

Interreg



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Caraïbes

INTERREG CARAÏBES PROGRAMME 2021-2027

CALL FOR PROJECTS No. 2

Opening date	Monday, September 23th, 2024
Closing date	Monday, October 21st, 2024 (12 :00 AM, Guadeloupe time)
Procedures for submitting applications	Exclusively on the e-SYNERGIE platform
Opened priorities and specific objectives	P2 - A Greener, More Resilient and Low-Carbon Caribbean, SO 7 - Environment and Biodiversity P3 - A More Connected Caribbean, SO 8 - Sustainable, Smart and Cross-border Mobility
Estimated total amount of the 11th EDF envelope allocated to this call for projects (exclusively reserved to non-EU partners located in eligible territories)	1,3 millions euros

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Framework of the Call for Projects:

The Interreg Caraïbes programme supports structuring projects that provide a concerted response to issues shared by the territories and populations of the cooperation area.

Applying *via* a call for projects is the main selection procedure for projects, in order to be able to assess and prioritize the quality of the submitted applications.

This call for projects sets the conditions for supporting cooperation projects related to two themes presenting major challenges for the area, and in alignment with the European Union Global Gateway, namely:

- Sargassum;
- Maritime connectivity.

Project holders (*e.g.* private operators, associations, and public institutions such as universities, research centers, local authorities, *etc.*) are invited to submit their applications from Monday, September 23th, 2024, until Monday, October 21st, 2024 at 12 :00 AM, Pointe-à-Pitre time, *via* the e-SYNERGIE platform.

The application must clearly and concisely set out the actions that the project partners wish to implement and be explicit about the "win-win" nature of the approach for all the partners, and all the territories which will be concerned.

This insures a fair and sustainable cooperation in the territory of the Greater Caribbean.

Applicants must also demonstrate the added value and complementarity that their project offers in regard with other projects and initiatives already supported or existing referring to these two themes. Finally, upon completion, the projects must allow the production of deliverables, pilot activities and tangible results for the territories and population.

Furthermore, for this call for projects No. 2, European credits are exclusively dedicated to non-EU project partners. Indeed, the ERDF funds, which are dedicated to territorial cooperation but which cannot support the activities of non-EU partners, will be coordinated with the European Development Funds (11th EDF). Therefore, this call for projects is available for applications that will request a financial support from Interreg Caraïbes programme under both the ERDF and the EDF.

1- Context:

The Interreg Caraïbes programme provides financial support for cooperation projects which are carried out between project holders in the Caribbean area and which contribute to the achievement of the cooperation strategy defined by the programme partners.

1.1 Cooperation Space

The Interreg Caraïbes cooperation area covers the following states and territories:

- **the following French outermost regions (FCORs):** Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, Saint-Martin
- **the following overseas countries and territories (OCTs):** Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Eustache, Sint Maarten
- **the following third States:** Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.



Map of the INTERREG Caraïbes Cooperation Area 2021-2027

In this cooperation area, the following territories are eligible for financial support:

- under the ERDF: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Saint-Martin. Organisations located on a European territory outside this cooperation area (including mainland France) may be eligible for ERDF support provided that their involvement in the project effectively benefits the cooperation area;
- under the 11th EDF: Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Aruba; The Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Bonaire; Curaçao; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; British Virgin Islands; Jamaica; Montserrat; Dominican Republic; Saba; Saint Barthélemy; Saint-Eustache; Saint Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Sint Maarten; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago.

1.2 Interreg Caraïbes Cooperation Strategy 2021-2027

The Interreg Caraïbes cooperation strategy for the period 2021-2027 has 6 priorities and 13 specific objectives (SO):

Priorities	Specific Objectives	ERDF credits budgeted for projects		ERDF credits engaged up to date
P1 - A smarter, more innovative Caribbean	Research, development and innovation	8 M€	23% 14.2M€	14,7 M€
	SME development and competitiveness	4.3 M€		2,8 M€
	Digital connectivity	1.9 M€		0 €
P2 - A greener, more resilient and low-carbon Caribbean	Renewable	1.9 M€	25% 15.4M€	0 €
	Climate change and natural disasters	5.5 M€		5,1 M€
	Circular economy and waste management	2.5 M€		0 €
	Environment and biodiversity	5.5 M€		3,7 M€
P3 - A more connected Caribbean	Sustainable, smart and cross-border mobility	2.5M€ 4%		0,7 M€
P4 - A more social and inclusive Caribbean	Initial training and integration of young people	3.7 M€	27% €16.7M	3,1M€
	Access to care and care systems	2.5 M€		1,1 M€
	Social inclusion and the fight against poverty	10.5 M€		0 €
P5 - Saint-Martin / Sint-Maarten cross-border cooperation		4.1M€ – 7%		0€
P6 - Facilitating and optimizing cooperation modalities in the Caribbean		8.9M€ – 14%		0€

Projects applying for financial support under the programme will have to demonstrate how they contribute to the achievement of the Programme's strategy – detailed in Section 2 – for one or more of the following specific priorities and objectives:

- Priority 2 – SO7: Environment and Biodiversity;
- Priority 3 – SO8: Sustainable, Smart and Cross-Border Mobility.

Projects responding to this call for projects will be assessed by the Steering Committee based on the remaining amounts available.

2 – Project Eligibility Conditions

2.1 – Objectives, Types of Actions and Expected Results:



- Priority 2- FOR A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT AND LOW-CARBON CARIBBEAN:
SO7- ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY:

Expected results and types of eligible actions:

The projects that are part of this SO will focus specifically on the theme of sargassum, and should contribute to the **following results**, expected by the programme:

- Better coastal protection;
- A more reasoned and sustainable enhancement of the environment in its various forms;
- The restoration of ecosystem services lost in the face of the resurgence or stranding of sargassum.

Also, the candidate projects must correspond to one of the following **types of action**:

- Expertise, implementation of strategic frameworks, networking and strengthening of the skills of stakeholders on sargassum, its flow, its impact (both on biodiversity and on economies, the health of local populations: tourism, landscape, health impacts, etc.), the possible reasoned and sustainable development of these algae:
 - Development and implementation of common strategies and/or legislative and regulatory frameworks for the protection, management and restoration of ecosystem services, biodiversity and the environment in the face of the sargassum resurgence;
 - Study and decision support projects for political decision-makers;
 - Creation/strengthening of networks of actors for a better management of issues related to sargassum
- Implementation of joint instruments for the protection, management and restoration of Caribbean ecosystems and ecosystem services:
 - Awareness campaigns
 - Pilot actions for the regulation and collection of sargassum
 - Pilot actions for the protection and restoration of fauna, flora, environments and ecosystem services affected by strandings
 - Pilot or larger projects against mass strandings of sargassum

In order to favour a multifaceted approach to the problem and challenges related to sargassum algae, and to be able to support structuring projects under this Call for Projects, the projects that will be submitted to this SO may also contribute to the types of action identified under SO 1 - Research, development and innovation; 5- Climate change and natural disasters; 6 – Circular economy and waste management. In particular:

- Collaborative research projects carried out by the actors of the cooperation area, participating in the promotion of scientific opportunities of excellence in the Caribbean and/or meeting the specific needs of the territories on sargassum:
 - Collaborative R&D projects, knowledge production actions, development of test and experimentation processes, development of pilot sites, feasibility or opportunity studies, in

particular on the possibility of turning this sargassum into a resource (availability, recovery potential, etc.) or on the impacts of these algae and their strandings;

- Networking of R&D&I actors in the Caribbean area working on sargassum:
 - Capacity building of networks of observatories, research centres and universities, instruments and measurement tools common to the Caribbean space, sharing of good practices and strengthening of skills in the field of sargassum.

- Establishment of strategic frameworks, networking and capacity building of actors in the cooperation area, deployment of common instruments aimed at strengthening the prevention, preparation and adaptation of Caribbean territories to the phenomenon of sargassum seaweed strandings:
 - Creation, equipment and networking of scientific observatories, warning and forecasting systems to better understand the origin, progression and stranding of sargassum, to develop decision-making tools or to set up collection shared between Caribbean countries and territories;
 - Capitalization on actions and work already carried out in the Caribbean region and spin-off of good practices
 - Regional programmes for the prevention or adaptation to climate change promoting the development of concerted and structured strategies in the area of cooperation on the theme of sargassum management.
 - Shared infrastructure or equipment at the level of several small territories in the Caribbean promoting risk prevention or greater territorial resilience;

Establishment of strategic frameworks and strengthening of response capacities and resilience of Caribbean territories, economies and populations to the arrival of sargassum on the coasts: development and implementation of strategies, joint instruments and networks for better response and coordination .

- Expertise, implementation of strategic frameworks, networking and strengthening of the skills of sector players for more sustainable waste management on a Caribbean scale and the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy: networking of sector players and structuring of sargassum seaweed treatment and recovery sectors on a Caribbean scale;
- Pilot measures and actions contributing to better management and recovery of waste in the Caribbean area: pilot actions to collect and recover waste from sargassum strandings.

Area of intervention:

Candidate projects must be consistent with one of the following **areas of intervention**:

- Strengthening cooperation with partners within and outside the Member State;
- Protection of nature and biodiversity, natural heritage and natural resources, green and blue infrastructure;
- Other measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the area of preserving and restoring natural areas with a high potential for carbon absorption and storage.

Indicators:

The projects must be consistent with and contribute to the **indicators** defined by the programme, namely:

Indicator Type	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Comment
Performance indicator	Pilot actions jointly developed and implemented in the context of projects	Actions pilotes	<p>The indicator counts the pilot actions jointly developed and implemented by the supported projects. The scope of a jointly developed pilot action could be to test procedures, new instruments, tools, experimentation or transfer of practices.</p> <p>To be counted by this indicator,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The pilot action must not only be developed, but also implemented within the project and - The implementation of the pilot action is expected to be finalised by the end of the project. <p>A jointly developed pilot action involves the involvement of the project partners. It benefits several territories or is carried out in several territories (in line with the cooperation dimension of the project, the actions benefit all partners).</p> <p>A pilot activity is not limited to the innovative nature but to the notion of experimentation and testing. For this reason, the evaluation of the tests and the transfer of the results are very important dimensions in a project including pilot actions.</p> <p>A pilot activity is one activity among others in a project. There can be several in the same project (identical but in different territories, or completely different, testing different approaches, processes or tools).</p> <p>The supported pilot actions will contribute to the results expected by the programme under this SO.</p>
	Jointly developed strategies and action plans	Strategy/Action Plan	<p>An action plan translates an existing strategy developed jointly into actions.</p> <p>A jointly developed strategy or action plan involves the involvement of the project partners.</p>
Result indicator	Joint strategies and action plans adopted by organizations	Joint strategy/action plan	<p>A joint action plan translates an existing common strategy into action. The strategy/action plan should be finalized and adopted at the time of project completion.</p> <p>An associated partner, who is not financially involved in the project, may, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate in the organization of technical seminars,

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend technical seminars organized, • Collaborate in the preparation of the summary of these seminars and the final reports. • collaborate with project partners in the transfer and capitalization of results. <p>In line with the results expected by the programme in terms of biodiversity preservation, the joint strategies and/or action plans developed within the framework of the supported projects may pursue the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capitalization on project results; - dissemination and appropriation by the final beneficiaries (associative fabric, populations in particular); - Sustainability of cooperation between the programme's partners; - scaling up/expanding the partnership; - implementation of solutions to address the issues raised in terms of biodiversity and species conservation, and assessment of the impact of these solutions; - actions with a view to the evolution of public policies, processes and habits; - evaluation of the impact of the pilot actions put in place; - evaluation of the implementation of pilot actions planned under the project. <p>The costs related to the development, adoption and monitoring of that joint strategy/action plan shall be eligible for support under the Programme.</p>
	Number of territories in the cooperation area benefiting from the project	Number	<p>This indicator measures the number of territories in the cooperation area benefiting from the actions of projects supported by the programme with a view to strengthening their transition towards better protection of the environment and biodiversity;</p> <p>The geographical entity that is a partner of the Interreg Caraïbes 2021-2027 programme as identified in section 1 of the programme (OR, OCT or third country) is qualified as a territory of the cooperation area.</p> <p>The same territory is counted only once, even if it benefits from several actions.</p>
	Number of inhabitants	Number	<p>This indicator measures the population living or working in the area concerned by an improvement</p>

	positively impacted by the project		in protection against climate risks as a direct result of the projects supported and implemented. The population residing in the territories of the leader and partners of an Interreg Caraïbes project is counted. The same territory is counted only once, even if it benefits from several measures.
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In addition, the projects will have to contribute to the indicators monitored by the programme within the framework of the 11th EDF delegation agreement, namely:

- The proportion of women involved in the implementation of the project;
- The number of final beneficiaries of the joint EDF-ERDF projects implemented under the scheme (disaggregated by sex).

Finally, and with regard to the specific terms and conditions for the payment of the EDF grant, each applicant for an EDF grant is expected to be able to determine:

- The sub-objective pursued by the activities supported under the EDF, and an indicator to justify the achievement of this sub-objective;
- Output-specific indicators for these activities, in order to monitor progress towards achieving the sub-goal pursued. In connection with each of these indicators, a supporting document will be attached to be sent.

When reporting expenditure and reporting from beneficiaries to the managing authority, EDF beneficiaries will be asked to produce supporting documents related to the output indicator, in order to enable the grant to be paid.

Assessment criteria

During the selection process (detailed in section 4), the projects of this SO will be analysed in the light of the following specific criteria:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
The project is coherent and contributes to local and national schemes and strategies (National Strategy for Biodiversity, Regional Scheme for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity; Regional Scheme for Ecological Coherence of Guadeloupe (green and blue belts, etc.)	1
The project provides for the implementation of pilot actions	2
The project provides for actions aimed at restoring natural habitats or reducing sources of degradation and/or the project contributes to the fight against invasive alien species (two main causes of biodiversity erosion overseas)	3
The dynamics of the project integrate the complementarity between the territories in order to enhance existing assets and expertise	1



- Priority 3-FOR A BETTER CONNECTED CARIBBEAN

SO 8 - SUSTAINABLE, SMART AND CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY:

Expected results and types of eligible actions:

With this strategic objective in mind, this call for projects is exclusively dedicated to maritime connectivity projects.

The projects benefiting from this SO must contribute to the **results expected by the programme**, namely:

- The harmonious development of connections between the territories of the Caribbean;
- The development of the internal network of space by transport networks;
- Strengthening the sustainability and resilience of transport modes.

Also, the candidate projects must correspond to one of the following **types of action**:

- Expertise, implementation of strategic frameworks, networking and capacity building of actors with a view to strengthening maritime connectivity between the territories of the Caribbean area and with the major global networks and of better quality, more resilient and more sustainable
 - Regional strategic plans for better maritime connectivity and for opening up the area, for sharing knowledge in the field of maritime surveillance;
 - Support for the implementation of legislative and regulatory frameworks conducive to the concerted development of the transport offer at the regional level;
 - Prefiguration studies for transport infrastructure projects and expertise that can benefit from being pooled to limit additional costs (feasibility studies, market studies, support for the identification and mobilisation of additional funding for infrastructure projects of regional interest, etc.);
 - Projects to improve existing infrastructure (e.g. projects on the adaptation and prevention of natural hazards and climate change) or to develop existing links (e.g. cabotage project between Brazil and Suriname which could be extended to the Caribbean, extension of passenger shipping companies) contributing to the strengthening of the connection between the Caribbean territories
 - Sharing of experience, exchange of best practices and capacity building of stakeholders with a view to more resilient, sustainable and better quality Caribbean mobility (e.g. support for decarbonisation in the field of maritime transport of people and goods, in particular through the use of low-sulphur fuel oil, the electrification of docks, etc.).
- Expertise, implementation of strategic frameworks and networking of actors with a view to facilitating more sustainable mobility in the territories of the Caribbean area
 - Exchange of good practices and the emergence of common orientations on the issue of regional connectivity and transport;

- Strategic, legislative and regulatory frameworks and initiatives in the direction of sustainable mobility in Caribbean territories, taking into account their specificities and the various impacts (particularly socio-economic) linked to these developments (example of projects on marine pollution, etc.);
- Sharing of experience, exchange of good practices and capacity building of stakeholders with a view to structuring and/or developing more sustainable and resilient mobility in Caribbean territories (maritime transport).

Area of intervention:

Candidate projects must be consistent with one of the following **areas of intervention**:

- Support for entities that provide services that contribute to the low-carbon economy and climate resilience, including awareness-raising measures;
- Strengthening cooperation with partners within and outside the Member State.

Indicators:

The projects must be consistent with and contribute to the **indicators** defined by the programme, namely:

Indicator Type	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Comment
Performance indicator	Number of projects aimed at improving (maritime) connectivity in the Caribbean	Number	This indicator measures the number of Interreg Caraïbes projects aimed at improving (maritime) connectivity in the Caribbean area supported by the programme for their implementation. The projects supported will contribute to the results expected by the programme under this SO.
	Jointly developed strategies and action plans	Strategy/Action Plan	An action plan translates an existing strategy developed jointly into actions. A jointly developed strategy or action plan involves the involvement of the project partners.
Result indicator	Joint strategies and action plans adopted by organizations	Joint strategy/action plan	A joint action plan translates an existing common strategy into action. The strategy/action plan should be finalized and adopted at the time of project completion. An associated partner is not financially involved in the project, may, for example, collaborate in the organization of technical seminars, attend the technical seminars organized and also collaborate in the preparation of the corresponding seminar summary and final reports, collaborate with the main partner in the transfer and capitalization of the results. In line with the results expected by the programme with a view to a better connection of the cooperation area, the joint strategies and/or action plans developed within the framework of the supported projects may pursue the following objectives:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capitalization on project results; - dissemination and appropriation by peers or final beneficiaries (users, populations in particular); - Sustainability of cooperation between the programme's partners; - scaling up/expanding the partnership; - Implementation of solutions to address the issues raised in terms of connectivity and mobility, including setting up new projects and requesting additional funding. <p>The costs related to the development, adoption and monitoring of that joint strategy/action plan shall be eligible for support under the Programme.</p>
	Number of territories in the cooperation area benefiting from projects to improve maritime connectivity	Number	<p>This indicator measures the number of territories in the cooperation area benefiting from the actions of projects supported by the programme with a view to improving connectivity (sea, air or land) and/or the sustainability of transport.</p> <p>The geographical entity that is a partner of the Interreg Caraïbes 2021-2027 programme as identified in section 1 of the programme (OR, OCT or third country) is qualified as a territory of the cooperation area.</p> <p>The same territory is counted only once, even if it benefits from several actions.</p>

In addition, the projects will have to contribute to the indicators monitored by the programme within the framework of the 11th EDF delegation agreement, namely:

- The proportion of women involved in the implementation of the project;
- The number of final beneficiaries of the joint EDF-ERDF projects implemented under the scheme (disaggregated by sex).

Finally, and with regard to the specific terms and conditions for the payment of the EDF grant, each applicant for an EDF grant is expected to be able to determine:

- The sub-objective pursued by the activities supported under the EDF, and an indicator to justify the achievement of this sub-objective;
- Output-specific indicators for these activities, in order to monitor progress towards achieving the sub-goal pursued. In connection with each of these indicators, a supporting document will be attached to be sent.

When reporting expenditure and reporting from beneficiaries to the managing authority, EDF beneficiaries will be asked to produce supporting documents related to the output indicator, in order to enable the grant to be paid.

Assessment criteria:

During the selection process (detailed in section 4), the projects of this SO will be analysed in the light of the following specific criteria:

Evaluative questions	Weighting
The project is consistent with transport organisation and planning plans: global travel plans, urban travel plans, operational transport organisation programme, etc.	1
The project incorporates dimensions relating to the sustainability of transport and the preservation of the environment.	2
The project takes into account existing infrastructure and equipment to provide new connectivity solutions.	2

2.2 Duration of Project Implementation

- Project Execution Time

Due to the eligibility period of expenditure co-financed under the 11th EDF, the implementation period of projects responding to this Call for Projects is limited to 3 years (from the date of signature of the grant agreement).

If, during the implementation of a project that was initially planned to comply with this implementation deadline, an overrun is necessary for the community partners and in order to achieve the objectives pursued by the project, a request for an extension may be considered by the programme under certain conditions. In particular, it will be necessary for the lead partner to anticipate this need and to inform the Joint Secretariat, to formalize a reasoned request for modification within the deadlines provided for in the agreement. Any derogation from this implementation limit will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 Financial Provisions

- Financial support

With regard to expenses borne by European partners:

- The activities planned under the project will be eligible for ERDF support of up to 85% of eligible expenditure;
- This rate may be reduced according to the regulations on state aid.

With regard to expenditure borne by non-European partners:

- They are ineligible for support under the ERDF.
- Expenditure borne by non-EU partners located in a territory eligible (see Section 1) will be eligible for financial support under the European Development Fund (11th EDF). The maximum co-financing rate under the EDF is 85% of eligible expenditure. A counterpart of 15% is therefore to be provided.

- Eligible and ineligible expenses and simplification rules:

The categories of eligible expenditure under Interreg Caraïbes 2021-2027 are as follows:

- Staff costs;
- Office and administrative costs/indirect expenses;
- Travel and accommodation expenses;
- Costs related to the use of external skills and services;
- Equipment costs;
- Infrastructure and works costs;
- Communication and capitalisation costs.



Please refer to the details of eligible and non-eligible expenditure in the DOMO I – Programme Action Sheets, in Section IV.

In addition, the managing authority implements a simplification strategy based in particular on the use of simplified cost options (SCOs) provided for by the regulations.

The table below presents the different applicable rules and options that can be mobilised depending on the expenses concerned:

Type of expenses	Possible ways of taking into account
Personnel costs	Application of an SCO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a lump sum of 20% of expenses directly related to the project that are not personnel expenses; Or fixed allocation rate to the operation
Travel and accommodation expenses	Application of a scale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – if the structure has its own scale: use of the structure's scale; – If the structure does not have a scale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ civil service scale, for travel within France (within one of the ORs and/or in mainland France); ○ scale applicable to the missions of European Union officials (used in the context of Europ'Aid), for travel outside France.
Equipment costs	Application of an SCO: 40% of personnel costs (also includes travel and accommodation costs)
Infrastructure and construction costs	
Communication costs	
Costs related to the use of external skills and services	
Indirect Expenses/Office and Administrative Costs	Exclusive application of an SCO: 7% of eligible direct costs

The choice of the most suitable options for the project will be made on the basis of the estimated budget and relevant justifications. The Joint Secretariat will be able to support applicants in choosing the Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) that are most appropriate to their situation and most relevant to the project.

For non-EU partners supported under the EDF, it will be possible to use the SCOs exclusively to take into account the expenditure :

- at the application stage: in accordance with the elements presented above, depending on the nature of the expenses and activities, the candidate chooses a combination of SCOs and the estimated expenses are presented and examined on this basis;
- at the stage of expenditure reports: depending on the characteristics of the project, and after examination and validation by the programme's steering committee, expenditure may be taken into account on the basis of the combination of SCO presented and/or by the implementation of additional Simplified Cost Options such as "lump sum" or "draft budget". This second type of SCO makes it

possible to calculate all or part of the expenses on the basis of a pre-established, duly justified amount. Expenses are paid if the predefined activity or achievements are fully completed¹. In this case, the expenses will be paid to the beneficiary of the subsidy on the basis of qualitative and financial reporting coordinated by the project leader, and on presentation of supporting documents attesting to the achievement of the achievement indicator defined at the time of the application and agreed.

- Compliance with procurement procedures and the notion of reasonable costs:

For structures subject to compliance with public procurement, in the event of a contract already launched, all the contract documents must be transmitted in support of the expenses concerned when the application is submitted, if applicable.

For structures that are not subject to compliance with public procurement and for applicants for an EDF grant, the reasonableness of the costs presented must be assessed. Therefore, the managing authority specified the following rules when submitting the aid application:

- For expenses less than or equal to €40,000 excluding tax (unit cost): production of at least one estimated document of the expenses² ;
- For expenses between €40,000 excluding tax and €215,000 excluding tax: production of at least two estimated documents of expenses.
- For expenses of more than €215,000 excluding tax: production of at least three estimated documents of expenses.

In cases deemed necessary by the investigating department, contradictory documents or specifications may be requested.

The different quotes presented must correspond to equivalent expenses, and must not come from the same supplier/service provider. The supplier/service provider must not be in a situation of conflict of interest with the project leader.

The documents submitted must be recent (less than 8 months before the date of submission of the application).

When the production of contradictory documents is not possible, the project leader must justify this impossibility by an explanatory note submitted to the request under SYNERGIE.

¹ These SCOs have the advantage of simplicity for the beneficiary and visibility on the amounts to be collected, but present a risk due to their binary nature: a partial realization does not trigger the payment (either the indicator/the planned realization is reached, and the payment is released in full, or it is not).

² As part of the submission of supporting documents in support of the application file and the estimated expenses, an estimated cost document may be:

- A quote;
- This approach was explained in a note that made it possible to verify the list of economic operators capable of satisfying a need on the market (sourcing) followed by an estimate made by a consular chamber, a cooperative, a design office, a project manager or any other expert;
- A screenshot of a website;
- A catalog scan;
- An invoice, paid or not;
- Or any other similar document, subject to validation by the managing authority.

2.4 – Partnership, a Key Element of an Interreg Caraïbes Project

The partnership of an Interreg Caraïbes project must provide **for at least** the following:

- **A lead partner** (in charge of the administrative and financial coordination of the project) **located³ in an Outermost Region of the area** (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Saint-Martin);
- A non-EU partner located in a territory eligible for the 11th EDF (see section 1).

Projects must meet at least two of the following four criteria:

- be defined in common;
- be carried out jointly;
- benefit from shared human resources;
- be jointly funded.

Indeed, the partners of an Interreg Caraïbes project are engaged in a common project (the project must be co-constructed, the participation of each partner motivated) and "win-win" (which will benefit each partner and each territory in which it is implemented). The programme authorities will pay attention to these characteristics when selecting projects.

Finally, the administrative and financial soundness of the project leaders, and in particular that of the leader⁴ and applicants for an EDF grant, will be assessed. Indeed, in view of the partnership dimension of an Interreg project, and the operating rules of the programme, the ability of beneficiaries to pre-finance their activities, to ensure the administrative monitoring of expenditure, to ensure reporting, to monitor and justify indicators or to coordinate the partnership are indeed key elements for the success of a European territorial cooperation project.

In this respect, it is worth highlighting the specificities of certain partners:

- **Lead Partner:** The lead partner of the project is responsible for the administrative management and coordination of the implementation of the project. In this capacity, it undertakes in particular to:
 - sign a partnership agreement with the other partners which includes provisions ensuring, inter alia, the sound financial management of the Union funds allocated to the Interreg operation, including the arrangements for the recovery of sums unduly paid;
 - assume responsibility for the implementation of the entire Interreg operation, and as such ensure the financial, operational and administrative coordination of the project, including activities co-financed under the EDF. He/she manages the reporting to the programme,

³ The location of the leader in the ORs refers to the fact that the structure that carries out and coordinates the project is present and has a regular activity in the territory in question, and is not a simple "mailbox". This location is appreciated by the project appraisal.

⁴ The lead partner is financially and legally responsible for the project on behalf of all partners, is responsible for its physical and financial implementation and ensures the coordination of the various partners. European regulations (Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1059) provide that it:

- Establishes a partnership agreement to set the terms and conditions for the implementation of the project with the other partners. This agreement includes provisions ensuring, inter alia, the sound financial management of EU funds, including the modalities for the recovery of sums unduly paid;
- Or responsible for the implementation of the entire Interreg operation;
- Ensures that the expenditure submitted by all partners has been paid for the implementation of the project and corresponds to the activities agreed upon by all partners and that it is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority.

providing support to the project partners and ensures that the information transmitted is reliable and justified and that the expenses presented by all the partners have been paid for the implementation of the project, correspond to the activities agreed upon and comply with the provisions of the agreement;

- ensure that ERDF beneficiary partners receive the amount of ERDF grant due to them, in full, without deduction or deduction;
- **EDF beneficiary partner:** as a project partner and beneficiary of a European grant, it is subject to the same rules and the same expectations of administrative, financial and operational rigour as the beneficiaries of an ERDF grant. They must therefore ensure the operational, administrative and financial monitoring of the co-financed activities in order to contribute to the reporting and provide convincing evidence of the information reported, and be able to pre-finance the activities pending the payment of the European subsidy.

2.5 - The DNSH Principle or "Do No Significant Harm" to the Environment

In accordance with European regulatory expectations, projects must be compatible with the DNSH ("*do no significant harm*") principle⁵. The aim is for the managing authorities to ensure that the projects selected and implemented do not have a negative impact on the environment, in the light of the following six environmental objectives: climate change mitigation and adaptation, preservation of aquatic and marine resources, circular economy, prevention and reduction of pollution, protection and restoration of biodiversity.

Also, the projects must imperatively be consistent with the types of action defined in the framework of the programme; comply with European regulations and national legislation; and respect this DNSH principle both in their development and in their implementation.

⁵Principle defined by the Taxonomy Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2020/852) and referred to in Article 9 of the CPR (Regulation (EU) 2021/1060)

3 – Conditions for Project Admissibility

3.1 – Procedures for Submitting the Dematerialized Application:

Candidates are invited to enter their complete application directly on the SYNERGIE-CTE platform. **Only complete applications submitted by this platform will be considered.**

The data entry must be done in French and English for each section.

To assist candidates in the entry, materials are made available on the programme's website, and the Joint Secretariat team is at the disposal of candidates to assist them in the formalisation of their application and the choice of combinations of Simplified Cost Options.

When the application is fully entered and finalized, click on the "SUBMIT" button at the bottom of the page.

As a reminder, project leaders are invited to submit their applications **until October 21, 2024.**

3.2 Completeness of the Application Form:

To be eligible, the project must meet the following conditions:

- The project is submitted via the information system, in accordance with the procedure defined by the programme;
- The application form is sent in French and English;
- The application form is completed in full;
- The required annexes (in particular: budget annex, logical framework) are attached to the file;
- The standard documents defined for the annexes are respected;
- Letters of commitment from the lead partner and partners are present, dated and signed;
- The supporting documents relating to the applicants (Kbis, status of the applicant and all partners, capacity of the legal representative to commit the structure , etc.) are sent;
- The supporting elements in support of the expenditure detailed in the budget annex (estimated documents, documents relating to staff costs, etc.) are sent;
- The lead partner and the EDF beneficiary partners undertake to send a RIB (or other for public structures) specific to the project if the project is approved;
- If the project provides for expenses including all charges (including VAT), a certificate(s) of non-recovery of VAT for the partner(s) concerned is sent;
- The documents attesting to the commitment of each public or private co-financier are attached;
- The project was submitted within the deadlines set for this call for projects;

- The final version of the application form is dated and signed by the Lead Partner.

Refer to the list of documents to be provided available on the program's website.

Any project that is incomplete at the end of the investigation and reminders will be deemed inadmissible and will be rejected.

4- Selection of Projects

4.1 – Analysis of the eligibility of the project and the expenses by the Joint Secretariat:

Initially, the applications submitted will be examined in terms of eligibility, legality and operational quality by the SC as part of the examination procedure.

The main eligibility criteria are as follows:

- The project complies with European and national regulatory requirements;
- The project associates *at least* a project leader located in one of the Outermost Regions covered by the programme, and a non-EU partner;
- The project partners cooperate at *least* in two of the following four dimensions: the development and implementation of Interreg operations, their staffing or financing;
- The project contributes to the achievement of a thematic priority and a specific objective of the programme (a project that contributes to more than one priority or to more than one specific objective may be the subject of a specific subsidy);
- The project is consistent with one of the programme's areas of intervention.

For more details on these eligibility criteria, refer to DOMO I, Section IV.



A project that does not meet the conditions for the award of Interreg funding in terms of eligibility or legality will not be proposed for the opinion of the technical committee or the decision of the steering committee, it will only be presented for information as to its rejection.

4.2 – Qualitative assessment and prioritization of applications by the Technical Committee:

- Procedure:

In a second phase, the admissible applications that meet the eligibility and legality conditions will be subject to a qualitative score by the technical committee. This technical committee is composed of the technical representatives of the programme's partner institutions. Three types of criteria will be used to assess the applications:

- Transversal criteria, applicable to all application files;
- Thematic criteria, specifically defined for each programme intervention theme with regard to the programme's intervention strategy;
- Bonus criteria, aimed at promoting projects that contribute more to European and programme objectives.

The transversal and thematic criteria will be scored (from 1 (very insufficient) to 4 (very satisfactory)), and

weighted by criterion.

The transversal and thematic criteria make it possible to define thresholds for the opinion on the operation, according to the procedure detailed in the grid of project assessment criteria annexed to these call for projects specifications. Three opinions are possible:

- Below an average score of 1.5 on each of these criteria, the project receives an unfavourable opinion;
- If the average score per criterion is between 1.5 and 2.5, the project receives a notice of postponement;
- If the average score per criterion exceeds 2.5, the project receives a favourable opinion.

The operations benefiting from a favourable opinion will be ranked according to their score, for their order of being studied by the Technical Committee.

The consolidated note and opinion of the Technical Committee on operations will be forwarded to the members of the Steering Committee to facilitate its decision-making on the granting of Interreg aid and the programming of operations.

- Qualitative assessment criteria:

Transversal criteria:

Applicable to all operations, these criteria make it possible to assess the operational quality and structuring dimension of the project, the relevance of the partnership and the added value of the cooperation, and the prospects for capitalization for the cooperation area.

These transversal criteria, grouped by subgroups, are as follows:

Operational quality and structuring dimension of the project:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
The project contributes to a broader strategy at the European level (e.g. REACT EU, ERASMUS+, LIFE+, Cosme, the European Digital Programme (EPD), Horizon Europe, the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative, the Connecting Europe Facility, European external funding strategies and programmes.), national, regional (e.g. Strategies for the Intelligent Specialisation of Territories, donor strategies), territorial on the cooperation area	2
The project clearly identifies the target groups and involves all the links in the chain (and in particular the final beneficiaries and users) from the design phase to the implementation phase of the project	2
The project anticipates its social, economic and environmental benefits	2
The retroplanning of activities is proportionate to the expectations of the program	2

Cooperation partnership and win-win dimension of the project:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
The choice of the leader and the partners involved in the project is relevant, proportionate to the objectives pursued by the project and structuring (the partners have expertise in the field concerned, the partners are unifying, complementary)	3
The lead partner and the partners involved in the project and its implementation have proven experience (in the management and implementation of cooperation projects such as Interreg or RCF, or in the management and implementation of European projects) to carry out the project	1
The lead partner and the partners involved in the project and its implementation have sufficient administrative and financial capacity to carry out the project	2
The project has a win-win dimension for all the territories involved (reality of the cooperation dimension and benefits expected by each partner clearly identified)	2
The activities planned by each partner are detailed and complementary, the level of involvement of the partners in the implementation of the project and in the expected results of the project is proportionate	3
The value of cooperation in addressing the subject of the project is clearly demonstrated and/or the results of the project could not be achieved or only partially achieved without cooperation	3

Projects involving the conduct of studies:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
The professionals in charge of conducting the study provide guarantees as to the quality of the result of the study produced (profile and legitimacy of the consultants, etc.) and/or provisions are made in this regard	1
The study has a win-win dimension for all the project partners (does it cover all the project partners? in its scope or at least in a comparison or exchange of good practices dimension)	2
When completed, the study will have concrete impacts on the territories (will the deliverables be made available to the public? does the study provide for the implementation of pilot actions upon completion?)	2

Capitalization and sustainability of the project:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
The project takes into account the available knowledge and adds value compared to existing initiatives.	1
The expected results of the action are sustainable from a financial point of view (how will the activities be financed at the end of the grant?), from an institutional point of view (will there be structures allowing the continuation of the activities at the end of the action? Will there be local "ownership" of the results of the action?) and/or policy (what will be the structural impact of the action – <i>e.g.</i> will it result in better laws, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?)	3
The results of the project can be duplicated by other structures (possibilities of reproduction, extension, dissemination of the results of the action) and/or the project presents provisions to this effect.	2

Thematic criteria:

Specific to each specific objective, these criteria are detailed in Section 2 for each priority and each specific objective.

Bonus criteria:

Applicable to all operations, these criteria make it possible to value the scores of projects integrating specific measures to meet the cross-cutting objectives of the European Union (respect for the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, sustainable development, environment and climate, non-discrimination, inclusion of people with disabilities, gender equality, etc.) or whose objectives and activities make it possible to contribute to the achievement of the strategy of the program beyond the priority in which they are broadcasting.

Each criterion is scored between 0 (the project does not contribute to this criterion) and 1 (the project contributes to this criterion).

These bonus criteria, grouped by sub-groups, are as follows:

Horizontal principles:

Assessment criteria
The project limits the impact on the environment and integrates environmentally friendly methods, both in the design and management of infrastructure and equipment, and in the delivery of services.
The project ensures, through additional positive actions, compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
The project integrates the gender dimension (gender equality) through additional positive actions
The project prevents discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, in particular in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) - measures, structural strategies, or actions are put in place to prevent discrimination (hiring policies, integration of issues related to the prevention of discrimination into the strategies for disseminating the results of the project, etc.)
The project provides, through additional positive actions, for the accessibility of the project and/or activities to people with disabilities (e.g. accessibility of websites and digital applications, adapted accommodations, actions specifically dedicated to accessibility, etc.)
The project provides for a strategic use of public procurement (environmental clauses, social clauses, incentives for innovation)

Principle of sustainable development:

Assessment criteria
The project ensures, through additional positive actions not to cause significant harm (DNSH)* or provides for mitigation measures, on the following dimensions: climate change mitigation and adaptation, preservation of aquatic and marine resources, circular economy, pollution prevention and reduction, protection and restoration of biodiversity.
The project includes an eco-communication and/or eco-event policy
The project takes into account the negative impact of travel (encouragement to rationalise unnecessary travel, limitation of the number of people making the trips, preferential use of videoconferences, organisation of distance training, measures to compensate for the negative environmental impacts of the project, etc.).
The project integrates citizen dialogue, consultation and transparency in the choice of technologies
The project integrates environmental education activities

Projects involving the creation or rehabilitation of infrastructure:

Assessment criteria
The project aims to build infrastructure that is resilient to disasters and the impact of climate change
The project anticipates the potential negative impacts linked to the creation and/or rehabilitation sites (noise pollution, waste, air quality, etc.) and favours the use of good practices in the conduct of the work.
The project anticipates the potential negative impact of the construction of new infrastructure (carbon impact, heritage, landscape, biodiversity, ecological corridors, land use)
The project favours the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure over the creation of new infrastructure
The location of the infrastructure integrates the challenges of saving space and controlling travel.
The project contributes to the orientations of the European New Bahaus

Structuring dimension of the project:

Assessment criterion
The project contributes to one of the cross-cutting dimensions identified by the programme, namely: strengthening the resilience of territories, supporting the blue economy, strengthening connectivity
The project contributes to one or more specific objectives of the programme in addition to the one on which it is based

4.3 – Decision of the Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee, composed of the partners of the Interreg Caraïbes programme, will decide on the programming of the operations presented on the basis of the proposal of the Technical Committee.

The Steering Committee issues three types of decisions on applications submitted to it:

- Favourable;
- Unfavourable;
- Adjournment.

These opinions are final and enforceable against the third party.

4.4 – Provisional Schedule of the Call for Projects:

The timetable for this call for projects is as follows:

- Opening of the CFP2: September 23, 2024
- Closing of the CFP2: October 21, 2024, at noon
- Presentation of candidate projects to the technical committee: November 25, 2024
- Presentation of candidate projects to the steering committee: December 19, 2024

5 – Life-Cycle of an Interreg Caraïbes Project

5.1 – Project Implementation:

- Agreement

In the event of a favourable opinion on the project, an ERDF grant agreement is signed between the lead partner and the managing authority, while an EDF grant agreement is signed between each EDF beneficiary partner and the managing authority. These agreements specify in particular the conditions under which the subsidy is granted for the execution of the project (expected deliverables, financing plan, deadline for execution, conditions for payment of the subsidy, *etc.*).

The lead partner is also required to sign a partnership agreement with all the project partners. This agreement lays down the arrangements for cooperation between partners, the amount of ERDF or EDF allocated to each partner and the related activities to the subsidy, and lays down provisions for an optimal financial management of the awarded European grant.

- Conditions for the payment of European aid:

After signature of the grant agreement between the lead partner and the managing authority, an advance of 5% to a maximum of 20% on the amount of the European co-financing may be paid upon reasoned request of the lead partner. This advance will be compensated by the managing authority during the first down payment of the subsidy.

For partners benefiting from an EDF grant, after signature of the EDF grant agreement, an advance of up to 40% of the European co-financing amount may be paid upon reasoned request. This advance will be compensated by the managing authority.

The payment of an advance is not systematic and is at the discretion of the managing authority. The decision to grant an advance is taken on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the operation and the situation of the beneficiary.

European aid is provided in the form of reimbursement of the expenses which have been paid off by the beneficiary, upon presentation and after analysis of an implementation report detailing the physical achievements of the operation (activities carried out, indicators achieved, deliverables produced, communication activities carried out, *etc.*) accompanied by supporting documents; and of the expenditure incurred, accompanied by supporting documents attesting the regularity and materiality of the expenditure and their connection to the operation. In accordance with the expectations of the program, payment requests are to be coordinated and supervised by the lead partner, and submitted on the SYNERGIE-CTE platform for the payment of the pay down and the balance of the project.

- Modification of the project

During the execution of the project, minor or major modifications are possible under certain conditions: they must be the subject of a reasoned request from the lead partner and/or a partner benefiting from the EDF grant, and must have been approved by the programme.

Any request for modification of the project must be made within the deadlines set out in the grant agreement,

and must be formalised using the documents provided by the programme.

5.2 – The Obligations of Project holders:

- Advertising and communication obligations

The communication of the projects echoes several strategic issues:

- **To make the use of European funds transparent to citizens** by respecting the regulatory obligations regarding the publicity of European co-financing;
- **To make the EU's action in the Interreg Caraïbes's cooperation area visible** by promoting projects and their results;
- **To ensure the sustainability of projects** by spreading project achievements to target groups and by disseminating good practices to maximize the results of supported projects.

In line with these issues, the program has defined requirements and a visual identity to ensure consistency in the communication process. Thus, projects supported by the Interreg Caraïbes programme are expected to:

- creating a graphic charter dedicated to the project, which will be affixed to any information and communication document (brochures, kakemonos, leaflets, etc.) and to any administrative documents, minutes, attendance sheets, reports, etc. It must include the European logo with the reference to the EU, the logo of the programme and the reference to ERDF or EDF funding, and the logo of the project;
- creating a website or web page specific to the project;
- affixing a project poster, or a temporary or permanent plaque, on infrastructure projects;
- participating in project promotion events (either from the European Commission or organised by the programme and/or programme partners);
- organizing launch and closing project events.

For each selected project, a communication plan detailing the planned actions planned must be submitted to the managing authority : the aims are to comply with European publicity requirements, and at the same time, to promote the project and its achievements.

These various communication actions must be anticipated in the budget, as early as at the stage of project draw up, in order to meet the publicity obligations of the 2021-2027 Interreg Caraïbes programme.

- Project monitoring and evaluation

When applying, the candidate leader and the project partners specify:

- the project's planned contribution to the indicators defined for the Interreg Caraïbes programme;
- the provisions for monitoring indicators;
- the methods of justifying the grades which will be indicated for each indicator.

Following the selection of the project, these values are agreed and the partners must regularly monitor the values achieved for these indicators and collect supporting documents proving the reliability of these grades.

Before project implementation, project team members agree on the grade assignment method ; then, during project implementation, the partners report the grades achieved by the project and transmit the related evidence and supporting documents.

Team members are warned that the lead partner may be contacted to provide information and supporting documents with regard to the performance indicators within one year after the completion of the project.

Finally, the lead partner and their partners will contribute to the surveys and evaluations carried out by the programme, which may take place after the completion of the project.

- The obligation of sustainability

According to this principle, the project must not undergo any major modification for a period of five years from the payment of the balance (this period may change depending on the regulations applicable to the operation) under penalty of repayment of the European subsidy received. These major changes correspond to:

- the cessation or transfer of a productive activity outside the NUTS level 2 region in which it received support;
- a change in ownership of infrastructure that provides an undue advantage to an undertaking or public body;
- a substantial change affecting its nature, objectives or conditions of implementation, which would undermine its original objectives.

- Controls

In the context of the implementation of the project, or after its completion, beneficiaries may be subject to controls carried out by the managing authority and/or its service providers, by the national audit authority or by the European control and audit authorities. The beneficiaries must make themselves available for this purpose, and store and archive the various documents relating to the operation, in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

- Prevention of conflicts of interest

In order to safeguard the proper use of EU funds, any conflict of interest situation should be prevented and/or managed. A conflict of interest "when the impartial and objective exercise of the duties of a financial actor or other person" who participates in the implementation of the budget "is compromised for family, emotional, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect personal interest".

Also, in the context of project implementation and, in particular, in the event of the use of external expertise (either being through public procurement or not), the supplier/service provider must not be in a situation of conflict of interest with the project leader.

- Fraud prevention

In its regulations, the European Commission has imposed an obligation for managing authorities to fight fraud in order to protect and guarantee the defence of its financial interests. A principle is zero tolerance for fraud and corruption being applied, the management authority has put in place measures to prevent and report any fraud or irregularity. Irregularity is defined as « *any violation of a provision of Community law resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has or would have the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the European Union or the budgets of the territorial or national authorities involved in the management of European funds* ». Fraud, on the other hand, differs from irregularity by its intentional nature.

According to the European Commission, fraud is « *any omission or intentional act relating to:*

- *the use or presentation of false, inaccurate or incomplete declarations or documents, resulting in the undue receipt or withholding of funds from the budget of the European Communities;*
- *the failure to provide information in breach of a specific obligation having the same effect;*
- *the misappropriation of funds for purposes other than those for which they were originally granted;*
- *or the misappropriation of a legally obtained advantage. »*

In addition to its preventive measures, the managing authority has tools at its disposal, that allow it to report any cases of fraud detected to the European Anti-Fraud Office (O.L.A.F) and at the same time to refer the matter to the territorially competent judicial authorities or directly to the European Public Prosecutor's Office. In a case of proven fraud, the beneficiary may be subject to recovery of the sums unduly received but also to criminal proceedings.

Finally, the managing authority offers external actors the opportunity to report any suspicion of fraud from the homepage of the managing authority's website (www.europe.guadeloupe.fr) in the context of the implementation of the 2021-2027 European programmes.

6 - Practical Information and Contacts

6.1 – List of useful resources and documents:

- Link to SYNERGIE-CTE platform: <https://cte-2127.synergie-europe.fr>

To submit your application *via* SYNERGIE-CTE:

- Link to the tutorial to create a SYNERGIE CTE account: <https://youtu.be/DPzT78shpJI?si=wRCAMXStR9lkGUNL>

Useful documentation and information on the programme website :

- Selection criteria, Operational Programme - which provides details of eligible actions, conditions for application and criteria to be taken into consideration when formalising the application, in addition to other relevant documents, are available on the Interreg Caraïbes Programme's website (<http://www.interreg.caraibes.eu>).

6.2 – Useful contacts:

- The Joint Secretariat:

The Joint Secretariat team can be reached at: interreg.caraibes@regionguadeloupe.fr