



Lithuania–Poland Cross-Border Cooperation

Shared and unique recommendations for Interreg post-2027



Executive overview

Three complementary perspectives—not three identical sets of recommendations

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1 ESPON border profile

Territorial evidence and policy options

Focus: demographics, accessibility, economy, environment, services and security.

2 Tourism final report

A sector-specific action agenda

Focus: joint tourism products, destination branding, partnerships, project selection and lasting outputs.

3 Harvesting report

Stakeholder-led programme design

Focus: funding access, administrative simplification, project formats, community priorities and resilience.

Method: recommendations are treated as shared when the reports support substantially the same action, even if wording and level of detail differ.



Recommendations shared by all three reports

Common themes expressed in different ways across the documents

- 1. Durable cross-border cooperation** — long-term partnerships, joint [permanent] planning and coordination among municipalities, public bodies, NGOs and businesses.
- 2. Better connectivity** — improve cross-border transport and infrastructure, including links that support residents and visitors.
- 3. Sustainable use of shared assets** — develop tourism around natural and cultural heritage while protecting the resources that make the region distinctive.
- 4. Better services and well-being** — address access gaps, especially for rural and peripheral communities, while supporting social inclusion.
- 5. Communication and participation** — improve information exchange, networking, stakeholder involvement and public awareness.
- 6. Lasting results** — build on successful projects, coordinate complementary initiatives and sustain outputs beyond the funding period.



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Shared themes: what they mean in practice

Translate common principles into programme-level actions

Governance & partnerships

Create durable working relationships, support partner search, and coordinate planning across the border.

Transport & access

Connect missing links and make key services, attractions and communities easier to reach.

Tourism & heritage

Develop connected routes and joint products; combine promotion with sustainable management.

Project sustainability

Maintain digital and physical outputs, transfer know-how, and embed results in local/regional strategies.



Important overlaps between two reports

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Environment and climate resilience — ESPON + Harvesting: ecological connectivity, nature protection, climate adaptation and resource efficiency.

Demographic change — ESPON + Harvesting: ageing, youth needs, and a shrinking working-age population.

Skills and partner capacity — Tourism + Harvesting: training, knowledge exchange and stronger project-development capability.

Promotion and visibility — Tourism + Harvesting: coordinated communication and promotion of successful results.

Programme procedures and evaluation — Tourism + Harvesting: improve project selection, implementation, monitoring and follow-up.

Security and crisis preparedness — ESPON + Harvesting: strengthen cross-border coordination for disruption, civil protection and emergencies.



Unique recommendations: ESPON border profile

Demographic adaptation — adapt labour markets, education and social services to ageing and workforce decline.

Higher-value employment — strengthen skills and cross-border education for specialist and knowledge-intensive occupations.

Economic and housing disparities — address differences in economic performance, wages and housing costs.

Environmental governance — coordinate protected areas and ecological corridors, including differing national approaches to nature protection.

Air quality and climate — explore joint action on fine-particle pollution, climate risks and resource efficiency.

Strategic infrastructure and resilience — assess additional electricity-grid interconnection and coordinate responses to border controls and logistics disruption, especially around the Suwałki Gap.

Better territorial evidence — supplement harmonised European data with finer-grained national and regional information.



Unique recommendations: tourism final report

Joint destination brand — establish a recognisable cross-border identity and coordinated communication strategy.

Tourism-specific selection criteria — prioritise genuine cross-border impact and reduce partnerships formed mainly to obtain funding.

Formal tourism-sector voice — increase tourism stakeholder representation in programme decision-making.

Tourism working group and clusters — create a platform for coordination among public bodies, businesses and tourism organisations.

Joint information system — consolidate attraction and product information, including a proposed tourism app.

Output maintenance — check that websites, apps, games and promotional products remain functional and updated after projects end.

Capacity-building and pipeline coordination — offer specialist training, share project plans early and reduce duplication.

Trails and destination positioning — connect thematic trails and active-tourism routes, embed products in strategies, and address negative perceptions of the borderland.



Unique recommendations: Harvesting report (1/2)

Distinctive contribution: funding architecture and programme delivery

Retain the existing programme geography — continue using the current Lithuania–Poland area and realise its remaining cooperation potential.

Use two complementary project formats — combine complex, multi-year systemic projects with small-scale projects accessible to local organisations.

Improve cash flow and financial flexibility — consider advance payments, more flexible spending and clearer reimbursement arrangements.

Simplify applications and administration — reduce unnecessary documents, clarify assessment criteria and make rules easier to apply.

Digitise programme management — use digital reporting, automated workflows and project-management/analytical tools.

Allow applications in native languages — reduce language barriers for potential applicants.

Improve funding accessibility and balance — address unequal participation opportunities and maintain appropriate geographical balance.

Consider infrastructure investment — support infrastructure where justified by local needs, balanced with cooperation activities.



Unique recommendations: Harvesting report (2/2)

Distinctive contribution: community priorities and continuity

Permanent cooperation structures — consider joint working groups, cross-border regional councils and thematic platforms.

Public participation and transparency — improve visibility of selection processes and consider resident voting on project ideas.

Civil protection and preparedness — develop joint security-management programmes and improve residents' emergency preparedness.

Youth and inclusion — support volunteering, arts, entrepreneurship, camps, well-being and participation by young people with fewer opportunities.

Language and intercultural learning — promote Lithuanian and Polish language learning, school exchanges and shared cultural-historical activities.

Joint healthcare and social services — explore cross-border care, telemedicine, mobile services and shared crisis-management initiatives.

Applicant support and outreach — provide information campaigns, partner-search events, project preparation assistance and follow-up.



Comparison how the three reports complement one another

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Theme	ESPON	Tourism report	Harvesting report
Territorial challenges & data	Primary focus	Context for tourism	Context and community evidence
Joint tourism products	Strategic option	Primary focus	Strong stakeholder interest
Programme rules & administration	Limited focus	Tourism-specific procedures	Primary focus
Transport & infrastructure	Territorial connectivity	Tourism routes and facilities	Roads, cycling and local needs
Environment & climate	Analytical policy options	Sustainable tourism	Nature and resilience proposals
Public services & inclusion	Accessibility and demography	Skills/community dimension	Healthcare, youth and social priorities
Long-term project sustainability	Strategic coordination	Maintain tourism outputs	Programme-wide continuity



Suggested priorities for Interreg post-2027

A synthesis — not an official ranking from the reports

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- 01 Security, resilience and crisis preparedness** Cross-border coordination for disruption, civil protection and emergencies using ISO3.
- 02 Cross-border cooperation networks / hubs** Joint planning and coordination among public institutions, municipalities etc. (ISO1).
- 03 Connectivity and essential services** Address transport gaps and practical access to healthcare and other services.
- 04 Integrated sustainable tourism** Connect routes, brand the destination and maintain earlier investments.
- 05 Long-term impact and resilience** Track lasting results; support project relations with other Programmes; capitalisation.



Interpretation note

“Shared” means substantially similar action appears across reports; “unique” means distinctive emphasis, not necessarily disagreement or absence of support elsewhere.

1. ESPON — Lithuania–Poland border profile (2026)

https://lietuva-polska.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/48_espon-core-ib_lithuania-poland.pdf

2. Tourism study — Final Report (2025)

https://lietuva-polska.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/final-report_ENG_18072025_FINAL-short.pdf

3. Harvesting Report — Interreg Lithuania–Poland Post-2027 (2024)

<https://lietuva-polska.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HARVESTING-REPORT-INTERREG-LITHUANIA-POLAND-POST-2027.pdf>

Important: ESPON presents analytical policy options; the tourism report gives sector-specific recommendations; the Harvesting Report records stakeholder proposals. None should automatically be treated as a binding programme commitment.

