

France has put in place several aid schemes that are exempt from the notification requirement for the 2014-2020 period.

<http://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/Centre-de-ressources/Aides-d-etat>

In addition to the aid schemes that are not subject to notification, the European Commission also allows the granting of de minimis aid. The de minimis regulation covers all categories of companies and authorises aid of up to €200,000 per company over a three-year period. All types of expenses may be covered by a de minimis grant.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1407>

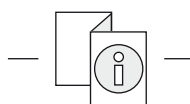
Subsidies awarded under 2014-2020 cross-border cooperation programmes must comply with regulations on state aid. Given that aid schemes exempted from notification are established nationally, it is necessary to **ascertain the existence and compatibility of schemes put in place by neighbouring countries that are part**

of the same cooperation programme. Subsidies may thereafter be granted to companies as part of cross-border projects.

One of the schemes put in place by France that is exempted from the notification requirement, No. SA.40646, relates to aid covering the costs of cooperation between SMEs within European territorial cooperation (ETC) programmes and came into force on 16 January 2015.

<http://cget.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/page/202/regimesa40646.pdf>

It is important to disseminate information on state aid schemes at all levels (European, national, regional, programme and local), through publications, seminars, etc.



Information materials describe the types of projects for which companies may be granted European funding.

EXAMPLE:

Through the publication of documents clarifying the main principles of aid schemes exempted from notification requirements, France's **General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET)** aims to make the use of these schemes more transparent at national level.

<http://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/Centre-de-ressources/Aides-d-etat>

EXAMPLES:

The CGET organises information and training seminars for French structures on this subject for the 2014-2020 European programming period.

INTERACT organises events on state aid for the 2014-2020 period for all European cooperation programmes.

http://www.interact-eu.net/events/workshop_state_aid_eligibility/14/16454



Networks of experts update and circulate the information continuously and efficiently.

EXAMPLE:

The CGET is developing a network of experts on state aid in France. The challenge is to identify the experts in the neighbouring countries.



Seminars or training sessions are designed to inform support structures so that they can direct companies to the appropriate financing channels.

IMPROVING PRIVATE-SECTOR PLAYERS' ACCESS TO INTERREG PROGRAMMES

Notwithstanding the implementation of state aid schemes exempted from notification requirements and the use of de minimis programmes, very few private-sector players have access to cooperation programmes. It is therefore necessary to improve certain aspects of the programmes in order to make them more accessible to private-sector players.

Before projects are submitted, it is necessary to **focus on the needs of economic players.** For example, at the launch of programmes, or before calls for project proposals, potential project developers must be supported to clearly define their project ideas. This may be done

through **seminars, workshops or surveys** to identify project ideas or the relevant structures.

EXAMPLES:

The “project idea” forms used by the Upper Rhine programme.

<http://www.interreg-rhin-sup.eu/interreg-v-rhin-superieur-2014-2020-les-elements-essentiels,30865.fr.html>

The “pre-project form” used by France-Switzerland.

<http://www.interreg-francesuisse.org/votre-projet/programme-2014-2020/construire-votre-projet/153262-7892,construire-votre-projet.html>