

In concrete terms, the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion EGTC will help to establish contacts between players in order to encourage the formation of partnerships and the set-up of projects. It will also work continuously to enhance the regional players' shared knowledge, as well as focusing its efforts on the priority areas. To do this, the EGTC will collaborate with the departments of the four regions and with the regional innovation agencies.

**In 2014, the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion drew up a Strategic Plan for 2014-2020** which identifies the development priorities for the territory. This multi-thematic document also deals with the economy and innovation.

A socio-economic assessment sets out the basis for the strategic guidelines and gives an up-to-date overview of the territory in terms of demography, jobs and training, economic activity, innovation and technologies, transport, communication and tourism. In addition, a review of the Aquitaine-Euskadi cooperation during the 2007-2013 period has made it possible to establish the point of departure for the next European programme period, which the Strategic Plan is designed for.

The strategic guidelines set out by this document focus on four areas: Euroregional citizenship; the knowledge-based economy, innovation and entrepreneurial competitiveness; sustainable territory; and open governance.

**In the area of the economy, the long-term objective is to “move towards a knowledge-based economy and improve businesses’ competitiveness and openness to new markets, by stimulating cooperation between them, as well as the education system and all of the research and innovation centres that exist in the Euroregion”.**

To do this, the actions carried out as part of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan aim at improving mutual knowledge and communication between the territory's economic players and those from the world of research. The strategy sets out 13 lines of action which will support educational mobility, common qualifications and vocational training. It will also encourage cross-border entrepreneurship and give impetus to synergies (inter-clustering, Euroregional innovation strategy) that will enable them to work together, develop new activities and gain access to new markets. All of these efforts will be concentrated primarily on the priority sectors identified by the two regions' smart specialisation strategies, in which the potential for synergies is more important, linked to policies for jobs and mobility.



## HOW HAVE THE STRATEGIES BEEN FORMULATED?

**A key element in the formulation of these two Euroregional strategies was the search for complementarities between the regional innovation strategies and S3S,<sup>145</sup> as well as economic development strategies and other regional programmes.**

The formulation of the assessment for the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion's strategy was entrusted to a consultancy firm in 2013 under the Midi-Pyrénées Region's presidency of the Euroregion. A consultation of the Regions/Autonomous Communities, regional innovation agencies, competitiveness hubs and clusters made it possible to compare the four regional innovation strategies, the means used to support the priority sectors and the systems of governance put in place. This phase also highlighted the existing cooperation initiatives in the Euroregion, as well as potential future developments. The Euroregional strategy drawn up on the basis of this assessment was then validated by the political representatives of the four regions.

The comparison of the regional strategies made it possible to identify priority sub-areas for each sector, chosen on the basis of technical criteria (regional economic and research potential), financing criteria (European, national and regional funding, etc.) and political criteria (players' willingness to cooperate).

The drawing-up of the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion's Strategic Plan was steered by the EGTC (with help from the consultancy firm IKEI). A major exercise of consultation of the main public- and private-sector players in the two regions, as well as of existing cooperation structures in the territory, was carried out.



## HOW WILL THE STRATEGIES BE IMPLEMENTED?

**Both of the Euroregions identify the European programmes (regional and cooperation programmes) as the first source of funding for the implementation of their strategies.**

In the Aquitaine-Euskadi Strategic Plan, for each line of action the most relevant programmes and thematic objectives to support projects have been specified. The Plan also stipulates that there should be annual monitoring and evaluation of implementation in order to help prepare for the post-2020 programme.

<sup>145</sup> Smart Specialisation Strategies.