

NEWSLETTER

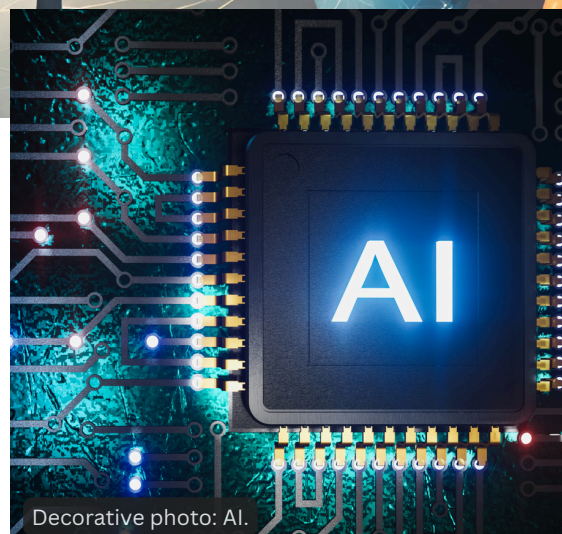
INTERREG IPA ROMANIA–SERBIA PROGRAMME



Decorative photo: AI-generated in canva.

About A.I., **page 2**

The impact the emerging technologies can have on our society cannot be ignored, as they will underpin a shift in the way that information is stored and shared, as well as on the way we interact with institutions, such as banks or EU/ governmental institutions.



Decorative photo: AI.

AI and the new wave of generative AI have the potential to be the most powerful technology in decades.



Decorative photo: Planning.

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Trending – about change:

Emerging technologies, AI, generative AI

The impact the emerging technologies can have on our society cannot be ignored, as they will underpin a shift in the way that information is stored and shared, as well as on the way we interact with institutions, such as banks or EU/ governmental institutions.

Most notable emerging technologies that are shaping the future, having a significant impact in our communities, which benefits can be used in the field of EU-funded projects:



- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation.
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** The Internet of Things refers to the network of physical devices, vehicles, home appliances, and other items that are embedded with electronics, software, sensors, and network connectivity, allowing them to collect and exchange data.
- **Blockchain:** Blockchain is a decentralized ledger technology that allows for secure and transparent tracking of transactions and data. It has the potential to transform various industries, including finance, supply chain management, and healthcare.
- **Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR):** Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies allow users to experience immersive digital environments and to interact with digital content in new and innovative ways.
- **Robotics:** Robotics refers to the design, construction, and use of robots for various applications, including manufacturing, healthcare, and military.
- **Quantum Computing:** Quantum computing is a form of computing that uses the principles of quantum mechanics to process information. It has the potential to solve complex problems that are beyond the reach of traditional computing technologies (e.g. healthcare).

While some technologies provide for more control of the citizens over their personal information and assets (e.g. blockchain), the far-reaching implications for our communities will be measured in the profound impact these will have on the way we think, communicate, and understand the information.

AI and the new wave of generative AI have the potential to be the most powerful technology in decades.

Trending – about change

AI is a general term form for anything that allows computers to carry out human-like behaviors, including rule-based programmes.

Machine learning (ML) is a subset of AI where machines do not need to be explicitly programmed. They use algorithms to identify and learn patterns in data, apply that learning and improve themselves to make better and better decisions.

Deep learning (DL) is a subset of ML in which computers learn in a way that mimics the human brain. In DL, machines build increasingly complex layers of knowledge. These AI models are typically trained on specific data sets and used within a given field or industry.

Capabilities include:

- **Forecasting and prediction** – for example, weather forecasting using meteorological data to predict future weather and climate patterns.
- **Categorization and recognition** – for example, email spam filters that recognize and categorise messages as spam or not spam.
- **Optimization** – for example, routing algorithms used by GPS systems to find the quickest or shortest path to a destination.

Responsible AI can help solve global challenges like climate change and access to quality medical care. AI can help humans solve tasks faster and better and with generative AI, machines can now understand and interact in language, sound and images.

Generative AI is a new form of AI made publicly available in 2022. It can understand text, code, images, sound, and video and can use it to generate or synthesize new content. Generative AI models are trained on huge general data sets to gain a general comprehension of text, visuals, code and sound. Generative AI can be used generally across almost any field or industry.

Generative AI technology is developing fast. In the most advanced countries, the economic contribution could peak in as little as ten years. New capabilities include:

- **Create new unique images** – for example, generating an image of a product that does not yet exist based on user input in natural language
- **Interact with voice and sound** – for example, translating a doctor's memo into a structured text or following up with a customer in writing based on a phone conversation.
- **Analyze and revise text and code** – for example, translating text and adapting it to a different target group or translating code between programming languages.
- **Do research and analyze data** – for example, searching the web for relevant information a synthesizing conclusions from large data sets.

Trending – about change

The ease of use of generative AI presents countries like Romania and Serbia with an opportunity to make a technological leap. It will require more digital skills and investment in innovation. New jobs in the AI-powered economy are expected to replace those lost due to automation, resulting in unchanged employment levels. The transition is expected to be gradual, allowing workers time to adapt to new tasks and develop new skills.

Gains come from:

- productive boost from people working with generative AI;
- freed-up time when generative AI helps to automate our work;
- re-prioritized and re-employed time to other value-creating activities.



Decorative photos: AI and value-creating activities.

Capturing the full economic gains requires innovation capabilities and a conducive regulatory framework to enable: growing R&D by local innovators, accelerating commercial uptake, retraining and upskilling workforce. Many EU countries, especially Central Eastern Europe countries fall behind on AI innovation drivers required to reap the full economic potential of AI. [1]

AI can make countries more prosperous, productive, innovative, creative and secure. However, making AI benefit society as a whole requires an adaptive, human centric and trustworthy approach. Also, all the features presented above can also be used while implementing Interreg Programmes in order to make daily activities more cost or/and time efficiently.

At the same time, there are plenty of pitfalls, paradoxes and tensions that choice-makers will need to navigate. It is an unregulated field yet[2], so what to expect?

Besides expecting regulations on privacy, children rights, intellectual property, deep fake, it is still too early to assume many things.

[1] Study commissioned by Google, May 2024.

[2] Despite that on June 13, 2024, the world's first set of rules on artificial intelligence was officially adopted under the name of Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act). This groundbreaking legislation aims to harmonize rules for AI within the EU being an EU-wide legal framework (Regulation) that sets out clear transparency and reporting obligations for any company placing an AI system on the EU market, or companies whose system outputs are used within the EU (regardless of where systems are developed or deployed). <https://bit.ly/3SF32uJ>

The Importance of Strategic Planning in Cross-Border Areas

Strategic planning is a cornerstone of sustainable development, particularly in cross-border regions where coordination and collaboration across national borders are essential. The European Union has long recognized the unique challenges and opportunities presented by these areas, and has developed several key documents to guide strategic planning efforts. This article will explore three critical approaches to strategic planning in cross-border regions: Green Planning, Territorial Planning, and Financial Planning.

Each of these approaches is essential on its own, but systemic and durable effects can only be achieved through their integrated implementation.

European Framework for Cross-Border Planning

Several key documents at the European level provide a framework for cross-border planning. The European Territorial Agenda 2030, the Cohesion Policy, and the European Green Deal are pivotal in shaping strategies for cross-border cooperation. These documents emphasize sustainability, economic growth, and social cohesion, setting the stage for integrated strategic planning.

Green Planning: Preserving and Enhancing Natural Resources

Green planning is focused on the sustainable management and protection of the natural environment in cross-border areas. This involves joint actions such as environmental assessments, the designation of shared protected areas, and the implementation of conservation projects with significant international and national importance.

One of the primary actions in green planning is conducting comprehensive environmental assessments that consider the ecological impacts across borders. These assessments help in identifying areas of significant biodiversity and ecological importance that require protection. For example, the Natura 2000 network, established under the Habitats Directive, includes numerous cross-border protected sites, ensuring coordinated conservation efforts. The designation of common protected areas is crucial for preserving ecosystems that span across national borders. The Danube River Basin is a prime example, where multiple countries collaborate to protect this vital waterway's biodiversity and water quality. Such joint initiatives are supported by the EU's Water Framework Directive, which promotes integrated water resource management.



Decorative photos: Green planning, Danube River, conservation efforts.

The Importance of Strategic Planning in Cross-Border Areas

Territorial Planning: Building Functional Areas for Integrated Development

Territorial planning aims to create functional areas that ensure the provision of infrastructure, transportation, and communication services essential for the integrated development of cross-border regions. This approach is crucial for facilitating economic activities, improving connectivity, and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Cross-border infrastructure development, such as the construction of bridges, tunnels, and roads, plays a vital role in enhancing connectivity and economic integration.

Provision of technical and utility services, such as water supply, waste management, and energy distribution, is another critical aspect of territorial planning. Coordinated efforts ensure that these services are delivered efficiently and sustainably, benefiting both sides of the border.

Financial Planning: Securing Resources for Joint Projects

Financial planning involves securing funding for cross-border projects through various financial instruments and programmes. This approach is essential for the successful implementation of green and territorial planning initiatives. Several EU funding programmes, such as Interreg and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), provide financial support for cross-border cooperation projects. These programmes facilitate investments in infrastructure, environmental protection, and socio-economic development, ensuring that resources are available for joint initiatives.

In addition to EU funding, leveraging private and public investments is crucial for the sustainability of cross-border projects. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can attract additional resources and expertise, enhancing the effectiveness and reach of strategic planning efforts.

The Synergistic Effect of Integrated Planning

While each of the three approaches—Green Planning, Territorial Planning, and Financial Planning—has its merits, their true potential is realized when implemented together. An integrated approach ensures that environmental sustainability, infrastructural development, and financial viability are addressed simultaneously, leading to systemic and durable impacts. The success of integrated strategic planning hinges on the robustness of institutions responsible for development and cooperation. Cross-border regions benefit from well-established governance structures that facilitate coordination, decision-making, and implementation of joint projects.

The long-term impact and sustainability of local projects are significantly influenced by territorial planning. The extent to which a region is equipped to support the effects of a local project determines its success and sustainability over time. Properly planned infrastructure and services ensure that local initiatives can thrive and have a lasting positive impact on the community.

The European framework and funding mechanisms provide the necessary support for these initiatives, paving the way for a more connected, sustainable, and prosperous Europe.

Key questions: Preparing for the future starts NOW!

Interreg LISTENS, Communities THRIVE!

As you might know or remember from previous iterations on this topic, to prepare for the future post-2027, the European Commission launched a consultation process with stakeholders and citizens living in the European area where cohesion policy is implemented. Therefore, and based on the Toolkit **Cooperation – the skill for our future, Guide for shaping together the future Interreg**, the European Commission asked Interreg Programmes to consult stakeholders and citizens in their Programme areas and report back on the results by the end of 2024.

Consequently, the Managing Authority for the Interreg IPA Romania–Serbia Programme started the process of consulting stakeholders and citizens living in the Programme area, by means of a questionnaire published online, inviting participants to share their ideas during the 1 February – 30 September 2024 period.

The questionnaire, published on the Interreg IPA Romania–Serbia Programme website <https://romania-serbia.net/shape-the-future-interreg-post-2027>, includes **10 questions for stakeholders** and **5 questions for citizens** and should be filled in by **30 September 2024**.

So take advantage of this time to go in order to make your voice heard and your intentions and wishes expressed!

In this regard, we invite you once again to fill in in the questionnaire!



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HOME PROGRAMME FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS TRANSPARENCY CAPITALIZATION NEWSLETTER

SHAPE THE FUTURE INTERREG (POST-2027)

Interreg LISTENS, Communities THRIVE!

You are kindly invited to share your own experience with Interreg and join us for a better future!

The Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme is a strong supporter of cooperation between our border regions. Our Programme encourages stakeholders and citizens to share their ideas, in order to collectively address them. We consider YOU as vital actors in building a more resilient, integrated and prosperous border area.

UNITED REGIONS AND EMPOWERED VOICES are at the core of the Programme. This is precisely why Interreg's strength lies in YOUR INPUT. Co-creating success, one community at a time, is important for us.

To prepare for the future (post 2027), we are launching the process of consulting stakeholders and citizens living in the Programme area. In order to keep living up to YOUR expectations, please dive into the list of key questions below, especially designed to make the most out of your experience. The results will guide us in our journey to transcend national borders and create a successful story beyond the current programming period (2021-2027).

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

FOR STAKEHOLDERS – Please share your views by filling in all 10 questions designed for your category.

FOR CITIZENS – Please share your views by filling in the 5 questions designed for your category.

Shape the future Programme!

Key Questions are waiting for your answers!

Interreg LISTENS, Communities THRIVE! www.romania-serbia.net

You are kindly invited to share your own experience with Interreg and join us for a **better future!**

Projects in focus

Project RORS-434: **For Unique New Education Design**



1. The desired ultimate status of the EU Vision involves significant advancements in education and training at local, national, and European level:

- a transformative shift towards modern, adaptable, and competency-based education models.
- hubs for innovation and lifelong learning.
- enhancing education systems, providing educators, students, and children with access to workshops, courses, and training programs that equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the modern world.

2. **Innovation and progress** – the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to meet the evolving needs of learners and the labor market.

Adaptability and future-readiness – the importance of developing skills and competencies that are relevant and in demand in a rapidly changing global landscape, equipping individuals to thrive in diverse personal and professional contexts.

3. The lead target group experiences improved educational outcomes, increased motivation, and enhanced opportunities for personal and professional growth.

4. The EU is investing in advancing education and training to address key challenges and promote the prosperity of its citizens. Investing in education and training aligns with the EU's commitment to promoting economic prosperity, social progress, and individual well-being for all its citizens.

HERE ARE THE ANSWERED QUESTIONS:

1. EU Vision – what will be the desired ultimate status? At local/national/European level.

2. What is the value of this priority to be communicated in our messages?

3. What is the benefit of this priority in the lead target group?

4. Why is the EU investing in this area/how will each European benefit?



We encouraged children's creative thinking and self-confidence!

Mathematics, inclusive education, visual arts, language and communication, music education, sports and psychomotor development activities, natural sciences and environment.

Collage of project results and events.

INTERREG IPA ROMANIA–SERBIA PROGRAMME

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Photo of the Danube between Romania and Serbia.

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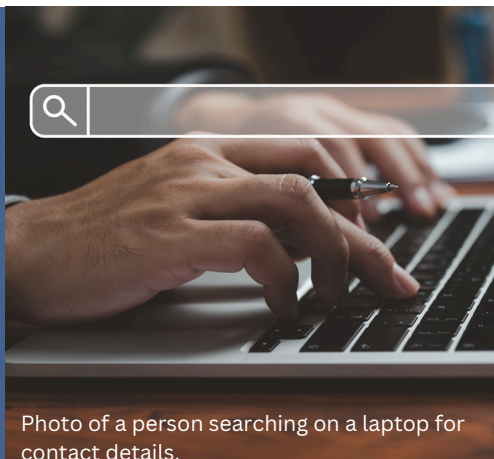


Photo of a person searching on a laptop for contact details.

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