneous budget lines</b>		<b>1,150,600</b>	---	All expenditures except those to be financed out of the miscellaneous budget lines are already budgeted under other budget lines.

## 11.6 Implementation Timeframe for Recommended Actions

The PMC bears the ultimate responsibility to decide upon the implementation of the mid-term evaluation recommendations. The evaluators provided an implementation timetable for recommended actions (table 15 below) as another (graphical) tool to facilitate PMC decisions. The timetable summarises the optimal implementation times identified in chapter 11.4.

The original intention was for the PMC to decide on the implementation of mid-term evaluation recommendations at its meeting on 23 October 2003. Instead, the decision was made to postpone such decisions to an additional PMC meeting in November. However, at the document's completion, an exact date for this additional PMC meeting had not yet been confirmed. In the implementation timetable, the evaluators therefore included October and December 2003 dates, previously identified in the final draft version of this document. All 2003 implementation dates (see table 15) require immediate decisions at the next PMC meeting, in order to still have an impact on the Programme.

Decisions concerning the implementation of medium-term (2004-2006) and long-term (2007 and beyond) recommended actions should be made no later than at the first regularly scheduled PMC meeting in the spring of 2004.

**Some crucial  
recommended actions  
requiring immediate  
PMC decisions**

**Table 15: Recommended Actions- Implementation Timetable**

Recommended Actions		Implementation				
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007+
1.1	Review Programme priorities & streamline for future Calls					
	PMC decision to review Programme priorities	Oct				
	Two day "think-tank" seminar	Dec				
1.2	NWE SpVWG (reflection; suggestions for definitions & examples of transnationality)		Feb			
	PMC decision on a new road map for future Calls		Apr			
1.2	Create an NWE observatory	Oct				
1.3	Develop a "road map" for future Calls					
	PMC decision on road map for future Calls	Oct				
	Road map issued		Mid 2004			
	Road map as effective programming approach based on wide stakeholder consultation					
2.1	Separate project development and proposal assessment					
	Separate project development and proposal assessment					
	Handover from JTS to CP's (shift to recommended roles of JTS and CP's completed)		Feb			
2.2	Develop JTS profile as "NWE service provider"	Dec				
2.3	Balance and increase efficiency of NWE committee structures					
	Balanced participation of three tiers of government (national, regional, and urban)					
	Increase efficiency and accountability					
3.1	Raise profile of CP's to become the main supporters for applicants and project partners					
3.2	Apply rules & procedures which reduce administrative burden of applicants & project partners					
	Application form		before Call 5			
	Two-step application procedure and seed funding voluntary from Call 5	Oct	before Call 5			
	Two-step application procedure and seed funding compulsory after 2006					
3.3	Provide training for CP's and project development opportunities		before Call 5			
4.1	Add external proposal assessors (before Call 4 assessments)	Oct				
4.2	Restructure PSC meeting procedures (before PSC 4)	Oct				
4.3	Adjust selection criteria	Oct	before Call 5			
5.1	Offer training seminars and thematic workshops to all project partners	Dec				
5.2	Encourage the submission of short & precise reports	Dec				
5.3	Incorporate site visits as an integral element of project monitoring activities					

Recommended Actions		Implementation				
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007+
6.1	Establish an Evaluation Initiative	Oct				
6.2	Improve baseline data availability					
6.3	Strengthen commonality					
6.4	Reduce complexity & strengthen relevance					
6.5	Make (independent) project evaluation mandatory with beginning of 5th Call for Proposals	Oct				
7.1	Increase awareness of the Programme					
7.2	Identify target groups and address them with specific communication strategies					
7.3	Hold a "Conference of the Regions"					
8.1	Focus on "project sustainability" after NWE funding					
8.2	Compare "Good Practices" with other IIIB Programmes					
9.1	Create fora for exchange and transnational co-operation for stakeholders of IIIB NWE					
9.2	Involve politicians and other decision makers (first policy round table in early 2004)					
9.3	Cluster projects thematically					
10.1	Distribute Evaluation Report widely					
10.2	Frequently review mid-term evaluation recommendations					
10.3	Allocate "miscellaneous budget line" to implement mid-term recommendations	Oct				

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Priorities & Measures

Table 16: Overview of INTERREG IIIB NWE Priorities and Measures

	<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	<b>PRIORITY 5</b>	<b>PRIORITY 6</b>
	<b>An attractive and coherent system of cities, towns and regions</b>	<b>External and internal accessibility</b>	<b>Water resources and the prevention of flood damage</b>	<b>Other natural resources and cultural heritage</b>	<b>Promoting territorial integration across the seas of NWE</b>	<b>Technical assistance</b>
Measure 1	More attractive Metropolitan areas in the global and European context	Sustainable mobility management	Land use and water systems	Stronger ecological infrastructure, reduced ecological footprint	Promoting co-operation between sea and inland ports	Technical assistance for management, implementation, monitoring and content
Measure 2	Coherent and polycentric pattern of complementary cities, towns, rural areas, coastal and peripheral regions	Improved access to the Information Society	The prevention of flood damage	Protection and creative enhancement of the cultural heritage	Facilitating co-operation across and between maritime and inland regions	Technical assistance for other expenditure

**Annex 2: INTERREG IIIB NWE Project Overview****Table 17: INTERREG IIIB NWE Project Overview**

Call	Project nr.	Projects name	Lead Partner country	Measure	Projects type	Total ERDF
First Call	A008	LIRA II	Netherlands	2.1.	Study	990,840
	A015	HST Platform	Netherlands	2.1.	Action	292,500
	A003	JAF	Netherlands	3.2.	Investment	7,058,370
	A016	SAIL II	United Kingdom	5.2.	Action	5,146,656
Second Call	BA005	SAUL	United Kingdom	1.1.	Action	8,174,075
	BA021	REURBA II	Netherlands	1.1.	Action	2,447,968
	B028	Hospital co-operation	France	2.2.	Action	1,499,988
	B030	TESIS	Ireland	2.2.	Action	880,188
	B032	SCALDIT	Belgium	3.1.	Action	3,252,032
	B035	AMEWAM	Germany	3.1.	Action	680,453
	B025	FAR	Netherlands	3.2.	Study	348,000
	B027	CFM	United Kingdom	3.2.	Action	4,397,965
	B039	FOWARA	Germany	3.2.	Action	1,413,584
	BA011	SOS	Netherlands	4.2.	Investment	6,443,620
Third Call	C054	Revit	Germany	1.1	Action	10,174,501
	C051	WIHCC	Netherlands	1.2	Action	5,079,533
	CA007	Europolis	France	1.2	Action	1,313,000
	CB029	CrobusParks	Netherlands	1.2	Action	248,692
	C053	Brain Drain	Netherlands	1.2	Action	518,500
	C055	NENSI	Netherlands	1.2	Action	927,355
	C057	NewTasc	United Kingdom	1.2	Action	3,507,698
	CO62	Polynet	United Kingdom	1.2	Study	1,022,798
	CA006	Artery	Germany	1.2	Investment	5,436,439
	C041	LIIFT	France	2.1	Action	3,420,783
	C044	HSTintegration	United Kingdom	2.1	Action	14,445,672
	C049	Blue Links	France	2.1	Action	8,704,750
	C047	Warela	Germany	3.1	Action	3,022,003
	CB023	Espace	United Kingdom	3.1	Action	2,372,965
	CB034	Rhinet	Germany	3.1	Action	1,792,070
	C048	SAFER	Germany	3.2	Action	5,649,380
	C060	Freude am Fluss	Netherlands	3.2	Action	4,029,500
	CO63	SDF	Netherlands	3.2	Investment	15,592,488
	CO40	Progress	United Kingdom	4.1	Action	1,883,892
	C056	Encourage	France	4.1	Action	5,051,705
	CBA018	Boundless Park	Netherlands	4.1	Action	3,572,913
	C050	Septentrion	France	4.2	Action	8,324,134
	CA022	EGHN	Germany	4.2	Action	1,363,200
	CBA012	Cross Cut	United Kingdom	4.2	Action	4,029,271
	C043	Finesse	United Kingdom	5.1	Action	416,148
	C045	Maya II	Netherlands	5.1	Action	4,957,106
	C058	Cycleau	United Kingdom	5.2	Action	6,295,604
	C064	ProHolz-ProBois	Belgium	4.2	Action	2,563,543

(Source: PSC 3 bis, 4 September 2003)



### Annex 3: Achievement of results

Table 18: Output Indicators, Expected Results and Impacts – Example Measure 1.1

Measure 1.1: More attractive metropolitan areas in the global and European context OUTPUT INDICATORS*	Target values	Expected results at programme level <sup>20</sup>	Expected level (in %)
<b>The project:</b>			
a) maintains or improves the competitiveness and attractiveness of metropolitan areas	8	4	50%
b) promotes the redistribution of functions among metropolitan areas	4	1	25%
c) promotes second-rank metropolitan areas	2	2	100%
d) provides greater equity in access to opportunities	2	3	150%
e) aims at containing urban sprawl	2	3	150%
f) is related to the revitalisation of the urban fabric	2	3	150%
g) is related to sustainable urban development	16	4	25%
<b>Target values:</b>			
a) the number of national, regional and local government authorities involved	80	251	314%
b) the number of other public bodies involved	8	108	1350%
c) the number of third sector (non profit) organisations involved	8	225	2813%
d) the number of private bodies (profit-making) involved	8	94	1175%
e) the number of semi-public bodies or public-private partnerships involved	8	71	888%
f) the volume of investments in firms	1,000,000	-	0%
g) the volume of investments in fixed capital (such as small-scale infrastructure)	20,000,000	13,856,000	69%
h) the size of the population reached by awareness raising campaigns	1,000,000	17,000,000	1700%
i) the number of comparative analyses related to metropolitan development trends	2	5	250%

N.B. The categories 'expected results and impacts' for measures 1.1 are not included in the table.

<sup>20</sup> The information is derived from the application forms of 4 projects that were submitted and approved for measure 1.1 under call 1 to 3 (of a total of 38 projects; call 3bis not included).

## Annex 4: Map of the NWE Territory

Figure 10: INTERREG IIB NWE Geographical Area

