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Interreg Caraïbes Operationnal Programme for 2021- 2027

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INTRODUCTION

This is the second version of the Interreg Caraïbes Cooperation Programme for the period 2021-2027. It includes (in line with the provisional OP drafting schedule):

- Section 1 (the programme strategy);
- Section 2 (programme priorities)
- Section 3 (financing plan)
- Preliminary content for Section 4 (action taken to involve partners)
- Section 5 (communication)
- Section 6 (the small project fund)

This second version is based on the strategic territorial needs analysis of the cooperation area as well as on consultations undertaken and decisions made by programme partners (see section 1).

The programme's financing plan, the indicators (related to the financing plan) and the section on governance / programme implementation remain to be added.

Please note: Where details are not available at this stage this is highlighted in grey in the text.

1. Programme Strategy: main development challenges and policy responses selected

1.1. Programme area

The Interreg cooperation programme for 2021-2027 covers the Caribbean cooperation area, which involves the following countries and territories:

The French Outermost Regions (ORs)	Overseas countries and territories (OCTS)	Third countries (non-EU countries)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRY 1 Guadeloupe • FRY2 French Guiana • FRY3 Martinique • Saint-Martin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW Aruba • BG Bonaire • CW Curaçao • Saba • Saint Barthélemy • BQ Sint-Eustatius • SX Saint Martin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AG Antigua and Barbuda • BS Bahamas • BZ Belize • BR Brazil (Amapa, Para, Amazonas and Roraima) • CO Colombia • CR Costa Rica • CU Cuba • DM Dominica • SV El Salvador • GD Grenada • GT Guatemala • GY Guyana • HT Haiti • HN Honduras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JM Jamaica • MX Mexico • NI Nicaragua • PA Panama • PR Puerto Rico • DO Dominican Republic • KN Saint-Kitts-and-Nevis • LC Saint Lucia • VC Saint Vincent and the Grenadines • SR Suriname • TT Trinidad and Tobago • VE Venezuela

With the exception of the British Overseas Territories due to Brexit, the geographic coverage of the Interreg Caraïbes Programme for the 2021-2027 period is identical to the 2014-2020 Programme.

A map of the programme area is provided in the Appendices.

1.2. Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities, joint investment needs and complimentary with other forms of support, lessons-learned from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies

1.2.1. The Caribbean Programme Cooperation Area: a cultural mosaic

While the Covid-19 crisis has disrupted the international context, the observations in the introduction to the 2014-2020 Interreg Caraïbes Programme regarding the diversity of the Caribbean region remain true; 'the Caribbean is a cultural mosaic'. The region is home to a rich diversity of territories with distinctive cultures, languages, political statuses and histories, and levels of wealth, etc. Three features in particular epitomise this diversity:

- **Diverse political statuses and histories:** the majority of the territories in the cooperation area are independent countries. There are small island countries such as the

archipelago of neighbouring islands of the OECS, and continental ones, such as Mexico and Central America. There are also French and Dutch overseas territories, dependent island territories such as Puerto Rico, and French Outermost Regions and Collectivities (Guadeloupe, Saint Martin, Martinique, and French Guiana). One legacy of this diversity and of the underlying historical processes, is that the different legal systems, standards, and regulations are today hindering progress towards regional integration.

- **Diversity of languages:** the Greater Caribbean region is home to five main linguistic zones, which cohabit with a range of creoles. It has a Spanish-speaking zone (Cuba, Dominican Republic), an English-speaking zone, including Jamaica and the majority of the islands in the Lesser Antilles, a Dutch-speaking zone (Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles), a Portuguese speaking zone in northern Brazil, and a French-speaking zone, including Haiti and the French overseas regional and local authorities (*régions, collectivités*).
- **A considerable diversity of economic realities, with important repercussions on levels of social development.** Some of the world's poorest nations are located in the Caribbean region. With 857 USD per capita, Haiti is ranked 173rd in terms of per capita GDP and 169th on the human development index. The region is also home to wealthier territories, such as Puerto Rico (with 31 939 USD per capita and ranked 30th in terms of per capita GDP and 63rd on the HDI) (sources : World Bank 2018 for per capita GDP and UNDP 2018 for the HDI). Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Saint Martin are among the wealthier ranked territories in the Caribbean. According to the most recent data, these territories' per capita GDP figures, are, 24 105 €, 24 456 €, 14 952 € and 16 572€ respectively (sources: INSEE/IEDOM 2019: 2018 data for Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Guiana. 2014 data for Saint Martin).

Diversity, yes, but the Caribbean is more than a mere juxtaposition of distinctive countries located in the Caribbean, its distinctive mosaic of peoples and territories share not only the same sea, the Caribbean, but also, very often, a history and/or common interests. **The territories of the Caribbean share a set of specific characteristics and common development challenges which provide a platform for regional cooperation.**

1.2.2. Strategic framework for the 2021-2027 Interreg Caraïbes Cooperation Programme

1.2.2.1. Transposition of strategic objectives for programming and complementarity with other forms of support available in the Caribbean

The 2021-2027 Interreg Caribbean Cooperation Programme contributes to the "European territorial cooperation" goal, which is supported by the **European Commission's regional development fund**. The programme is therefore a mechanism for delivering the EU's strategic objectives for the 2021-2027 programming period. These are:

- A smarter Europe – for an innovative and smarter economic transformation
- A greener Europe with low carbon emissions
- A more interconnected Europe - regional mobility and ICT connectivity
- A more social Europe – delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights
- A Europe closer to its citizens – the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural, and coastal areas by supporting local initiatives

The Interreg Caraïbes programme comes under INTERREG's strand 4. This strand is new feature in the regulations for the 2021-2027 period since it is specifically aimed at outermost regions (ORs). The creation of this new strand put an end to the division of the INTERREG Caribbean

programme into two strands (cross-border and transnational), a division which featured in the 2014-2020 programme.

The present programme's strategy was drawn up on the basis of a strategic needs analysis. This work began in early 2020 in close liaison with the partnership. It allowed partners to identify the main shared challenges facing the Caribbean's territories and countries, the needs they share in terms of investment and the main fields where cooperation, and therefore where this programme, can offer the greatest potential. Of course, the existence of shared challenges and needs does not always mean that regional cooperation is the most effective response. For this reason, the INTERREG Caribbean programme seeks to be complementary to existing regional policies and funds and its strategy is to maximise the added-value of cooperation as a means of tackling shared problems at regional and infra-regional scales.

The Programme is also a mechanism for delivering the **ambitions of the European Commission for the Outermost regions**, which, in its most recent communication on 24 October 2017¹ entitled '*A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions*', proposes a new approach to creating opportunities and better meeting the particular needs of each of the EU's nine ORs, and at the heart of this approach is strengthening cooperation between the ORs and their regional neighbours. This programme therefore reflects a will to improve the **integration of the French ORs in their regional environment** and to consolidate cooperation with international organisations operating in the Caribbean and participating in the Programme as partners, including the ACS (Association of Caribbean States, the OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States), and the Cariforum. The European Commission (DG DevCO and DG Regio) is also eager to foster cooperation between the French ORs and their non-EU partners, as this is a sound basis to stimulate and support ambitious projects in the cooperation area.

This ambition is reflected in, in particular, a new regulation which clarifies how INTERREG can combine with the new *Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)*. With this in mind, significant work was carried out in the preparation of the 2021-2027 INTERREG Caribbean programme to assess the impact of the efforts undertaken under the 2014-2020 programme to facilitate the parallel mobilisation of ERDF and EDF. This work was mainly aimed at anticipating and evaluating the new possibilities offered by the regulations regarding combining INTERREG with the NDICI. The introduction in the European regulations of a new Specific Objective to INTERREG (ISO) dedicated to better governance of cooperation offers partners new possibilities to capitalise on the 2014-2020 experience and facilitate a better linkage between INTERREG and NDICI funds.

In addition, and with a view to ensuring alignment with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy (AMS), some of the Programme's objectives will contribute to the following AMS objectives:

- Reducing greenhouse gases and developing renewable energies by supporting research and investment in marine renewable energies;
- Combating marine pollution by supporting environmentally friendly shipping and coordinating action against marine pollution;
- Creating jobs by filling skill gaps in sectors of the blue economy and supporting cooperation between EU training centers and businesses;
- Adapting to climate change by improving coastal observation and protecting coasts.

In addition, and in accordance with European Commission and French State guidelines for the 2021-2027 period, the INTERREG Caribbean programme will include cross-border cooperation

¹ COM(2017) 623 final

between St. Maarten and Sint-Maarten, which was previously a separate programme. Therefore, and in order to ensure the implementation of the cross-border strategy of the stakeholders involved in cooperation in this sub-area, the programme includes a dedicated priority "for enhanced cross-border cooperation between Sint Maarten and St. Maarten".

1.2.2.2. A critical challenge for 2021: tackle the consequences of COVID-19 and help the Caribbean prepare to build back post-COVID².

Preparatory discussions with partners and stakeholders on the new programme strategy for 2021-2027 began in March 2020, just as the Covid-19 epidemic was becoming a pandemic, affecting the Caribbean as well.

While it is too early to know the full extent of the consequences of this crisis, international organisations are already predicting that they will be very serious; they will be worldwide, affecting economies (real and financial sectors), employment, the socio-economy, society and culture, the environment, and politics and policymaking.

In June 2020 the World Bank predicted that "world GDP will shrink by 5.2% in 2020", adding that Europe would be hardest hit globally with a 9.1% fall in output. Not since 1870³ have so many countries simultaneously faced recession. In October 2020, the World Bank indicated that "for the first time in 20 years, the global rate of extreme poverty was set to rise". According to the Bank's biennial report, 'Poverty and Shared Prosperity', published in October 2020, "the pandemic and global recession may cause over 1% of the world's population to fall into extreme poverty"⁴.

To reverse this setback, which undermines progress on development and poverty reduction, countries are laying the groundwork for a post-COVID society. 'Build back better' is the goal of the recovery plans drawn up by Europe and France:

- The French government's recovery plan announced in September 2020 includes a 100 billion Euros stimulus package for the 2021-2027 period in support of three priorities. Ecology, competitiveness and socio-economy and territorial recovery.
- Since the start of the crisis, the European Commission has also taken several measures to support member states⁵. These include:
 - The 'general escape clause' of the Growth and Stability Pact (GSP) authorising Member States to run a budget deficit of less than 3% and a national debt of less than 60% of GDP;
 - The European Stability Mechanism ('Pandemic Crisis Support') giving each member State the possibility of accessing credit lines to support the costs engendered by Covid-19 in relation to health, including care and prevention;
 - A new multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 designed to address the economic consequences of the crisis;
 - The ReactEU programme, which 'tops up' the EU's cohesion policy budget over the next few years with 58 billion € of extra funds.

² Will be updated on finalising the POLICY (needs analysis on impacts on recovery strategies)

³ Source : World Bank, quoted in Le Monde, 08/06/2020

⁴ To update when finalising the OP

⁵ To update when finalising the OP

In this context, one of the challenges for the INTERREG Caribbean 2021-2027 programme will be to contribute, through cooperation, to strengthening the economic, social and environmental resilience of the Caribbean area.

1.2.2.3. Consideration of cross-cutting environmental issues

Moreover, and for all of the programme's priorities, **and pursuant to the recommendations of the strategic environmental assessment for the Interreg Caraïbes OP 2021-2027⁶** and in order to contribute to delivering the objectives of the Green Deal⁷, the programme will incorporate the following⁸:

- The precautionary principle;
- Environmental recommendations to further the energy and ecological transitions, and potentially eco-conditionality criteria;
- Particular attention will be paid to air travel, inherent to cooperation in the Caribbean (the OP will consider the possibility of setting up a code of practice for face-to-face or distance meetings, both for the programme and for its projects);
- The specification of an eco-communication and eco-events policy, to guide the awareness-raising actions of all relevant SOs;
- For infrastructures (even though they constitute only a fraction of the actions financed by the OP), the programme will take into account the potential negative impacts linked to the creation and/or improvement of infrastructures (noise pollution, waste, air quality, etc.) and will foster the use of good practices in the performance of works. Similarly, it is essential to determine the potential negative impacts of the construction of new infrastructures (carbon footprint, heritage, landscapes, biodiversity, ecological corridors, land use) and to give preference to the least impactful projects, for example, by encouraging restoration/improvement or by including a criterion on the location of strategic economic infrastructures in order to take into account the need to save space and manage transport aspects.

1.2.3. The Interreg Caraïbes strategy 2021-2027 for a smarter, greener and more inclusive Caribbean

On the basis of the cooperation area's needs analysis, and in line with the strategic goals of the whole partnership, the strategy of the 2021-2027 INTERREG Caribbean is broken down into 6 main priorities, namely:

- Priority 1: For a smarter, more innovative and more competitive Caribbean;
- Priority 2: For a greener, more resilient Caribbean with low carbon emissions;
- Priority 3: A more connected Caribbean;
- Priority 4: For a more social and inclusive Caribbean;
- Priority 5: For enhanced cross-border cooperation between Saint-Martin and Sint-Maarten;
- Priority 6: For facilitating and optimising cooperation in the Caribbean.

⁷ To update when finalising the OP

1.2.3.1. Challenges and cooperation strategy more innovative and more competitive Caribbean

Regarding **the EU's goal for a smarter, more innovative and more competitive Europe**. The strategy for the cooperation area is to pursue the efforts of previous generations of **Interreg Caraïbes** programmes. In the fields of R&D, innovation, and economic development, **previous programmes** supported projects with the following objectives:

- Establishing and developing networks of business and industry stakeholders in the Caribbean (clusters, industry associations, etc.) in fields such as tourism, the boating industry, services, and the sustainable use of natural resources and naturally-sourced products;
- Undertaking joint exploratory (fact finding) missions;
- Encouraging and stimulating entrepreneurship among young people, especially through entrepreneurship training programmes in Caribbean universities;
- Supporting companies or industry/business/trade associations with participation in international trade shows and fairs;
- Developing joint tools for promotional purposes.
- The development of ICT solutions to improve digital connectivity.

As examples here we can cite:

- the TEECA project supported export companies in five sectors identified as development opportunities for the cooperation area;
- the RECAVACA project supported coordination in the cocoa sector by developing technical/technology and professional skills among its stakeholders;
- or the CARIBIX project, whose objective is to create and network GIXs⁹ in the Caribbean in order to improve the quality and security of Internet provision, in particular to enhance resilience vis-à-vis the risk of natural disaster.

In these areas, **the challenges facing the forthcoming programme** relate, firstly, to identifying relevant R&D and innovation projects capable of generating tangible results for Caribbean territories, communities, and economies. Secondly, the complexity of policy intervention in the area of competitiveness and economic development using Interreg programmes implies a need to very carefully tailor its intervention in these areas and ensure complementarity with other policy instruments available to the different territories.

In line with the strategic ambitions of each of the programme's partner countries and territories, the programme's strategy for a 'smarter' cooperation area will therefore pursue the following objectives:

- **Enhancing cooperation on RDI in leading-edge Caribbean industries and/or in order to respond to the shared challenges identified by programme partners.** These challenges include: reducing pollution; eco-development and risk management; the challenges of an ageing population; marine issues (fisheries resources, the ecological restoration of marine areas, such as the restoration of coral reefs, etc.);
- **Supporting economic diversification** within existing industry sectors by supporting the emergence and development of high value-added activities;

⁹ Global Internet eXchange

- **Deepening regional economic integration** with a view to promoting endogenous (i.e., regionally-generated) economic development in the cooperation area and strengthening the regional economic fabric;
- **Encouraging the take-up and use of digital technologies.** The importance of digital technology was underlined by the impact of the Covid19 epidemic, and digital technologies are also a powerful way to solve some of the cooperation area's specific challenges, which include: widening and deepening economic exchange in all its forms, education and training, health, and social inclusion.

1.2.3.2. Challenges and cooperation strategy for a greener, more resilient Caribbean with low carbon emissions

Regarding **the EU's goal for a greener, more resilient Europe with low carbon emissions**, the strategy for the cooperation area is to pursue the efforts of previous generations of the Programme, as well as to open up new areas of intervention for cooperation in the Caribbean.

In the areas of adapting to climate change, risk prevention, resilience to natural disasters, support for renewable energies, developing a circular economy and protecting biodiversity, **previous Caribbean programmes** supported projects with the following objectives:

- Research work on the Sargassum problem and investigating ways to capitalise on this resource³⁸;
- Adapting to climate change and its impacts on socio-economic activities;
- Preventing and managing seismic, coastal, and natural disaster risks, through a range of actions including information and prevention campaigns targeting the general public;
- Enhancing and pooling knowledge on the cooperation area's natural resources (biodiversity, plant health, the functioning/function of ecosystems, ecosystem services, as well as trends and dynamics of change in these areas through research and study projects;
- Developing decision support tools and other forms of support for public sector decision-makers; awareness raising on the importance of preserving and generating benefits from the environment and from biodiversity in the cooperation area.
- Carrying out studies and pilot projects on renewable energies or waste management and recovery³⁴.

On these topics, the cooperation under INTERREG Caribbean is long-standing and rich, we can cite:

- TSUNAHOULE, which collected and modelled data on marine submersion (tsunami and cyclonic submersion), enabling the development of risk management tools for public decision-makers and communities and in particular the establishment of "Flood Prevention Action Programmes (PAPI)" and "Town Rescue Plans (PCS)" in Guadeloupe and Martinique, or the production of new tsunami maps used in the Caribe Wave 21 exercise (annual international civil security exercise on tsunami risk and evacuations);
- CARIB-COAST, which, through the installation of new permanent instruments and the running of a storm monitoring network, has made it possible to better understand and anticipate the impacts of storm events on the coast, to improve coastal risk anticipation systems, and to better model marine currents in the Caribbean (data that can be used, for example, for better management of Sargassum beaching);

- PREST, on the monitoring of seismic and volcanic hazards and scientific cooperation in the Caribbean, which, following the eruption of St. Vincent Grenadines in 2021, has produced tools for policymakers and educational guides for the populations of the Caribbean territories on the prevention and management of volcanic ash falls;
- SARGCOOP, the highlight of which was the organisation of an international conference on Sargassum for people, companies, scientists and decision-makers in the Caribbean, which brought together more than 600 people. This project enabled the establishment of a real air quality monitoring network in the region.

In these areas, **the forthcoming programme faces a double challenge**, specifically, a need to i) pursue the effort to protect the environment and generate benefits from natural resources in line with the goal of sustainable development (including on the issue of Sargassum) and ii), address the challenge of resilience to natural disasters, particularly in the wake of hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017, and to pursue development efforts.

In line with the strategic ambitions of each of the programme's partner countries and territories and of the Green Deal, the programme's strategy for a 'greener' cooperation area will therefore pursue the following objectives:

- **Adapting to climate change and enhancing resilience to natural disasters. This will include research on risks and risk management and the implementation of measures to enhance the policy response to natural disasters (notably in the wake of hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017);**
- **Reducing pollution and protecting the Caribbean's biodiversity. This will be achieved in particular by supporting knowledge generation activities and concerted action at scales wider than single countries and/or territories and by the implementation of joint actions for the preservation of and/or restoration of ecosystems.**
- **Placing a greater emphasis on the potential of developing the different renewable energies available in the Caribbean in order to increase their share in the energy mix, thereby reducing the consumption of fossil energies;**
- **Increasing capacity to manage waste and develop a circular economy, both through knowledge generation actions and the implementation of actions to improve the policy response in these fields.**

1.2.3.3. Challenges and cooperation strategy for a more connected Caribbean

Regarding the EU's goal for a more connected Europe, the strategy in the cooperation area is to pursue the efforts of previous generations of the Programme and to open up new areas of intervention on the scale of the Caribbean.

In order to strengthen the connectivity of the Caribbean territories, the cooperation activities carried out under INTERREG Caribbean have enabled the implementation of projects aimed at:

- Strengthening and optimising maritime cabotage in the Caribbean area;
- Improving and harmonising the reception of passengers in the maritime stations of the area;
- Optimising air traffic, facilitating the movement of passengers and developing interconnections between territories.

In this regard, we can in particular cite the projects:

- CARIBSKY which, by interconnecting the reservation systems of the partner airlines of the project, has allowed XX new destinations to be served;

In these areas, the **challenges the programme will address** include enhancing transport networks and infrastructures (air, maritime in particular) in the Caribbean, developing transport services *per se* including associated services for people and goods, but also developing greener and ecologically responsible transport services.

In light of the above and in line with the strategic goals of all the programme's partners, the Programme's Strategy for a 'more connected' cooperation area has the aim of developing a national, regional and local transport sector that is more sustainable, intelligent, multi-modal and resilient in response to the climate realities facing the cooperation area.

1.2.3.4. Challenges and cooperation strategy for a more social and inclusive Caribbean

Regarding **the EU's goal for a 'more social and inclusive' Europe**, the strategy for the cooperation area is to pursue the efforts of previous generations of the Programme, as well as open up new areas to joint intervention on the Caribbean scale.

In the fields of enhancing education, skills and training, health cooperation and social inclusion, **cooperation under previous Interreg Caraïbes Programmes** enabled the implementation of projects with the following objectives:

- Developing youth entrepreneurship, especially through entrepreneurship training in Caribbean universities⁵⁴;
- Strengthening proficiency in foreign languages and fostering their use in the Caribbean, in particular among students and young workers⁵⁵;
- Improving the quality of and access to health care in the whole Caribbean area, through facilitating healthcare pathways for Caribbean patients;
- Enhancing the capacities of health care systems to enable them to respond to crises related to climatic/weather events or other natural phenomena;
- Surveillance/monitoring of diseases and combating infectious diseases;
- Developing the cooperation area's economy based on a logic of inclusive growth.

Under this topic, we can cite the following projects:

- HIV-AIDS OBSERVATORY, which, through awareness-raising on HIV/AIDS prevention, has contributed to the social, economic and professional integration of people from vulnerable groups. The 14 associations involved in the project accompanied more than a hundred HIV-positive people in their professional development or activities, by informing them about their rights and schemes in the field of work, disability, health and social services;
- CARIBVET, which enabled the creation of a Caribbean Animal Health Network composed of 122 professionals from 34 Caribbean countries and territories to facilitate regional approaches to animal disease surveillance and control. This network, active since 2017, enabled the implementation of prevention and management tools in veterinary services following the eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and provided regional assistance with animal feeding;
- ELAN, aimed at strengthening school, student, teacher, university and professional mobility within the Caribbean region. Up to date, this project has mobilized 120 participating teachers, and to facilitate 103 outgoing and 56 incoming mobility of young Caribbean people. It also enabled to sign 10 pairing agreements between training structures.

In these areas, **the challenges facing the forthcoming programme relate in particular to** enabling young people to enter a labour market characterised by high unemployment and a need to better match the skills available and the needs in different sectors of activity, all in a context characterised by significant differences in primary and secondary education across the Caribbean and continuing low levels of cooperation in vocational education and training. In respect of health, the current Covid19 crisis has revealed a twofold need in regions such as the Caribbean, which need to continue efforts to improve the performance of the health care systems of the different territories and at the same time strengthen regional cooperation. In the event of an outbreak of an epidemic, such a dual track effort would enhance the resilience of health care systems and facilitate patient care (access and delivery).

In line with the strategic ambitions of each of the programme's partner countries and territories, the programme's strategy for a 'more inclusive' cooperation area will therefore pursue the following objectives:

- **Improved socio-economic inclusivity, especially for young people**, by improving the provision of and access to education, training, apprenticeships, and lifelong learning and supported by increasing mobility in the field of education and training;
- **Improved access to health care and strengthened health care systems**, through cooperation in the field of health care, including strengthening shared knowledge on shared public health challenges or cooperation on training or healthcare pathways; by improving knowledge about and harnessing expertise in the territories and greater complementarity in order to facilitate healthcare pathways between different territories;
- **Improved social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Caribbean** by implementing cooperation action specifically addressing social-economic challenges, to the benefit of the poorest and the excluded.

1.2.3.5. Challenges and strategy for strengthened cross-border cooperation between Saint Martin and Sint Maarten

Regarding **the EU's goal for a Europe 'closer to its citizens'**, the strategy for the cooperation area is to choose integration and cross-border cooperation between Saint-Martin and Sint-Maarten as a territory-level aspiration.

Under the 2014-2020 Saint-Martin / Sint Maarten OP, three major cooperation projects were envisaged, namely:

- A waste water treatment facility at Cole Bay;
- An evaluation project and action plan to "preserve environmental quality and biodiversity, while taking into account the economic development of the entire Simpson Bay Lagoon"¹⁰;
- A flood management project in the Belle Plaine area;

However, the political context and the specificities linked to the differences in statuses of the territories make the practice of cooperation particularly complex at the scale of the whole island.

In addition, the cooperation area was brutally disrupted during this period. In 2017 Hurricane Irma inflicted heavy damage on Saint-Martin (estimated at between 1 and 3.5 billion euros. All of its basic infrastructures were affected (housing, public facilities, electricity network, water

¹⁰ PCTE Saint-Martin / Sint Maarten 2014-2020, Version SFC, p. 30

network, telephone network, tourist facilities), plunging the territory into a crisis and multi-faceted emergency.

Due to these various difficulties, the objectives initially set in the strategy could not be fully achieved by the 2014-2020 programme, despite the fundamentally coherent and essential nature of the pre-identified operations.

“The island of Saint-Martin is a [bi-national] island of 87 km² divided politically between the French side in the north (56 km²) and the Dutch side in the south (34 km²), with a multinational, multi-ethnic and multicultural population”¹¹. However, the existence of this administrative border is not a tangible feature on the island scale, as the flows and interdependencies are numerous.

In this particular context, cooperation between the two territories is not only a major challenge but a necessity. Indeed, the small size of the island calls for the construction of joint responses to the problems which confront the territory and its inhabitants, whether they are located in the Dutch or French part.

For this reason, this programme's strategy provides support for strengthening cross-border cooperation between St. Maarten and Sint Maarten under a dedicated priority, in the form of an island-wide project, co-constructed by the stakeholders of this programme sub-area.

1.2.3.6. Challenges, opportunities, and the cooperation strategy for facilitating and optimising cooperation in the Caribbean

Regarding **the EU's goal for a better governance of cooperation**, the strategy for the cooperation area is to pursue the efforts of previous generations of the Programme, as well as open up new areas of intervention to joint working in the Caribbean region.

The conclusions of preparatory work for the 2021-2027 programme found that one of the main barriers to improving regional cooperation is the limits of the existing funding instruments. Indeed, and while several funding providers are present in the Caribbean region, the procedures involved hamper the use of these funds to support large-scale coordinated and coordinating projects in the Caribbean area involving stakeholders located in outermost regions, overseas countries and territoires, and non-European territories. In this context, an EDF office at the Guadeloupe regional council was in put place during the 2014-2020 period in order to overcome the barriers encountered by the Interreg Caraïbes programme. While it could be improved, this effort to coordinate facilitated the emergence and joint funding of eight EDF-FERDF operations.

While this linkage between the ERDF and the EDF helped to strengthen the involvement of the programme's non-EU partners, it is now necessary to go further in order to guarantee the possibility of supporting more balanced partnerships under Interreg projects, thereby encouraging better consideration of the particular challenges involved in implementing a programme involving both Community territories, OCTs and third countries. In this regard, programme partners see the regulatory changes in the legislative package for 2021-2027 as an opportunity to capitalise on their experience of joint working and make it sustainable, and more generally to improve the governance of cooperation conducted under INTERREG Caribbean programme.

In line with the objective of the Partnership Agreement on strengthening the integration of the OCTs in their regional neighbourhood through INTERREG cooperation, a second major challenge is to promote better mutual understanding between institutions, organisations and

¹¹ PCTE Saint-Martin / Sint-Maarten 2014-2020, Description of the programme strategy, 1.1.1, version SFC, p.1

socio-economic stakeholders in the area. The dynamics of regional cooperation supported and driven by local authorities, institutions and international organisations have led to considerable diplomatic (e.g., new memberships in international organisations with a regional remit) and operational progress (joint projects undertaken). However, given the specificities of the Caribbean space, regional cooperation can be rendered complex by various factors such as: the diversity of political status and competencies, different administrative cultures, a different prioritisation of issues or varying financial and human resources across Caribbean countries and territories.

For the INTERREG Caribbean programme, for example, evaluation and consultation work has made it possible to recommend that cooperation projects would be facilitated by: a better understanding of INTERREG's funding requirements by non-community partners; a better mutual understanding of the potential in the territories and of the functioning of the major organisations and local authorities; moreover, and above all, by more visibility socio-economic stakeholders and the right contacts for issues of shared interest between the territories (cf. conclusions of the Chapelier/Poletti parliamentary report on the international environment of overseas departments and local authorities).

On this theme, we can cite the following regional initiatives:

- The project 'Training and immersion for diplomats' financed under INTERREG Caribbean, aimed at strengthening the capacities of diplomats and other cooperation actors in the Caribbean, via which 20 Caribbean trainees benefited from 6 training seminars of 5 days;
- The thematic platforms initiated by CARIFORUM for the Clovis Beaugregard Conference, which enabled key actors from the Caribbean territories to network on issues identified as being of regional importance (i.e., trade and investment, HIV/AIDS, natural disaster management, interconnectivity).

In addition, the 2014-2020 INTERREG Caribbean programme mobilised volunteers from the 'Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative' to help in the region's partner organisations. This initiative not only made it possible to reinforce links between the Interreg Caraïbes programme and the OECS but also facilitated the emergence of cooperation projects.

In line with the strategic ambitions of each of the programme's partner countries and territories, the programme's strategy for a better cooperation governance is to pursue the following objectives:

- **Facilitating the incorporation of external funding in the Interreg Caraïbes programme** made possible by the new regulations in a coordinated way with respect to the programming timeline for the NDICI instrument and with the recent decision of the EU Council on "the Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Union including relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark" on the other;
- **Facilitating the harnessing of funds that are complementary to the ERDF and to external funding** in order to enhance the coherence and coordination of development policies on the Caribbean scale;
- **Promoting a better partnership dynamic in programme implementation**, by promoting a better mutual understanding among institutional and sectoral stakeholders in the cooperation area. To this end, the OP may support training and mobility projects for staff responsible for cooperation in the Caribbean (including outermost regions, international organisations with a regional remit and the French diplomatic services);
- **Promoting the establishment of thematic platforms/networks**, aimed at identifying and networking key stakeholders in the various territories on the important themes and issues jointly identified by the partners.

1.3. Incorporation of cross-cutting environmental challenges in the whole programme

For all of the programme's priorities, **and pursuant to the recommendations of the strategic environmental assessment for the Interreg Caraïbes OP 2021-2027**¹², the programme will incorporate the following points¹³ :

- Environmental criteria, and potentially eco-conditionality criteria, may be incorporated in the guiding principles for the selection of operations;
- Particular attention will be paid to air travel (inherent to cooperation action in the Caribbean) but which has a high environmental impact (the OP will in particular consider the possibility of setting up a code of practice for face-to-face or distance meetings, both for the programme and for its projects);
- The OP may consider defining an eco-communication and eco-events policy, to guide the awareness-raising actions of all relevant SOs;
- For infrastructures (even though they constitute only a fraction of the actions financed by the OP), it is essential to determine the potential negative impacts linked to the creation and/or improvement of infrastructures (noise pollution, waste, air quality, etc.) and to foster the use of good practices in the conduct of works. Similarly, it is essential to determine the potential negative impacts of the construction of new infrastructures (carbon footprint, heritage, landscapes, biodiversity, ecological corridors, land use) and to prioritise the least impactful projects, for example, by encouraging restoration/improvement or by including a criterion on the location of strategic economic infrastructures in order to take into account the need to save space and manage transport.

1.3.1. Partners' intentions for the Interreg Caribbean Programme 2021-2027

During the drafting process, the partners agreed on the **need for the Programme to have a broad and open intervention strategy: the 2021-2027 Interreg Caribbean programme must be able to support all cooperation initiatives, as long as they are relevant and effective in meeting the shared economic, environmental and societal challenges of the cooperation area.**

This approach is based on the following considerations:

- The diversity of the Interreg Caribbean cooperation area;
- The importance of all the different specific objectives for which the European Commission offers ERDF funding support;
- The need for the programme to remain open and flexible in order to respond to the various threats faced by the Caribbean (natural disasters, pandemics, etc.);
- The dynamics of cooperation are still incipient on certain subjects but which must be supported when they request the assistance of the Interreg programme.

In addition, the Programme's stakeholders welcome the **ever-more dynamic cooperation between the ORs and non-EU partners and are committed to strengthening it.** This cooperation allows the emergence and support of cooperation projects that support the integration and

¹² A actualiser au moment de la finalisation de la rédaction du PO

¹³ Ceux-ci seront détaillés dans les documents pertinents (DOMO ou documents à destination des porteurs notamment)

policy connectivity of the cooperation area, bringing concrete benefits for all its territories. The new arrangements for enhanced cooperation and for a better linkage of ERDF and NDICI funding from the European Commission should make it possible to support this dynamic cooperation.



1.4. Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
1	(1i) enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies ¹⁴	Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to the shared economic, social and environmental challenges of the Caribbean that can be provided by research and innovation • Expertise and know-how in a wide range of sectors (energy, fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, tourism, biodiversity, medicinal plants, tropical health, aeronautics, satellite imagery, etc.) • Presence of complementary expertise/specialisations across the region, which can be harnessed to support the research and innovation effort • Significant potential in R&D with the presence of leading research institutions and expertise on the key challenges facing the cooperation area • A longstanding history of cooperation on this theme, which generates concrete projects and results for the territories (projects such as VACAN, CABARE, or CARIBIX) • High potential for projects <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities (ORs) • The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies • The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
1	(1iii) enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job	Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical need to support the local economic fabric, particularly in relation to the issue of employment : a critical objective i) in a post Covid context and ii) to generate employment opportunities, especially for young people • Potential exists in important key <i>filières</i> but which are not fully exploited (tourism, renewable energies, etc.).

¹⁴ Is cross-cutting by nature, can support diverse areas of policy action

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
	creation in SMEs, including by productive investments ¹⁵		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for this theme from all partners • The presence of innovative sectors, such as energy, fisheries, aquaculture, biotechnologies, the agri-food industry, tourism, etc. • Economic integration of the territories is nascent and is struggling to really become a focus of cooperation • Persistent need for support to economic agents / need for brokerage and networking for economic agents driving promising/growing <i>filières</i>¹⁶ • A longstanding history of cooperation on this theme, which generates concrete projects and results for the territories (examples of projects: TEECA, Invest KARAIB, RECAVACA, PACAM or Kreyol Fashion Days) • High potential for projects <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities • The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies • The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
	(1v) enhancing digital connectivity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband networks, even ultrafast broadband are not in place in some territories. In several territories Internet speeds are continuing to increase. • The questions of the cost of access to Internet, service quality and the transition to ultrafast broadband (<i>très haut débit</i>) are current ones. Moreover, the take up of digital applications by business is particularly slow. • Cooperation could help to the smooth the integration of the Caribbean area into the information society and improve regional communication(s)

¹⁵ Objective is cross-cutting and able to cover a diverse range of policy action themes.

¹⁶ **Filière policy.** *Filière* is a French term for an industry or sector level industrial policy with several features. Its goal is to promote innovation, technological upgrading and joint strategies (R&D, prototyping, etc. with support from various policy instruments) involving every tier in the value or supply chain and other stakeholders in a coordinated or structured way. The policy does not seek to undermine competition between companies nor support specific companies. It is similar to 'clustering' but without necessarily any geographic criterion.

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital connectivity is a prerequisite for mobilising and networking stakeholders and for developing businesses Prior programming rounds supported projects on enhancing local authority management in the ORs through the use of digital technology; to develop digital solutions to facilitate networking among Caribbean stakeholders; to enhance understanding of the cooperation area; to improve the connection to the Internet, the quality of services and network resilience <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
	'2ii) promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant potential to develop renewable energies but which remain largely underexploited or unexploited. The situation is similar across the whole cooperation area Area still imports fossil fuels in very large quantities Elevated electricity production costs Low energy efficiency leading to power cuts and load shedding The presence of all forms of renewable energy in the cooperation area (solar, hydroelectric, marine energy, geothermal, biomass, wind) High potential for geothermal energy in some islands of the Caribbean Political will to develop renewable energies in many Caribbean countries (CARICOM, OECS) and the ORs A new departure for INTERREG despite a handful of emblematic projects (e.g., Geothermal) <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies The 2021-2027 Amazonia

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
2	(2iv) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches ¹⁷	Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acute vulnerability of the cooperation area to the full spectrum of natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.) The gravity and increasing frequency of disasters and growing underlying risks, especially climate change Shared and growing concern among policymakers and populations in the region Diversity and complementarity of approaches and responses to climate change mitigation and adaptation Cooperation is mutually beneficial: no competition so can envisage sharing of experience, expertise, human and financial resources from all partners Essential added value of cooperation: sharing of information on natural conditions, coordination of responses, sharing of experience in terms of governance, monitoring, responses, awareness-raising among populations, etc. A longstanding history of dynamic cooperation on this theme, which generates concrete projects and results for the territories (example of projects: Tsunahoule and Carib Coast. The experiences of the 2007-2013 programming, both in terms of research projects and capacity building projects, attest to this. High potential for projects <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
	(2vi) promoting the transition to a circular and	Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of significant natural resources (hydrological, extractive, forestry and maritime resources) Numerous projects to modernise waste management and processing

¹⁷ Objective is cross-cutting and able to cover a diverse range of policy action themes

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
	resource efficient economy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will to undertake combined actions on waste processing/treatment • The Caribbean is one of the most polluting economies in terms of the pesticides and waste it puts into the marine ecosystem, for water pollution and for persistent organic pollutants • Structural waste management problems in small territories, where economies of scale are not always feasible • Projects to modernise waste management and treatment at the territorial level, which can serve as starting points for regional cooperation projects • Cooperation hampered by the structural problem of transport costs and the (non) interconnection of the Caribbean islands • Hardening of the European position on the export of waste, which may run counter to the logic of cooperation • Cooperation at this stage focuses on improving waste treatment systems and exchanging best practices and shared solutions to the Sargassum problem <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities • The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies <p>The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP</p>
2	(2vii) enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing	Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enormous shared resources/potential: the Caribbean is one of the world's cradles of biodiversity (flora and fauna) • The presence of significant high-quality natural resources (water, extractive, forestry, and marine resources) • A very diverse range of high quality landscapes • Existing protection measures for natural areas and resources could usefully be enhanced • Concern for the protection of the environment in the different territories: research projects, protection of threatened or endangered species, protection of natural areas, creation of nature reserves, public awareness • Growing problem of Sargassum beaching across the Caribbean territories

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
	all forms of pollution ¹⁸		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long history of cooperation on the strengthening and sharing of knowledge on the natural resources of the cooperation area, biodiversity and plant health, and on the functioning of ecosystems, their services and changes through the financing of research projects and studies • A deficit of knowledge identified on marine environments, compared with terrestrial ecosystems, although it is an essential issue for the territories • The development of tools and decision support for public sector stakeholders; • Raising awareness on the issues of preserving and enhancing the environment and biodiversity at the scale of the cooperation area • High potential for projects • Direct and indirect impact of human activities (tourism, agriculture, transport, economic activities, extraction of raw materials) on natural areas and the quality of resources (pollution, waste) and on the natural heritage (ecosystem, landscapes and sites) <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities • The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies • The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
3	(3ii) developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility,	Priority 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport and port infrastructures have recently improved; they are enabling the development of exchanges within the Caribbean area • However, recent efforts to strengthen connectivity within the Caribbean still face: i) territorial discontinuity is still important: it is caused by an inadequate infrastructure, logistics services and air, sea and land transport; and ii) the cost of air travel and sea freight is high and connections between territories are difficult • Strengthening the internal network of transport networks is an essential condition for the intensification of intra-regional exchanges and harmonised development among the Caribbean territories

¹⁸ Formulation of objectives offers wide scope, a range of more specific topics can be pegged to this objective

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
	including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport was not a specific theme under the previous programmes, but several important projects focused on this sector: they aimed to improve the coherence of territorial provision in terms of international nautical routes and to carry out strategic studies on improving connectivity (maritime, air, etc..). <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
4	(4ii) improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training	Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strong growth of higher education and mobility over recent years A lack of skilled workers at all levels is a major weakness of the zone's economies The number of unemployed, especially among young people, is a major concern A strong potential for cooperation, especially in higher education and language teaching A significant potential for university cooperation between France, the OCTs and foreign countries on technical/technology training (for example, the Dominican Republic wishes to work in collaboration with the agricultural high schools in Guadeloupe). A potential for cooperation in a few specific sectors of activity: in the partner countries, some professions lack recruits due to the lack of training at the local level. There are few marine biologists in the Dominican Republic. This is also a problem for the growth of certain sectors (waste management, renewable energies) Historic Interreg cooperation supporting entrepreneurship among young people; training in entrepreneurship within Caribbean universities; strengthening the mastery and mutual practice of languages in the Caribbean, especially for students and young professionals A theme where cooperation is long-standing, dynamic, bringing concrete results for the territories (the ELAN, CAP3D, CIGAREL projects for example) Significant potential for projects <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
4	(4V) ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community-based care	Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic and vector-borne diseases are common and sometimes specific/endemic to the cooperation area The area is subject to the emergence and dispersion of infectious diseases at the global level, and also experiences diseases and infections that are more specific to it and are common to the various territories in the cooperation area Cooperation is a highly relevant way of addressing shared health problems and in particular in the combat against infectious diseases This challenge has been elevated as a priority by the COVID crisis (the crisis revealed the importance of cooperation with nearby neighbouring countries and the interdependence of territories) Strong cooperation activity under previous programmes (mutually beneficial cooperation). Examples of projects: CARES or the HIV Observatory Interreg cooperation can focus on Observation and the fight against infectious diseases; Improving the quality of health care supply; Strengthening the capacity of health systems to respond to crises related to climatic and natural events; Actions to share and exchange of resources, equipment and best practices on the management and care of patients Success of several cooperation projects carried out on the theme (HIV Observatory, CARES, etc.) High potential for projects <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies <p>The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
4	(ESF+4L) promoting social inclusion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the poorest and children;	Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion is an important issue for the entire region • Some regional organisations and NGOs in the region are working on these issues • Pronounced levels of poverty in the Caribbean • Interreg cooperation can aim to promote the economic development of the cooperation area with a view to inclusive growth; strengthen the capacity to respond to natural disasters; improve the quality and accessibility of health care provision throughout the cooperation area • Specialised NGOs and regional organisations have the capacity to deliver social inclusion actions and could be good partners <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in the French Outermost Regions/Collectivities • The French ORs' ERDF-ESF OP for 2021-2027 • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies • The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP
5	To be defined	Priority 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border cooperation between Sint Maarten and Sint Maarten concerns a sub-area of the Programme that has its own specificities and faces particular challenges • The stakeholders in cooperation on Sint Maarten and Sint Maarten must be part of an integrated development process and wish to pursue their objectives in a joint cross-border cooperation strategy • The partners of the Interreg Caribbean Programme have validated the principle of including the Sint-Maarten / St. Maarten sub-programme under strategic objective 5 for a Europe closer to its citizens in order to take into consideration the need to build a governance system adapted to the challenges of the territorial project to be implemented <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the relevant sectoral programmes in force in Saint-Martin • The 2021-2027 ERDF-ESF+ OP for Saint-Martin • The cross-border cooperation strategy between Saint-Martin and Sint-Maarten which remains to be formally drafted, in line with the provisions of article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
ISO1	(ISO1 f) other actions aiming to support better cooperation governance	Priority 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The possibility of enhancing coordination between the EDF and ERDF and the participation of (a wider range of) stakeholders in the Programme <p>The actions supported under this specific objective are consistent with the following plans and programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Programme's partners' regional cooperation strategies • The 2021-2027 Amazonia ICP

2. Priorities of the Interreg Caraïbes Cooperation Programme

2.1. Priority 1: A smarter, more innovative and more competitive Caribbean

This priority includes specific objectives on i) enhancing research and innovation capabilities and the uptake of leading-edge technologies ii) helping SMEs to grow and become more competitive.

2.1.1. Specific objective (1i) enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

2.1.1.1. Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority has several objectives: to promote stakeholder networking in R&D&I and support their actions in practice, where these match the needs of the Caribbean territories, communities and economies. It also aims to strengthen the innovation process in Caribbean companies and technology transfer between the research and business worlds, to support economic diversification and to strengthen regional economic integration.

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- **Collaborative R&D projects, actions to support knowledge generation, to develop new processes, to carry out of tests and trials and to develop pilot sites**, feasibility and scoping studies, studies to evaluate infrastructure vulnerability, the availability of resources or potential, etc., led by the cooperation area's stakeholders. Actions should capitalise on opportunities to undertake research/development in the areas of scientific excellence present in the Caribbean and/or which address the specific needs of the Caribbean's territories, economies, and populations.
- Actions related to **the enrichment of shared observatory networks, instruments and measurement tools** in the Caribbean area
- **Collective actions (i.e., business development support for groups of companies)** in the field of innovation and technology transfer (e.g., organisation of meetings in place of production, etc.)

The fields of application of these research and innovation actions in line with the needs and potential of the cooperation area include, in particular:

- Generating benefits from natural resources, agri-food processing;
- Cultural and creative industries ;
- Tourism;
- The Blue Economy;
- The Bioeconomy;
- Eco-construction;

R&D projects on other essential themes for the cooperation area such as biodiversity, digital, renewable energy, circular economy, adaptation to climate change and risks and health are supported under the Programme's dedicated Priorities (e.g., R&D project on renewable energy supported under priority 2 of the OP).

The programme will also give preference to projects integrating citizen dialogue, consultation and transparency in the choice of technologies, as well as projects involving all relevant stakeholders and in particular the final beneficiaries.

In addition, and with a view to aligning with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, this specific objective may contribute to the following goals:

- The reduction of greenhouse gases and the development of renewable energies;
- The fight against marine pollution;
- Adaptation to climate change by improving coastal observation and protection.

2.1.1.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.1.1.3 Indicators

Section to be completed on the basis of the financial plan

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
1	1i					

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	1i								

2.1.1.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- Research staff, including academic teaching staff who undertake research, students, and PhD students;
- Higher education and research organisations;
- Innovative companies;
- Organisations that support research and innovation activities (local development agencies, clusters, incubators, technopoles, etc.)
- National, regional and local administrations and public institutions;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;

- Etc.

2.1.1.5 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area.

2.1.1.6 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to use financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.1.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.1.2 Specific Objective (1iii) enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs

2.1.2.1 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority aims to support the growth and competitiveness of SMEs in the cooperation area through the development of an environment conducive to business in the Caribbean and strengthening the internationalisation of Caribbean companies. This should contribute to balanced economic growth within the region, creating wealth and especially jobs (especially for young people). It also aims to support small businesses in their digital and environmental transition (including energy).

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- **Cooperation to identify complementarities** between the different territories with a view to supporting industrial *filière*-based coordination & development that exploits synergies

through collaboration on a wider scale than is possible in single territories (for example: advisability/scoping/feasibility studies, studies into the drivers and barriers to the convergent economic development of the economies of the Caribbean area, drawing up regional-scale industrial *filière* networking strategies, coordination & development actions, etc.

- **Business development support** open to all companies (collective actions¹⁹); For example: support for starting up a company, for innovation, on the digital transition, for the energy transition, for skills development and training, for implementing Caribbean area export strategies, for the exchange of good practice, etc.
- **Supporting the drivers and enablers of growth of Caribbean businesses (digital or energy for example: support for the design of regional strategic plans, regional training schemes, etc.)**

The fields of application of these actions on the growth and competitiveness of SMEs include, in particular:

- Generating benefits from natural resources, processing of agricultural production;
- Cultural and creative industries ;
- Tourism;
- The Blue Economy;
- The Bioeconomy;
- Eco-construction;

Projects to support the growth and competitiveness of SMEs concerning other essential themes for the cooperation area such as biodiversity, digital, renewable energies, circular economy, adaptation to climate change and risks and health are supported under the Programme's dedicated Priorities (e.g.: support project for businesses in the renewable energy sector supported by priority 2 of the OP).

In addition, and with a view to aligning with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, this specific objective may contribute to the following goals:

- The reduction of greenhouse gases and the development of renewable energies;
- The fight against marine pollution;
- Creating jobs in the blue economy sectors and supporting cooperation between EU training centers and companies;
- Adaptation to climate change by improving coastal observation and protection.

2.1.3.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.1.3.3 Indicators

Section to be completed on the basis of the approved financing plan

¹⁹ The wording used in French 'actions collectives' is longstanding French expression used when a policy scheme on a given business development or technology transfer issue, is open to multiple companies.

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.1.3.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies, chambers of commerce and observatories;
- International organisations with a Caribbean regional remit;
- The not-for-profit sector and companies, professional/ industry organisations, business and trade organisations, economic development agencies;
- Etc.

2.1.2.2 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.1.3.5 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to use financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.1.2.3 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.1.4 Specific Objective (1iii) Enhancing digital connectivity

2.1.4.1 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority of the Interreg Caribbean Programme aims to support digital connectivity within the cooperation area. The reduction of the digital divide within the Caribbean is an important issue both for the inclusion of different territories but also for the development of trade and thus the economic development of the territories. In this sector, the fragmentation of the Caribbean across islands, as well as the limited size of the population centres, is an obstacle that cooperation can help to mitigate.

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- Support for digital infrastructure projects (feasibility studies, market studies or support for the mobilisation of additional funding to finance an infrastructure project of importance to the region), particularly for data hosting projects (data centers), cybersecurity, etc. (including knowledge production actions that may benefit from being pooled to limit costs), in complementarity with the regional ERDF OPs for the French outermost regions;
- Actions to support the creation of legislative and regulatory frameworks conducive to the concerted development of digital connectivity at the regional level;
- Research and innovation projects on digital technology in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in this sector;
- Support for the development of regional strategic plans for better digital connectivity at the supra-territorial level;
- Cooperation actions supporting the exchange of best practices and the emergence of shared goals on the issue of digital connectivity (e.g.: e-administration; data protection);
- Projects to support the digitalisation of SMEs or local public organisations;
- Open data development projects to share data at the Caribbean level (especially data on trade, transport, economic *filières*, etc.);
- Projects aimed at educating users on the proper use of digital technology.

The programme will prioritise projects that include citizen dialogue, consultation and transparency in the choice of technologies.

2.1.4.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.1.4.3 Indicators

Section to be completed on the basis of the OP's financing plan

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.1.4.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies, chambers of commerce and observatories;
- International organisations with a Caribbean regional remit;
- The not-for-profit sector and companies, professional/ industry organisations, business and trade organisations, economic development agencies;
- User groups
- Etc.

2.1.4.5 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.1.4.6 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to use financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.1.4.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed on the basis of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Field of intervention

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
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1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	
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Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.2 Priority 2: A Greener Caribbean

This priority includes specific objectives on i) renewable energies ii) adapting to climate change iii) the transition to a circular economy and resource efficient economy and iv) protecting the environment and biodiversity.

2.2.1 *Specific Objective (2ii) promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein;*

2.2.1.1 *Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate.*

This priority of the Interreg Caraïbes programme aims to support the development of renewable energies in the Caribbean, the potential for which is very high (diverse sources of renewable energy are present in the Caribbean and are still little exploited).

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- Research and innovation projects on renewable energy in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in the sector;
- Strengthening data on energy sources and the potential of these resources, as well as on consumption in the various islands and the composition of the energy mix (financing of studies to obtain a better understanding of these subjects, of a renewable energies observatory, etc.);
- Support for the drawing up of regional or local strategies for developing renewable energy (exchange of practices on local public policies or implementation of shared strategies at the Caribbean level on renewable energy);
- Support for implementing projects to exploit the potential of renewable energies and developing new solutions (storage, smart grids, etc.) in the Caribbean (funding of feasibility studies, pilot projects, etc.);
- Strengthening the sharing of experience between Caribbean stakeholders on technical/technological solutions for production and use, as well as support policies (capitalisation, meetings between stakeholders, etc.);
- Projects to reinforce the public acceptability of renewable energies, to raise awareness of the impact of the consumption of fossil energies (especially by the individual car) in a "citizen energy" approach. The programme will prioritise projects that integrate citizen dialogue, consultation and transparency in the choice of technologies.

All renewable energy sources are eligible for OP support (photovoltaic, wind (including offshore wind), geothermal, biomass, biogas, tidal, hydrogen and port energy management in particular).

2.1.4.8 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.1.4.9 Indicators

Section to be completed on the basis of the OP's approved financing plan

Table 2 *Output Indicators*

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
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Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.1.4.10 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies, chambers of commerce and observatories;
- International organisations with a Caribbean regional remit;
- The not-for-profit sector and companies, professional/ industry organisations
- Etc.

2.1.4.11 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.1.4.12 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP does not intend to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.1.4.13 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed on the basis of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Field of intervention

Priority n°	Fund	Objectif spécifique	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.3.2 Specific Objective (2iv) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches

2.2.1.2 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority aims to strengthen the capacities of the territories of the cooperation area to adapt to climate change, to develop their capacities to prevent and respond to risks and resilience to disasters, to which the territories of the Caribbean are extremely vulnerable. In support of the goals of mitigating climate change, supporting the energy transition and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (supported under the other priorities of the OP), the actions to be supported under this specific objective will be the following.

- Capitalisation activities on the actions and work already carried out in the Caribbean region and dissemination of good practices (e.g., through the establishment of centres of excellence, training, etc.);
- Actions 'upstream' of adaptation to climate change leading to greater resilience in economic and social systems (projects on adapted urban planning, preservation of environments or replanting of mangroves for example). Specific sectors such as the agricultural and fishing sectors may be targeted;
- Research and innovation projects on climate change and risks in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in the sector;
- **Actions aimed at better prevention/preparation in relation to risks and their consequences**
 - Support for **regional programmes on the prevention or adaptation to climate change and the management of major risks** with a view to developing a concerted and coordinating strategy in the cooperation area
 - For example: planning, risk management, sectoral adaptations, evaluations of measures implemented by Caribbean States, OCTs and ORs, etc. / actions on harmonising different building standards such as hurricane-proof and earthquake resistant construction, etc.
 - Establishing or strengthening scientific observatories, warning and forecasting systems to improve knowledge of phenomena and risks, to develop decision-making tools and improve the response capabilities of the Caribbean countries, OCTs and ORs of the cooperation area.
 - For example: meteorological and hydrological monitoring, surveillance and risk prevention (coastal risks, telluric or geological risks, climate risks), etc.
 - Responsibility for managing shared equipment on the scale of several small territories in the Caribbean;
 - Capacity building for local stakeholders and decision makers through specific targeted training and networking between scientists and public decision makers;
 - The implementation of awareness-raising and information campaigns in support of prevention, as well as training and support actions on climate change and major risks

- For example: Awareness campaigns to bolster resilience, projects to promote the independent capabilities of different communities (schools, neighborhoods, families etc.), training programmes for public decision makers, etc.
- **Actions to enhance emergency response capabilities**
 - Actions to contribute to insurance and compensation schemes for natural disasters, in concert with the interventions of the different regional organisations and funding providers operating in the cooperation area
 - Support for capacity building in relation to natural disaster response and crisis management

For example: projects to facilitate the pooling of material and human resources, organising emergency disaster response operations; pre-positioned logistics facilities for emergency equipment and supplies; training for civil defense/protection stakeholders/personnel involved in risk management and emergency response (search and rescue, risk managers, etc.), including, in particular, multidisciplinary and inclusive victim management and care etc.

The programme will also be able to offer stronger support on the principal climate change related challenges, such as:

- Conflicts of use involving water resource (agricultural, tourism, domestic and industrial use and the needs of natural environments) and an increased risk of shortage;
- Interrupted electricity supply;
- Increasingly harmful heat waves;
- Forests under pressure (negative impacts on tree physiology and increased risk of forest fires);
- Ocean acidification and rapid disappearance of coral;
- A rise in sea level with impacts for coastal populations and activities;
- Specific impacts on the blue economy such as those related to the development of Sargassum;
- Tropical diseases (dengue, chikungunya) are more frequent.

In addition, and with a view to aligning with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, this specific objective may contribute to adaptation to climate change by improving coastal observation and protection.

2.3.2.1 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.3.2.2 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's objectives/types of actions

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.3.2.3 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies;
- International organisations with a Caribbean regional remit;
- Research centres and Universities;
- Organisations playing an auxiliary function in the field of civil defense (such as the French Red Cross, 'national societies'²⁰ or the Caribbean Red Cross);
- Not-for-profits organisations and NGOs;
- Etc.

2.2.1.3 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.3.2.4 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective

2.2.1.4 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)

²⁰ 'Sociétés nationales'. Refers to, for example, humanitarian organisations.

1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	
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Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.3.3 Specific Objective (2vi) promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

2.3.3.1 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority aims to support both a better management of waste but also a broader conception of waste management based on the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy (integrating the issues of waste prevention, sustainable supply, short circuits, eco-design of products, recovery of waste, etc.).

The actions to be supported under this specific objective will be the following:

- Research and innovation projects on the circular economy in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in the sector;
- Improving data on the different sources of waste, the treatment capacities in the different territories of the Caribbean, or the strategies and goals of different authorities and institutions;
- Supporting the drawing up of local public strategies for the development of the circular economy, waste management and the reduction of non-recyclable waste
- Supporting the implementation of operational projects to treat, recover and exploit waste generated in the Caribbean (financing feasibility studies, pilot projects, development of actions on the sources of waste, etc.). Experiments could be conducted based on Guadeloupe's experience with plastic bottles.
- Strengthening feedback between Caribbean sectoral stakeholders on technical/technological solutions on waste production and exploitation, as well as support policies (capitalisation, meetings between stakeholders, etc.).

Building on from the prior programme, a particular focus will be on the Sargassum problem (production of data on Sargassum, pilot projects or projects of larger scale to tackle the massive beachings of Sargassum, collection and reuse of seaweed) by demonstrating the added value of the project/capitalisation on actions already undertaken.

Similarly, the 'plastic sea' problem in the Caribbean needs to be addressed through targeted action.

2.3.3.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.3.3.3 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.3.3.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies, chambers of commerce;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;
- Not-for-profits organisations and NGOs, professional and industry bodies;
- Etc.

2.3.3.5 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area.

2.3.3.6 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to use financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.3.3.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Field of intervention

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Tableau 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.3.4 Specific Objective (2vii) enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

2.2.1.5 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority aims on the one hand to strengthen environmental protection (marine protected areas, protection of mangroves, natural parks, etc.) but also to strengthen the economic exploitation the environment in its various forms (including sustainable use of resources for economic purposes (exploitation of plant resources or green tourism for example)).

Consequently, this specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- Research and innovation projects on biodiversity in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in the sector;
- **Actions to support the drawing up of joint environmental protection and stewardship (protection, restoration, management) strategies, specially where** degraded by human construction, ocean acidification and plastic pollution. For example: actions to support the introduction of legislative and regulatory frameworks that help to safeguard, restore or manage biodiversity and the environment and joint actions to strengthen the capacities of local operators; study projects, and the development of decision-support tools for decision-makers; establishing/strengthening stakeholder networks in the field of environmental stewardship, cooperation actions to draw up guidance on the stewardship of the species and protected areas; actions to control and eradicate invasive species in the cooperation area.
- **Actions to support the implementation of joint instruments for the protection, management and restoration of biodiversity, with for example:**
 - Actions to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding biodiversity **and support for change processes aimed at communities and economic agents;**
 - Support for creation of protected areas in the Caribbean, especially in "corridors", reproduction areas, and nursery grounds used by species or a group of species;
 - Specific actions to protect plant life, animal life, and habitats;
- Projects related to the development of compensation funds in carbon emissions trading.

In addition, and with a view to aligning with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, this specific objective will be able to contribute to the following goals:

- The reduction of greenhouse gases;

- The fight against marine pollution;
- Creating jobs in the blue economy sectors and supporting cooperation between EU training centers and companies;
- Adaptation to climate change by improving coastal observation and protection.

2.3.4.1 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.3.4.2 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source de data	Comments

2.3.4.3 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;
- Research centres and Universities;
- Conservatories managing natural reserves;
- Not-for-profit organisations and NGOs;
- Etc.

2.2.1.6 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area.

2.3.4.4 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective

2.2.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.4 Priority 3: A more connected Caribbean

This priority includes the specific objective dedicated to developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility.

2.4.1 Specific Objective (biv) developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

2.4.1.1 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This priority aims to support the efforts made in the Caribbean territories to intensify exchanges of people, goods and services in the Caribbean. Significant progress has been made in recent years on transport infrastructure in particular, but there is still a major need to qualitatively and quantitatively enhance connections between the Caribbean territories (especially in a more sustainable way).

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- Support for transport infrastructure projects (feasibility studies, market studies, support for identifying and mobilising additional funding for infrastructure projects of regional importance, etc.);
- Support for the development of projects (example of the coastal shipping (*cabotage*) project between Brazil and Suriname, which could be extended to the Caribbean);
- Support for projects to improve existing infrastructure (e.g., projects on the adaptation and prevention of natural hazards and climate change) or projects to promote sustainable mobility (e.g., projects on marine pollution), which are unhampered by competition and are conducive to cooperation;
- Research and innovation projects on transport and mobility in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of companies in the sector;
- Actions to support the enactment of legislative and regulatory frameworks conducive to the concerted development of transport provision on a regional scale;
- Cooperative actions aimed at exchanging best practices and developing shared guidelines on the issue of regional connectivity and transportation;
- Support for the development of regional strategic plans for better maritime, air and land connectivity;
- Knowledge generation actions which can be shared endeavours to limit costs;
- Actions aimed at sharing experience, exchanging best practices and capacity building capacity.

The Programme will be able to pay particular attention to the issue of tourist flows, which are essential for the economy of the Caribbean but which generate a high level of environmental pollution (cruise ships in particular).

2.2.1.8 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.4.1.2 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 2 *output Indicators*

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 *Result Indicators*

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.4.1.3 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;
- Not-for-profit organisations and NGOs, professional organisations and industry bodies;
- Etc.

2.4.1.4 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area.

2.4.1.5 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to use financial instruments for this specific objective

2.4.1.6 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 *Dimension 1 – Field of Intervention*

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 *Dimension 2 – Form of financing*

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.5 Priority 4: A more social and inclusive Caribbean

This priority includes specific objectives on i) access to education and training, ii) social inclusion through tourism and culture and iii) health.

2.5.1 *Specific Objective (4b) improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training*

2.2.1.9 *Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate*

This specific objective aims to support mobility dynamics in the field of education and vocational training at the Caribbean level and the strengthening of the internationalisation of initial and vocational training courses. This should contribute to developing cooperation and strengthening skills in the region, which are vectors of economic development and employment (youth employment in particular). It also aims to support the acquisition of linguistic and intercultural skills on the part of its beneficiaries.

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- **Projects supporting exchange/mobility in the fields of initial and vocational/continuing education with, for example:**
 - actions supporting the creation of an exchange programme, such as ERASMUS, for students and academic staff between the schools and universities of the Caribbean;
 - exchange and mobility projects for working people, the unemployed, and people seeking to change career in the Caribbean area; a second phase of the E.L.A.N pilot project could be envisaged in order to go beyond the English-speaking area and serve the Caribbean's other linguistic areas, etc.
 - Setting up language training courses with specific objectives (such FOS²¹, French for specific purposes) in relevant business/industry sectors in the Caribbean: tourism, business and trade, business law, etc.
- **Actions to support the sharing of experience, the exchange of good practice, and capacity building**

For example: cooperation projects in the fields of education and learning, continuing education & skills training, higher education and the integration of young people into active life and the labour market, etc.
- The setting up of shared distance learning and online platforms (MOOC)

²¹ French title for information 'Français sur Objectifs Spécifiques'

The areas of application of these actions in the field of education and training, consistent with the needs and potential of the cooperation area, include:

- The beneficial use of natural resources, processing in the agri-food sector;
- Biodiversity (including odorous aromatic and medicinal plants);
- Cultural and creative industries;
- Tourism;
- Social innovation and the social and solidarity economy;
- The bio-economy;
- Sustainable construction;

In addition, and with a view to aligning with the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, this specific objective will contribute to the following goals:

- Reducing greenhouse gases and developing renewable energies;
- Tackling marine pollution;
- Creating jobs and filling skills gaps in the blue economy sectors and supporting cooperation between EU training centers and companies;
- Adapting to climate change by improving coastal observation and protection.

2.5.1.1 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.5.1.2 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.5.1.3 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and local public administrations and bodies, chambers of commerce;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;
- Universities, engineering schools, management schools, higher and vocational education & training institutes;
- Adult vocational and training centres;
- Vocational Lycées²² (e.g., lycée specialised in the hotel industry) and apprentice training centres;
- Etc.

2.2.1.10 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.5.1.4 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective

2.2.1.11 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

²² Lycées provide secondary education between the ages of 14 and 18 in the French education system.

2.5.2 Specific Objective (4d) improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services across borders

2.2.1.12 Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This specific objective aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of health at the Caribbean level and develop the internationalization of care pathways, thus harnessing complementarities between the territories and countries of the Caribbean. This should make it possible to improve the accessibility and efficiency of health and long-term care systems across borders. Taking into consideration the impacts of the Covid pandemic¹⁹, but also with regard to the shared health issues at the Caribbean level, it also aims to promote greater resilience of health care systems and a better capacity to respond to public health issues affecting the cooperation area.

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- Research and innovation projects on health in the Caribbean, as well as projects to support the competitiveness of economic stakeholders in the sector
- **Joint prevention and awareness actions on common health issues (including environmental health)**

For example: prevention campaigns and education on chronic and transmissible disease, informing the public about how diseases are transmitted, information on epidemic risks, actions for screening, testing etc., mosquito eradication campaigns by public authorities to prevent vector-borne diseases, etc.

- **Actions to improve access to health care and ensure coverage and health care pathways**

For example: target screening/testing campaigns, awareness raising targeting foreign populations through the adaptation of prevention measures and health education, sharing good practice on healthcare pathways and health policies, studies on complementarities of medical specialisations in the cooperation area, exchanges and joint work in relation to the regulation of medicines, actions to develop telemedicine practices, etc.

- **Actions to develop regional health care education programmes**

For example: integrated health care pathways on the regional scale, actions supporting university mobility, investments with a view to developing facilities to host foreign students, etc.

- **Actions to strengthen the capacities of national health care systems**

For example: exchange of good practice, joint training, investment in 'cross-border' health care infrastructures, etc.

- **Actions to create and strengthen health surveillance, monitoring, and alert systems**

For example: supporting the coordination of and strengthening the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), developing specialised networks and health monitoring systems, such as the pan-Caribbean partnership against AIDS/HIV (PANCAP), etc.

Capitalisation and transfer actions to share the results of pilot initiatives

For example: Exchange of best practice as part of specific health care cooperation exercises in the health field, exchange of feedback from practitioners, etc.

2.5.2.1 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.5.2.2 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's objectives/types of actions

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target value (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and territorial public administrations and institutions;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit, in particular organisations responsible for health (e.g. CARPHA);
- Research centres and universities;
- Public or private health establishments;
- Public or private institutions in the field of health training;
- NGOs and not-for-profit organisations (including patient associations)
- Etc.

2.2.1.13 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.5.2.3 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective

2.2.1.14 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.5.3 *Specific Objective ESF+ 4L) promote social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and the most deprived persons and children;*

2.5.3.1 *Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate*

This specific objective aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of inclusion and the fight against poverty at the Caribbean level. It aims to develop internationalised initiatives exploiting complementarities between the territories and countries of the Caribbean. This should improve support for marginalised communities across borders. Taking into consideration the impacts of the Covid19 pandemic, but also with regard to the shared challenges at the Caribbean level, it also aims to promote greater resilience of social systems and a better capacity to respond to the problems of poverty and exclusion that affect the cooperation area.

This specific objective will support the following types of actions:

- **Cooperation actions between the responsible public stakeholders of the Caribbean States, the OCTs and the ORs**

For example: actions aiming at the emergence of shared goals on social inclusion and innovation through culture and / or tourism at the regional level; support actions aiming at strengthening the capacities of local operators in these fields;

- **Drawing up strategic regional plans in the field of inclusion, reducing poverty and social innovation and resilience**

For example: actions aimed at facilitating exchanges between responsible organisations at the Caribbean level, through the creation or strengthening of stakeholder networks, actions aimed at capacity building;

- Actions aimed at **sharing experience, exchanging good practices and building capacity** in the field of social inclusion and the tackling poverty in the cooperation area
For example, in the areas of access to the labour market for young people, access to employment, on mechanism/pathways able to facilitate social inclusion, etc.
- Developing a **regional training capability in the fields of inclusion, work in the community and social innovation**
For example: actions aimed at developing integrated pathways at the regional level, actions promoting the mobility in training
- **Support for the coordination and development of specialised spheres of culture able to facilitate social inclusion**
For example, actions to seek complementarities between the territories to help to connect and coordinate specialised spheres of the world of culture, drawing on Caribbean talents (in the fashion or cinematic sectors for example).

In connection with the issues of connectivity, provide support for inclusive digital development, plan an action targeting the senior community, especially through exploiting innovations to help them remain at home (e-health, alert system and behavioural monitoring).

2.5.3.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.5.3.3 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's objectives/types of actions

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.5.3.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- National, regional and territorial public administrations and institutions;
- International organisations with a Caribbean remit;
- Education and training providers;

- Public or private agencies operating in the field of culture and tourism (professional organisations, chambers of commerce, etc.)
- NGOs and not-for-profit organisations
- Etc.

2.5.3.5 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area.

2.5.3.6 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.5.3.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Field of intervention

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.6 Priority 5 : For enhanced cross-border cooperation between Saint-Martin and Sint-Maarten

This priority is based on the implementation of the specific objective dedicated to integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, in particular in connection with the cross-border cooperation strategy between St. Maarten and Sint-Maarten.

2.6.1 *Specific Objective (i or ii) Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in urban areas OR in areas other than urban areas*

2.6.1.1 Types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate

This specific objective aims to support the potential of cross-border cooperation between the bi-national island of St. Maarten and Sint Maarten. It aims to promote the development of joint initiatives between public sector and other stakeholders interested in cross-border cooperation and the search for complementarities between the island's two territories.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058, "support under SO5 [for a Europe closer to its citizens] shall be provided by means of territorial and local development strategies, in the forms provided for in Article 28(a), (b) and (c) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060."

The actions this specific objective may support must address the issues and objectives laid down in the territorial strategy for cross-border cooperation between Sint Maarten and Saint Martin, which details, in accordance with the provisions of Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060:

The geographical area targeted by the strategy;

An analysis of the area's development needs and potential, including economic, social and environmental aspects;

A description of an integrated approach to addressing the identified needs and development potential of the area;

A description of partner involvement in the development and implementation of the strategy.

2.6.1.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.6.1.3 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's objectives/types of actions

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference Year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.6.1.4 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

2.6.1.5 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

2.6.1.6 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP has no plans to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective.

2.6.1.7 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Field of Intervention

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 - Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

2.6 Priority 6: For facilitating and optimising cooperation in the Caribbean

This priority is based on the implementation of the specific objective dedicated to improving the governance of cooperation at Programme level, in particular in connection with the search for complementarity between the different policy mechanisms which can be mobilised in the Caribbean (including the future NDICI).

2.6.2 *Specific Objective ISO1(b) enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies;*

2.6.1.1 *Related types of action, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basis strategies, where appropriate*

This specific objective aims to support the overall potential of cooperation at the Caribbean level. It aims to promote the development of international initiatives by public and other stakeholders interested in regional cooperation and exploiting complementarities between the territories and states of the Caribbean. This should improve the prospects of mobilising funding that is complementary to the ERDF for certain operations and should also facilitate the identification of potential project leaders, ideas for projects to be supported and the co-construction of concerted strategies, thus ensuring improved strategic management of the Programme and regional cooperation.

This specific objective will support actions in the following areas:

- **Actions to improve the linkage between the ERDF and the EDF, then also between the ERDF and the NDICI**

For example: cooperation actions and strategic exchange aimed at facilitating the parallel mobilisation of EDF (then NDICI) in return for Interreg Caribbean grants, creation and running of a network of donors and organisations managing EDF (and soon IVDCI).

- **Actions to enhance partnership working**

For example: to finance the running of RCP networks in order to contribute to generating larger-scale cooperation actions whose scope could be amplified, actions to reinforce working methods and information sharing between partners, information or training actions, staff exchange and/or mobility programmes to facilitate joint work processes, actions to better identify the obstacles to cooperation, initiatives to remove obstacles to cooperation, etc.

- **The creation and running of thematic platforms to support the strategic management of cooperation**

For example: Platform projects coordinating exchanges between cooperation stakeholders in areas of shared interest for the Caribbean's countries and territories, bringing together potential project leaders and identifying funders, good practices, capitalisation, etc.

- **RDI: cooperative action aimed at facilitating international exchange and creating the conditions for the development of collaborative research** in the Caribbean (e.g., development of joint strategies on a regional scale, networking of research stakeholders, etc.

- **Uses of digital technologies:** Actions to support the establishment of legislative and regulatory frameworks conducive to the concerted development of digital connectivity at the regional level and capacity building of local operators in the field of digital and ICT, etc.
 - **Economic development and integration:** cooperation actions to facilitate international exchange, to reinforce mutual intelligence regarding business opportunities and to create the conditions for endogenous economic development in the Caribbean space, etc.
 - **Biodiversity:** cooperation actions to facilitate international exchange and to create conditions for better protection of biodiversity in the cooperation area, etc.
 - **Digital Connectivity:** Exchange of best practice aimed at moving towards common goals on the issue of digital connectivity with a view to: stimulating economies of scale and improving the range of services, sharing of resources, reducing duplication and benefiting from greater influence in negotiations, developing regional strategic plans for better digital connectivity at the supra-territorial level - especially to complement initiatives led by regional organisations -, actions to support the establishment of legislative and regulatory frameworks conducive to the concerted development of digital connectivity at the regional level and the strengthening of the capacities of local operators in the field of digital and ICT, etc.
 - **Connectivity and transport:** Exchange of best practice with a view to developing shared goals on the issue of regional connectivity and transport, both in terms of trade facilitation and regional mobility, and the development of regional strategic plans for better maritime, air and land connectivity (where appropriate) at the Caribbean level, in particular to complement the initiatives of regional organisations.
 - **Education and training:** Exchange of best practice in order to develop shared goals on the issue of education, careers guidance, higher education and continuing education, both in terms of facilitating exchanges but also in terms of mobility on a regional scale, development of regional strategic plans to facilitate university exchanges on a Caribbean scale but also the mobility of apprentices, teachers and professionals, particularly in relation to the acquisition of language skills relevant to the cooperation area, etc.
- Etc.

2.6.1.2 List of planned operations of strategic importance

Not applicable

2.6.2.1 Indicators

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's objectives/types of actions

Table 2 Output Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)

Table 3 Result Indicators

Priority	Specific Objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments

2.6.2.2 The main target groups

The main target groups for operations eligible under this specific objective are the following:

- Public sector stakeholders involved in regional cooperation;
- Potential project leaders in the field of European territorial cooperation
- Managing authorities responsible for ERDF, EDF (then NDICI) funding
- Funding donors active in the Caribbean regional and development agencies;
- NGOs and civil society stakeholders (dont les Réseaux Régionaux Multi-Acteurs (RRMA)) ;
- Etc.

2.6.1.3 Specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

This specific objective targets the whole cooperation area

2.6.2.3 Planned use of financial instruments

The OP does not intend to make use of financial instruments for this specific objective

2.6.1.4 Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Section to be completed after validation of the OP's financing plan

Table 4 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	133 -Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	

Table 5 Dimension 2 – Form of financing

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
1	ERDF	1i	01-Grant	

Table 6 Dimension 3 – Territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority n°	Fund	Specific Objective	Code	Amount (in EUR)
Not applicable				

3 Financing Plan

Priorities	Specific Objectives	V1	V2	
A smarter, more innovative Caribbean	Research, development and innovation	18%		13%
	SME development and competitiveness	12%		7%
	Digital connectivity	N/A		3%
				23%
A greener, more resilient Caribbean	Renewable energies	N/A		3%
	Environment & biodiversity	9%	=	9%
	Climate change and natural disasters	9%	=	9%
	Circular economy and waste management	N/A		4%
				25%
A better connected Caribbean	Transports, interconnection	N/A		3%
				3%
A more inclusive Caribbean	Initial education & employment of young people	6%	=	6%
	Social inclusion and tackling poverty	4%	=	4%
	Access to health care and health care systems	17%	=	17%
				27%
For facilitating and optimising cooperation in the Caribbean		19%		16%
				16%
For enhanced cross-border cooperation between Saint-Martin and Sint-Maarten		6%	=	6%
				6%

The FP will be completed once decisions on allocations are taken

3.1 Financial appropriations by year

Reference: Article 17, paragraph 4, point g) i); Article 17, paragraph 5, points a) i) to iv).

Table 7

Funds	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total	Funds
ERDF									
IPA III CBC									
Neighbourhood CBC									
IPA III									
NDICI									
OCTP Greenland									
OCTP									
Interreg Funds									
Total									

PO N° or TA	Priority	Funds (as applicable)	Basis for calculation EU (total or public)	EU contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions from the third countries (for information)
						National public (c)	National private (d)			
	Priority 1	ERDF								
		IPA III CBC								
		Neighbourhood CBC								
		IPA III ¹⁰								
		NDICI ¹¹								
		OCTP Greenland								
		OCTP								
		Interreg funds ¹⁴								
	Priority 2	(funds as above)								
	Total	All funds								
		ERDF								
		IPA III CBC								
		Neighbourhood CBC								
		IPA III								
		NDICI								
		OCTP Greenland								
		OCTP								
		Interreg funds								
	Total	All funds								

*Prior to the mid-term review, this table includes the amounts for the years 2021 to 2025.

4 Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The preparation of the present version of the Caribbean cooperation programme was undertaken on the basis of the participation of and deliberation among partners from across the countries and territories of the cooperation area.

In a first phase, all the stakeholders from the cooperation area contributed to the production of the Strategic Territorial Needs Analysis. Their input was enabled through interviews with key representatives at the strategic level as well as through group workshops. The production of the needs analysis, the purpose of which included ensuring the widest possible concertation, included the following steps:

Some 20 interviews were carried out in May and June 2020 with the RCPs, with their cooperation service, and with the different departments/technical services of the French ORs in the programme;

Three inter-French OR thematic workshops were organised in July 2020, which brought together the different departments of the programme's local authority partners;

Between July and October 2020 meetings on different themes were organised with regional organisations involved in the Programme as partners (Cariforum, ACS, OECS).

A first COTECH meeting (representatives from French overseas local authorities) followed by an enlarged COTECH (local authorities and representatives from the French central government and from international organisations operating on the Caribbean region) were held in July and September 2020 respectively;

A Monitoring Committee meeting was held in October 2020 to approve the Programme architecture.

The Strategic Territorial Needs Analysis for the cooperation area was drafted in stages and was the fruit of the contributions of all partners, including both EU and non-EU partners, who were able to read, comment, and deliberate on its content.

In parallel, the Managing Authority initiated a work stream to review programme governance and the programme's use of external complementary funding available in the Caribbean. This work stream also provided an opportunity to consult the programme's partners, at different levels of representation, in order to refine the strategy and improve the governance of cooperation. This process was also an opportunity for the programme partners to better understand their place in the programme's management and implementation system.

5 Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme, including the planned budget

Programme communication will be implemented in line with its objectives and with European regulatory provisions for implementation. The Managing Authority will apprise the Monitoring Committee about its information and communication activities at least once a year.

Communication will be coordinated at cooperation area level and will comprise a range of actions. The timing of these actions will be based on the programme's three key phases: its launch, implementation and capitalisation phases. Communication actions will be implemented in a coherent and legible manner, and in consultation with the partnership and in line with the approach specified in the programme's communication plan, which will be drawn up jointly. The communication strategy, which will be developed as part of the communication plan, will cover all the funding provided in support to INTERREG Caribbean operations. **As far as possible, the most environmentally friendly operations will prioritised in order to ensure good environmental communication.**

We outline below the strategic objectives and target publics for the programme's communication plan. We then present a budget and a timetable, which provide a basis for its operational arrangements. Finally, we set out the indicators for the tools put in place.

5.1- Strategic framework

5.1.1 - Objectives

Three priority objectives have been set:

- **accessibility:** to facilitate access to European funds for potential beneficiaries by providing them with clear and intelligible information;
- **proximity:** to increase awareness of European intervention in the Caribbean. The aim is to include Europe in the lives of Caribbean project leaders by providing concrete evidence of its action in the territories.
- **performance:** to enhance the achievements and results of the programme in the cooperation area but also at national and European levels.

5.1.2 - Target audiences and communication channels

5.1.2.1 - Communication about the programme

The programme's communication will mainly target the general public. This communication will have to be **large-scale, repeated and close to citizens.** The aim is to publicise all the programme's interventions by showing how they benefit citizens. This will help to raise awareness of the programme and the image of the European Union.

The programme will strive to increase the effectiveness of communication by developing synergies between the different partners of the programme, both in the EU territories and in third countries. The programme will take into account partners' own respective policy interventions and find opportunities to associate Europe with them.

Decision-makers and elected representatives can be both beneficiaries and effective WOM relays for project leaders throughout the cooperation area. They will be regularly informed of funding opportunities and projects supported by Europe in the area in order to sustain their engagement with the programme.

The media will also be used. The media provide an information channel that makes it possible to meet the objectives of transparency and awareness.

5.1.2.2 - Programme outreach:

Potential beneficiaries are the priority target of the programme's outreach activities. Targeted communication actions will be preferred over mass communication, which could lead to a massive influx of projects, processing difficulties, refusals, etc. The messages will therefore be adapted to the needs of the various beneficiaries. Emphasis will be placed on the transparency of the procedures and the accessibility of the policy officers responsible for outreach.

Beneficiaries are an important vector for programme communication and also target for programme outreach.

The regulations stipulate that each beneficiary must respect their basic obligations to 'publicise' the funds received. They will be informed through a 'publicity kit' in particular.

Beyond this obligation, **beneficiaries are relays for the European message.** They will serve as role models by testifying to the success of their project and how they were able to obtain European support. Their EU-co-financed projects will be promoted. Programme communication will seek to elicit and guide the testimonies, as well as adapt them to the target publics.

5.2. Budget and implementation

5.2.1. The planned budget

The estimated budget for communication actions will be equal to or greater than 0.3% of the total amount of the programme. It will therefore be at least **XX** M€ of EU funds.

Integral to the communication plan, specific resources and a specific breakdown for those resources will be identified for the Sint Maarten-Saint Martin cross-border cooperation sub-programme.

5.1.2 - The communication timetable

The communication timetable needs to respect the three phases of the programme: launch, implementation and capitalisation. It will provide for all the major moments and communication actions annually. It will be revised every six months by a partnership editorial committee.

This timetable will be linked to the communication plan which will include, for each general strategic objective of Interreg Caribbean:

- Target audiences,
- Key messages,
- Communication actions,
- Communication objectives,
- The period at the end of which Interreg evaluates the results of its communication
- Communication channels

The Programme's website <https://www.interreg-caraibes.eu> will be the principal channel of communication. Its purpose is to inform project leaders and (potential) beneficiaries about the funding opportunities and programme achievements. It will promote project calls and lists funded projects. It will also offer guidance to project leaders and will showcase the achievements of European funding.

Social networks (Facebook page, Twitter account, Instagram, etc.) will also be used to reach out to a wide audience and raise awareness about the programme's work. Usage indicators for each network will be taken into account:

Network	Recommendations
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short videos and publications • Tag potential WOM relays (a few hashtags), use emoticons • Promotion : difficult, 3-4 days, target on basis of interests and geographic particularities
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short videos and publications (max 280 characters) • Programme the website to display a « card » when shared. Tag potential WOM relays in the visuals. Use emoticons. • Promotion : based on location, subscription to similar sites, #and key words.
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short videos, longer publications, focus on content. • Use some #, tag potential WOM relays at the end of publications • Promotion: more complicated, enables geographic targeting (regional audiences).
Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual content, short videos, stories. • Make extensive use of #, emoticons, tag potential WOM relays. • Promotion: difficult, 3-4 days, target on basis of interests and geographic particularities.
You Tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short videos, reporting on projects • Use hashtags • Publicity for project calls
WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create groups (influencers, journalists, NGO/not-for-profit managers, communication, public relations officers) • Publish videos, launch, articles in the press • Promotion: WOM relays for communication officers

Printed publications and audiovisual content will be produced to help people understand the programme and to showcase projects as exemplars.

Public events will accompany the life of the programme. Regular seminars will be organised: at the launch of the programme, for outreach on specific themes and on the linkage between EDF/ERDF. Seminars will also bring together all the project leaders of projects financed under the programme. **Exemplary projects will be presented on European Cooperation Day, a flagship event for European funds.**

Other channels must also be mobilised: promotional items in line with enviro-communication priorities (posters, banners, brochures), guides and manuals for project leaders, invitations to the national and Caribbean media for all events and projects.

5.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of communication will be performed continuously for those actions conducive to this. This will enable modifications in the light of results, to better identify needs and maximise the impact of communication in the cooperation area. In addition, a one-off evaluation (at mid-term or end of the programme) with surveys on the awareness of European funds could be carried out among the various target groups.

In regard to traditional dissemination methods, the number of press releases, publications and communication events organised and their participants will be recorded. All these indicators will be evaluated at both programme and project levels.

Finally, a series of indicators will be used to evaluate the performance of the website and social media publications. For the website, it will be a question of identifying, with the help of Google Analytics, **who the visitors to the site are, the communication channels they used to get there and their behaviour once on the site.** For social networks, the systems specific to each of them

will make it possible to evaluate the awareness of a publication or a page, as well as interaction with its content.

The communication plan will make it possible to detail the relevant indicators according to the actions and communication channels.

6 Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds

In light of the characteristics of the cooperation area it serves, the Interreg Caraïbes Programme is a Programme which will only very rarely support a small cooperation project. This is because the costs of cooperation in the Caribbean are generally too high to mobilise project-level actors for small-scale operations.

Nonetheless, the INTERREG Caribbean's partners would like to put measures in place to diversify the typology of the Programme's beneficiaries, notably by creating the conditions which will facilitate small projects.

Therefore, and in order to take into account the reality of the barriers to cooperation in the Caribbean, the French partners in the Programme will support cooperation using the *Fonds de Coopération Régional*, managed by the *Préfectures*, already present in the 2014-2020 programme. The Joint Secretariat is careful to direct project leaders waiting for funding to set up cooperation projects to contact the regional prefectures, which have funding that is easier to mobilise for small projects than funding from the Interreg Caraïbes programme.

Furthermore, the Managing Authority has ensured that in the 2021-2027 programming period beneficiaries will benefit from administrative simplification measures, in particular through the widespread use of Simplified Cost Options. To this end, significant work has been carried out in order to use the tools provided for by the regulations and thus reduce the administrative burden on applicants and project managers, while limiting the risk of error.

7 Implementing provisions

7.1 Programme authorities

Not yet drafted - Compléments pour la VF

Table 10.

Programme Authorities	Name of the institution [255]	Contact name [200]	E-mail [200]
Managing Authority	Guadeloupe Region		
National authority (for programmes with participating third countries, if appropriate)	Guadeloupe Region		
Audit Authority			
Group of auditors representatives (for programmes with participating third countries, if appropriate)			
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission			

7.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

In accordance with Article 46 of EU Regulation No. 2021/1059, "the Managing Authority, after consulting the Member States and, where appropriate, the third countries, partner countries or OCTs participating in the Interreg programme set up a joint secretariat, the staff of which shall reflect the partnership of the program"

The Joint Secretariat - JS - of the 2021-2027 Programme is based on the continuity of the 2014-2020 Program: it will thus benefit from its experience and knowledge of the territory, actors and projects. Its role and functioning (in particular with the Regional Contact Points of the Programme) will be detailed in the Implementation Document of the Programme.

However, as the partners wanted the issue of programme governance to be given particular attention in the framework of the preparatory works for the future programming period, the procedure for implementing adaptations to the JS for the future programming period shall be defined at the level of the program partnership, and not solely at the initiative of the Managing Authority.

Assessment and diagnostic works were carried out over the course of the year 2020, aiming in particular to identify the main needs for adaptation in terms of procedures and functioning. Also, and with this in mind adapting the program's governance system to promote JS operations that are more consistent with partnership issues, particularly with regard to its anchoring in partner states and territories, collective exchange times are planned for the second quarter of 2021 and the beginning of the year 2022.

If the composition of the staff currently working in the JS as of now meets the challenges of taking into account the partners, particularly with regard to the procedures implemented for recruitment made in the past (via the organization of recruitment interviews involving the partnership, bilingualism of agents, etc.), it is convenient for the future programming to find solutions to strengthen that, it means firstly to stabilize the involvement and the relays with third party partners and OCTs of the program.

Following the organization of the first time of collective exchanges, which took place on September 28th, 2021, it was agreed to work on the formalization of proposals for adaptations

by the time of the adoption of the program. The first lines of thoughts could be discussed, aiming in particular at valorizing the territorial antennas set up by some partners within the ORs, but also the initiatives of making personnel available to regional organizations of the Caribbean area.

With this in mind, the programme partners consider that one of the main stakes remains to promote a better running of the programme at the scale of Third States and OCTs, while globally improving the assistance to project lead partners at the level of the cooperation area as a whole.

7.3 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Not yet drafted – to be added in the FV depending on arbitrations

