

INTERREG VOLUNTEER YOUTH

Guidelines for host organisations



Dear IVY Host Organisation,

We are very glad to welcome you on board the Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY) initiative.

With this document, we at the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) would like to provide you with more information on IVY to guarantee a positive experience for you and the volunteer(s) you will host, as well as to enable a smooth and fruitful cooperation with you.

This document is organised according to the chronological development of the process of hosting a volunteer. It starts with some general background information on the initiative, and endeavours to guide you through the procedure, from the application to participation in the selection process, leading to mentoring the volunteer you will host.

We hope to have included all aspects and that this document is as comprehensive as possible, both for Interreg programmes and projects. However, should you have further doubts on the procedure or while hosting a volunteer, please contact us at ivy@aebr.eu.

Content:

I.	What is IVY and our mission.....	Page 4
	Background information	Page 4
	What is IVY about	Page 4
	Objectives	Page 5
	Underpinning principles	Page 5
II.	How to host IVY volunteers	Page 7
	How to apply	Page 7
	Fundamental principles of IVY	Page 8
	Tips on how to complete the documents	Page 9
III.	Collaboration to select the volunteer	Page 12
	Who are IVY volunteers?	Page 12
	The selection process	Page 13
	The interview with candidates	Page 14
	Identification of the right volunteer	Page 14
IV.	Preparing the volunteer.....	Page 15
	Financial support	Page 15
	Insurance for the volunteers	Page 15
	Providing relevant information	Page 16
	Preparing to host a volunteer	Page 16
V.	Hosting the volunteer	Page 17
	The role of mentor	Page 17
	The volunteer’s tasks	Page 17
	Regulation of volunteering time	Page 18
	Monitoring and certification of the experience	Page 19
	Risk and conflict management	Page 19

I. What is IVY and our mission

Background information

[Interreg Volunteer Youth](#) (IVY) was initiated as part of the [European Solidarity Corps Initiative](#), launched by the European Commission and announced by President Juncker in his State of the Union Speech in the European Parliament on the 14 September 2016. The **Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy** (DG REGIO) decided to answer the European Commission's call in launching IVY as its contribution to foster solidarity and provide Interreg Programmes and Projects with valuable support. As a result, on 1 March **2017** IVY was launched – first as a one year pilot initiative, which has been further extended since then.

Now an independent programme, the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative has grown in its unique role as the access point for young people in European Territorial Cooperation.

IVY is co-funded by the European Commission's DG REGIO, through the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) and is managed by the **Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)**.

AEBR manages the entire procedure and is the contact point for both host organisations and volunteers. We support you in finding volunteers for your organisation, arrange legal/administrative issues and cover the volunteers' insurance while they are engaged in your organisation. AEBR also prepares the contract and provides volunteers with the financial support they will need during their experience. Finally, AEBR ensures that both host organisations and volunteers are satisfied with the IVY experience. This is why we monitor all participants on a regular basis and report back weekly to DG REGIO.

With the support structure we provide, host organisations have few obligations. They cooperate with us during the selection process, help volunteers deal with local administrative requirements, assist in finding accommodations and help assimilate volunteers into the team.

What is IVY about

IVY offers Interreg, IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT projects and programmes the possibility of hosting volunteers, with the objective of promoting concrete achievements in European Territorial Cooperation.

Interreg, IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats and/or national authorities can host Interreg Reporters, who help disseminate information on the benefits of territorial integration. Reporter volunteers bring an informal and creative approach to supporting communication.

Interreg, IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT Project beneficiaries can host Interreg project partners to help implement the project's goal and demonstrate solidarity in Interreg initiatives.

Involving young volunteers in Interreg and cross-border cooperation programmes and projects helps raise awareness of European integration and cooperation, showing in particular the spirit of solidarity that underpins territorial cooperation and each specific project, and which benefits your local community.

At the same time, volunteers have opportunities for engagement in solidarity activities that foster positive societal change, in particular in the field of European Territorial Cooperation, while improving their skills and competences for personal, educational, social, civic, cultural and professional development. For them, IVY is an experience of active citizenship and of mobility.

The deployment can last between 2 and 6 months. Remote volunteering will be allowed in the event of exceptional circumstances, such as the current pandemic, and requests will be considered on a one-by-one basis.

Objectives

The IVY initiative is aimed at engaging young volunteers to **support, promote and report** the achievements of Interreg, IPA/ENI-CBC and NEXT Programmes and Projects, as well as promoting **cooperation across borders** and fostering related values, such as solidarity.

IVY gives volunteers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Interreg and ENI/IPA-CBC and illustrates the many benefits of collaboration across borders.

In this light, the main objectives of Interreg Volunteer Youth are:

- to promote concrete achievements of Interreg IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT programmes and projects;
- to strengthen the visibility of Interreg, IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT;
- to provide Interreg, IPA-CBC and ENI-CBC/Interreg NEXT projects and programmes with the support of young volunteers;
- to provide young people with opportunities in the field of European Territorial Cooperation;
- to contribute to European integration and raise awareness of its positive impact among young people.

Underpinning principles

Definition of a volunteer: A volunteer is a person who carries out activities benefiting society, by their own free will. These activities are undertaken for a not-for-profit cause, benefiting the personal development of the volunteer, who commits his/her time and energy for the general good without financial compensation. The main objective of volunteers deployed within the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative is to promote European Territorial Cooperation.

Definition of the volunteering activity: Volunteering activities are undertaken by volunteers. The activity is undertaken for a not-for-profit cause and does not replace paid staff. The general objective of volunteering activities undertaken within the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative is to promote European Territorial Cooperation.

Principles, quality standards, and expected tasks and responsibilities of all participants (coordinating organisation, host organisation and volunteers) to be ensured:

- The not-for-profit character of the project and the volunteer tasks. Part or full-time service and active role of the volunteer in implementing the activities have to be ensured. Volunteering activities must not replace any employment;
- The benefit to and the contact with the community benefitting from Interreg/IPA/ENI-CBC/NEXT projects;
- The non-formal learning and intercultural dimension, through a clear definition of a learning plan for the volunteer;
- The free-of-charge participation for the volunteers, except for their own potential contribution to travel, lodging and accommodation;
- Accessibility and inclusion.

In order to involve young people in Interreg and ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT programmes and projects, the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative has adopted a volunteer format.

This is because volunteering increases the participants' sense of solidarity, develops their social skills and promotes active participation in society. Additionally, volunteering is valued as a non-formal learning experience, enhancing volunteers' professional skills and competences.

We also believe that the external perspective of volunteers can benefit your organisation in providing a **new point of view**, one which is closer to the general public than to the "institutions" – and we think that such an approach might showcase the achievements of your Interreg and ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT projects in a more effective way to citizens.

It is a win-win situation, where the volunteer, the host organisation and the targeted community benefit.

To participate, host organisations must adhere to these principles. And to maintain the focus on the objectives of the initiative, organisations applying to host a volunteer will be asked to outline the spirit of solidarity, which is at the core of Territorial Cooperation, of the activities foreseen for the volunteer.

II. How to host IVY volunteers

Hosting a volunteer with IVY is quick and easy and requires only a few steps:

1. Organisations fill in an application document(s), known as the programme/project note + the confirmation by the programme if necessary;
2. A call with the candidates you decide to be put in touch with;
3. The signature of the final agreement.

AEBR takes care of all the organisational and administrative arrangements.

All processes can be completed online and documents can be submitted via email to ivy@aebr.eu.

Each organisation can host volunteers as follows:

- *Programmes and national authorities* can host two volunteers per year – either simultaneously or one after the other, depending on the needs of the host organisation;
- *Project beneficiaries* will be able to host one volunteer per each year of the project. Host organisations can decide to host volunteers simultaneously or all in the same phase of the project (namely, in the same year) or one per year, depending on the needs of the project. A potential extension of the project does not count, as volunteers cannot be hosted during the months of the extension, unless agreed on differently.

The total number of years of the project is not retroactive and starts in 2022.

How to apply

- **Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats and National Authorities** simply fill in the “**Programme Note**,” a document to outline tasks for the volunteer and express your preferences in terms of the profile you would like to host. This document also states the rules underlying an experience in the framework of IVY and serves to explain how the volunteering activities will show the solidarity dimension of Interreg, which must be envisaged as an integral part of the volunteering activity. A template of the programme note can be downloaded from our website using this link: <https://www.interregyouth.com/host-organizations/how-to-apply/>
- **Project beneficiaries** complete a similar document, the “**Project Note**.” Here, you indicate tasks for the volunteer and preferences for the profile of the volunteer you would like to host. The document also defines the rules envisaged by IVY and shows the solidarity dimension of the Interreg Project the volunteer will be involved in, which must be envisaged as an integral part of the volunteering activity. Project beneficiaries willing to host a volunteer also have to submit a document, to be issued by the Managing Authority or the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT

Programme they belong to (the “**Letter of Approval**”). This document is essential for AEBR to have official proof that the organisation applying to host an IVY volunteer is indeed an Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT Project beneficiary.

Both the “Project Note” and the template of the “Letter of Approval” can be easily downloaded from our website: <https://www.interregyouth.com/host-organizations/how-to-apply/>

Keep in mind that both project leaders and project partners are eligible to host IVY volunteers.

Fundamental principles of IVY

To host volunteers, host organisations shall:

- clearly identify which **activities** are relevant to the Interreg Volunteer Youth initiative and make sure that they are carried out in compliance with the present principles;
- give a clear **task description** for the activity that the volunteer should carry out. The host organisation ensures that participants receive detailed information about the initiative and the task they are asked to carry out. The content of the task description should be, to the furthest extent possible, developed and agreed on together by the host organisation and the volunteer and, if needed, should be updated during the volunteering activity;
- commit to developing and implementing quality standards that ensure preparation and briefing, offer personal guidance, assistance and **monitoring** throughout the entire process, clear evaluation mechanisms and full support in the realisation of the required follow-up activities;
- (pre-) select and recruit participants in compliance with the principles of **equal treatment, equal opportunities and non-discrimination**;
- select volunteers according to their **mission and vision**, and the specific skills and profile of volunteers if certain volunteering activities require them;
- seek to **empower** participants by valuing their skills and experience while engaging them in their activities, fostering their personal, socio-educational and professional development;
- ensure that the environment and conditions in which the activities are performed are **safe** and decent;
- provide adequate **training** or support to help participants fulfil their tasks;
- offer **support and feedback** throughout the volunteering activity, including preparation of the activity, personal guidance and assistance during the implementation of the activity, proper evaluation and debriefing following the activity and full support in the realisation of the required follow-up activities;
- provide the possibility to participate in the **decision-making process** regarding the volunteering activity at the most appropriate level;
- not request or require any financial contribution or fee from participants;
- process personal data of participants in full compliance with European and national legislation on data protection;

- ensure that the support to the organisation's activities by the participants is adequately made visible and recognised;
- take into account the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of participants and put in place measures that facilitate their **integration** into the local community of deployment.

Specific Tasks and responsibilities of host organisations and/or mentors:

- identify a mentor who is responsible for the volunteer(s);
- offer supervision and guidance to the volunteer(s) through experienced staff;
- provide personal support during the learning process to the volunteer(s);
- provide support for the volunteer(s) to comply with administrative issues in the host country;
- give the volunteer(s) the opportunity to integrate into the local community, to meet other young people, to socialise, to participate in leisure activities, etc.;
- encourage contact with other volunteer(s) whenever possible;
- ensure the participation of the volunteer(s) in training and evaluation activities;
- if required, the host organisation will provide support to the volunteer(s) to obtain their visa (preparation of invitation letters, provision of relevant information, etc);
- monitoring of accommodation, food and local transport issues.

Tips on how to complete the documents

Please note that the programme and the project note can be signed by the person within the organisation who will be responsible for the volunteer. The approval from the Managing Authority or the Joint Secretariat can be signed by the person of the Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT Programme with whom your organisation is in touch with (this person can be the communication officer or the officer you are mostly in touch with, and who best knows your project).

The programme and the project note are useful to us to **understand** what your organisation is working on and which kind of **profile** would best suit your expectations. The information you give us will be our criteria when looking for your volunteer.

Programme and project notes include:

- information on the programme/project the volunteer will be involved in;
- A description of the tasks the volunteer is expected to carry out
- the fields of knowledge requested;
- language skills needed to carry out the activities;
- the motivation of the organisation to host volunteers;

- the principles underpinning the initiative.

If you host multiple volunteers, we will need separate notes for each volunteer.

The notes are organised as follows:

- Letters A and B help us understand **your organisation's profile** and what your Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT programme or project is about;
- Letter C showcases your motivation to host a volunteer;
- Letter D outlines responsibilities of the host organisations for your knowledge;
- Letters E and F help define the **profile of the volunteer** who best fits your mission;
- Letter G provide information on the hosting period;
- Letters H to I detail measures to support the volunteer during his/her stay at your organisation.

It is sufficient for us to receive the documents in electronic form, so there is no need to send them via traditional mail. However, should you need the original documents, please let us know.

Relevant aspects to consider while completing the programme/project note are:

- the **solidarity scope/dimension** of being involved in IVY:

We expect volunteers to fully grasp the spirit of solidarity that underpins territorial cooperation during their experience. By supporting, promoting and reporting about Interreg/ENI/IPA-CBC / NEXT projects, volunteers will take part in the collaboration between the partners, an integral aspect of territorial cooperation. With **letter E**, we ask you to highlight this aspect. Therefore, please outline here the cooperative and supportive dimension of the project in which the volunteer will be involved – especially considering that Interreg/ENI/IPA-CBC / NEXT is by definition about cooperation and support, hence solidarity.

- the nature of IVY as being about **volunteering**:

IVY offers volunteering experiences, which means that the relationship between the host organisation and the volunteer is based on mutual learning and reciprocal giving. All parties involved benefit from the experience: the volunteers bring an added value to the host organisation by contributing with specific skills and specific experiences, which can help the host organisation better reach its goal, while the volunteers gain an empowering experience through giving and through the learning experience. With respect to this aspect, **administrative, logistic and in general, job-substitution tasks are not allowed**. On the contrary, we expect the volunteers to be granted some **freedom and flexibility** with regard to the way they can communicate and operate. We encourage them to **“think outside of the box,”** to communicate in a more informal way and to be proactive during their stay in your

organisation. Please remember that the young person you agree to host is a volunteer and not an intern or a trainee: the person is there to actively contribute to the goal of your programme/project, and not only to fulfilling a learning experience. In this light, please develop appropriate tasks and make sure to always address the IVY volunteer as a “volunteer” and not as a “trainee/intern.”

Should there be any doubts about how to respond to a certain point in the Project/Programme Note, we are at your full disposal, and we are happy to help you at any step.

It is highly recommended that you send a draft programme/project note before signing it so that we can check it and provide you with feedback, should there be inaccuracies.

Once you send us the final **programme/project note completed and signed**, the cooperation between your organisation and AEBR is official and we will start looking for your volunteers. Also, at this point we will add your name to the list of **IVY’s host organisations** on our website, to give our partnership clear visibility. To do so, we ask you to send us the **logo of your organisation** and/or of your Interreg project (jpeg format only) to be uploaded on our website: <https://www.interregyouth.com/programme> and <https://www.interregyouth.com/projects>

III. A collaboration to select the volunteer

At this point, we look for young people's profiles that best match what is written in your note and present you a selection of candidates. However, should you already know someone whom you would like to host as a volunteer, let us know and put us in touch with this person: we will arrange the volunteering experience with the **person of your choice** directly when suitable.

You are also more than welcome to sponsor your volunteering offer(s) within your network by adding an item on your website and/or via your social media account so as to attract spontaneous candidates as well. If you do so, please let us know so that we can share the "news" on our platform and increase the visibility of your offer(s).

Who are IVY volunteers?

A volunteer is a person who decides to engage in this experience with the aim of benefitting the target group of your Interreg/IPA or ENI-CBC/Next programme or project for a not-for-profit cause. He or she commits his/her time and energy to promoting European Territorial Cooperation, having a non-formal learning experience, and enhancing his/her professional skills and competences while promoting active participation in society.

Eligible volunteers are individuals **between 18 and 30 years old** who are legally residing in a participating country (Member State of the European Union, partner countries under EEA, IPA and ENI programmes, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

Volunteers are deployed in two roles:

Interreg Reporters support the communication activities of the programme. They are encouraged to write articles and posts for online and offline communication media, to interview stakeholders and to help in the organisation of events and conferences.

Interreg Project Partners undertake tasks envisaged in the project cycle of the Interreg project they are volunteering for. Among others, communication activities are also foreseen for volunteers hosted by Interreg project beneficiaries.

Candidates are selected as per the following criteria:

- genuine interest in cooperation and/or EU policies and motivation to support the specific programme/project;
- language skills needed to serve in the specific project context;
- if possible, specific competences in the field of the project (*Interreg project partners*);
- good command of communication skills (*Interreg reporters*).

Host organisations are encouraged to bear in mind that volunteers are a great asset because of the new ideas and the strong enthusiasm they bring. The expected proactive approach can help tremendously with both communication and implementation of the project's tasks.

We therefore advise applying organisations to avoid looking for disproportionately highly-skilled people. On this note, job-substitutions and routine activities are strictly prohibited in the framework of the volunteering experience.

The selection process

The procedure is as follows:

1. **AEBR pre-screens the candidates:** Once the Programme or Project Note is approved, we look for your candidates in an internal database;
2. We then **forward you some profiles** (about 6) of the candidates we believe correspond best to your needs;
3. We put you in touch with the candidates you have chosen for you to schedule an interview with them;
4. You select the volunteer you will host and inform us;
5. We prepare the necessary documents and arrangements for the start.

Please note that we warmly encourage you to follow these suggestions, which we have learnt from experience:

- the greater the number of people interviewed, the quicker the chance to arrange a rapid, smooth and successful match between the final volunteer and the host organisation;
- the quicker you give us feedback about candidates, the better (keep in mind that people tend to apply to more than one opportunity at the same time);
- we require a minimum period of three weeks' time after you have selected the volunteer and the actual start date of the experience.

Some of these aspects are key to a successful match, so let's look at them in detail:

The interview with candidates

The interview is meant to be a moment in which you and the candidate can **get to know each other** better and can **exchange mutual expectations**.

This is also the occasion for you to provide a **clear task description** of the activity that the volunteer should carry out.

The interview is intended to be **informal** and focused on **assessing the motivation, interest and the competences of the candidate** in relation to the scope of the project. We understand you might need specific skills from the volunteer, but please avoid a formal setting for the interview. As proof of their competency, you may ask candidates to submit examples of their work. *Please do not see the interview as a test for the volunteer, and instead avoid putting the*

person under pressure: IVY is about volunteering and the procedure should not resemble a job interview.

Rather, the relationship between the host organisation and the volunteer should be based on trust, commitment, mutual respect and cooperation, and these aspects should guide the interview as well.

Identification of the right volunteer

Once you have identified the person you would like to host as an IVY volunteer, you can communicate this directly to the person and let us know about your choice. As soon as the candidate accepts, the match is considered done; you can arrange the details of the period during which the candidate will volunteer.

Please agree on an **exact start and end date** between a **minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 6 months**. Once you have decided on the dates, **we prepare the documents** for the volunteer: **the so-called “IVY Agreement” and the insurance**, which we send to him/her together with some **information** (general information about the European Union and Interreg, and **guidelines and tips**) which will be useful to the volunteer during his/her experience.

As mentioned above, we require a minimum period of three weeks' time after you have selected the volunteer and the actual start of the experience.

IV. Preparing the volunteer

Besides administrative aspects, AEBR takes care of the financial support for the volunteers.

Financial support

We grant all volunteers a **daily allowance** which varies depending on the costs of living of the country where the volunteers are deployed (the amount ranges between a minimum of 19 EUR to a maximum of 33 EUR per day) for the entire duration of their placement.

This daily allowance is intended to help the volunteer cover lodging, food, local transport, etc., as well as to provide some pocket money.

Moreover, we **contribute to the travel costs** by giving a fixed amount of money, which is based on the number of km between the volunteer's residence and the location of the host organisation.

AEBR transfers the money directly to the volunteers in two or three instalments, depending on the length of the stay.

You can see the tables displaying how much money is granted for the daily support in the country in which your organisation is based and for the volunteer's travel on our website: <https://www.interregyouth.com/volunteers/faq/>

AEBR will also cover additional costs related to extra requests or needs of volunteers. These include support for justified language training/integration measures, medical expenses and equipment.

Volunteers or, if appropriate, mentors should contact AEBR in case they need to make a request.

Host organisations are welcome to supplement AEBR's financial support to the volunteers if they wish to do so. However, please keep in mind that **the money that the volunteers receive from AEBR comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**. Hence, if you wish to give extra monetary support to the volunteer, this cannot come from ERDF funding (Interreg), as **double use of the same EU source for the same purpose must be avoided**. Therefore, although very much appreciated, you can **supplement** the financial support only by **using your own resources** or other sources which are **independent from EU funding**.

Insurance for the volunteers

The insurance that AEBR arranges for the volunteers covers **health, general assistance, liability and accidents**. The volunteers will be covered for the whole duration of the period indicated in the IVY Agreement.

Please note that we are not able to apply the insurance scheme we normally offer in the event that you host a volunteer who is already insured in the country in which you are based. The scope of our insurance coverage is limited to countries other than the candidate's country of residence to avoid a conflict with pre-existing policies. However, under IVY it is possible to

host a volunteer who is a resident in the same country where the host organisation is based, so if you have identified a person who is a resident in the same country as you are, it is by no means a problem: we will look into other options, and we will do so by getting in touch with someone who is responsible for legal and administrative issues within your institution. Should an internal solution not be possible, we will contact private local insurance providers to make sure that the volunteer is covered **prior to his/her start**.

Providing relevant information

Once the administrative and financial issues are taken care of, we at AEBR make further contact with the volunteers and have an **extensive Zoom call** with them. The main aim of this call is **to get to know each other** and make sure that the volunteers have **no doubts remaining** with regard to their engagement in your organisation. The call is also an occasion to clarify the role of the many actors involved in IVY (for example, AEBR's role), as well as to illustrate once more what Interreg is. We advise them about their role in your organisation and how they can enhance the solidarity dimension of territorial cooperation. We exchange general information and emphasise that volunteering is based on mutual commitment, flexibility and a proactive attitude.

Only AEBR staff and departing volunteers attend this call.

Preparing to host a volunteer

In this phase, the host organisation's involvement is minimum, as **AEBR takes care of the organisational and administrative issues** together with the volunteer.

Host organisations at this point should be in touch with the volunteer to **help him/her find accommodation** in case the volunteer needs support and **prepare internal administrative documents** if needed.

In addition to getting the volunteer settled in, a representative of the host organisation must **sign the contract** once the volunteer has completed it. Please send the agreement to us afterwards so that we can finalise it by adding our signature, too.

In addition to the programme/project note, we only need a scanned copy of the signature page of the IVY Agreement. If you need the original copy via post, please let us know.

V. Hosting the Volunteer

To host a volunteer means to engage in a relationship in which all the parties involved benefit from the experience: the volunteers contribute by bringing specific skills and experiences which can **help the host organisation** better reach its goal, while the volunteers gain an **empowering experience** through giving, but also through the learning experience. This relationship is based on **commitment** and **flexibility** at the same time, and therefore we expect both parties to respect these two elements. According to these principles, we let you and the volunteer decide how to best outline responsibilities. AEBR encourages you to bear in mind that the nature of the relationship is voluntary, and as such it differs from a traditional internship experience.

Working with a volunteer carries with it the benefit of having a person with a fresh perspective in your organisation. This is a unique opportunity to gain an external point of view, one which also requires some guidance at the beginning.

The role as mentor

The mentor is expected to **help the volunteer become familiarised** with the environment of the organisation and, most of all, with your organisation's ties to Interreg. The mentor will be the **main contact person** for the volunteer, the one who will give him/her the tasks, and also the one the volunteer should speak with in case any doubts or difficulties should arise. The volunteer and the mentor should **discuss the work** the volunteer is expected to carry out during the stay, and the volunteer should **decide together with** the mentor **on the activities** he/she will suggest outside of the assigned tasks.

We recommend arranging a moment to **check in with the volunteer on a regular basis** and to carry this out repeatedly, so as to ensure a strong and fruitful cooperation with him/her.

The volunteer's task

We encourage our volunteers to take full advantage of their IVY experience and take initiative beyond the assignments requested by the host organisation. We invite them to **be proactive**, to bring their **own ideas** to your organisation and **engage** as much as possible with the environment outside the host organisation as well, for example with the local community, with stakeholders and media, so as to increase the visibility of your local impact and to expand your possibilities.

We encourage the volunteers to **meet the beneficiaries of the Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC/NEXT projects** in which they are involved. The volunteers are indeed advised to reach out to project partners which are involved in the Interreg programme, covering the area in which they are deployed, or other associations or institutes working on the same Interreg project. For these kinds of **visits and travels of the volunteer, you may use Interreg resources (hence ERDF funding) to cover the related expenses**, as this would not interfere with the financial support AEBR grants to the volunteer. Therefore, this does not result in double financing as it corresponds to another objective. It is not considered personal support to the volunteer but rather an expenditure in the framework of the implementation and/or promotion of your Interreg or ENI/IPA-CBC programme or project. *Please check with your managing*

authority/financial unit if costs of activities carried out by an IVY volunteer are eligible within your project/programme.

We also involve the volunteers in activities to which AEBR is invited within the scope of the “Interreg Volunteer Youth” initiative, such as interviews and events. We believe that **including the volunteers** in these **outreach events** is a great asset for them. At the same time, it benefits AEBR since volunteers can share their first-hand experiences and promote the success of the Programme. This is also good publicity for host organisations and provides for greater visibility among potential candidates, as well as influential attendees. However, when inviting them, we ask the volunteers to discuss this possibility with the mentor, who has to agree to it beforehand.

Finally, in order to promote IVY, we also **involve the volunteer** in the initiative itself so as to bring together the experiences of all the volunteers and host organisations and **create** thus a solid, common pool of “**Interreg stories.**” To do so, we collect the volunteers’ experiences by asking them to send us pictures of their volunteering environment, to write blog posts in which they report on their involvement in the Interreg Programme or Project they volunteer for, and to produce a video with the mentor in which they can present a sketch of how your IVY experience is going and why you decided to become an IVY host organisation.

In light of these **extra tasks** we ask of the volunteers, we would like you to take this aspect into consideration when formulating the workload for the volunteer.

Volunteers who wish to do so also have the possibility to organise [Citizens’ Engagement Activities](#), which are ad hoc events to be organised by IVY volunteers in order to raise awareness of Cohesion Policy, while interacting with local citizens.

The aim of these efforts is to strengthen the visibility of initiatives that fall into the category of European Territorial Cooperation and thus to raise awareness of it. We believe that by collecting the different experiences of our IVY volunteers and presenting them through one channel which addresses a new public, Interreg and the partners involved in its structures gain a stronger image among a broader public.

Regulation of volunteering time

Normally, volunteers shall be deployed for a maximum of 35 hours per week. If needed, part-time deployments are envisaged upon request by the participant and approval of the host organisation.

Volunteers are entitled to two consecutive free days per week (unless arranged differently in mutual agreement between the volunteer and the organisation, and explicitly stated in the volunteering agreement). Weekly rest days have to be agreed upon between the host organisation and the volunteer.

Volunteers are entitled to two days of holidays per month. Vacation periods have to be agreed upon between the host organisation and the volunteer.

The start date of the activity shall be the first day that the participant needs to be present at the host organisation and the end date shall be the last day the participant needs to be present at the host organisation.

Remote volunteering will be allowed in the event of exceptional circumstances, such as the current pandemic, and requests will be considered on a one-by-one basis.

Monitoring and certification of the experience

AEBR takes care of **monitoring the stay of the volunteer during IVY**. In addition to the preparatory call, we regularly stay in touch with them, as well as with the host organisations to make sure they feel comfortable throughout their stay. We also ask the volunteer and the mentor to **fill in a survey** to assess the overall IVY experience.

At the end of the stay, we will send each volunteer and the host organisation a **certificate of participation** to commend their commitment.

Risk and conflict management

The following measures are designed to prevent conflict, and AEBR makes these clear to both volunteers and host organisations:

- the volunteer must not act in any way that could put others or her/himself at risk of being injured;
- if a conflict situation arises, the volunteer may ask her/his mentor to facilitate communication between the volunteer and the local environment or other parties at the host organisation. The mentor should be able to provide an independent and objective evaluation of the situation;
- if a conflict arises between the volunteer and the mentor, the volunteer can ask to have another person appointed as her/his mentor. In the event of a conflict situation, the volunteer should be supported and must cooperate actively with the coordinating and host organisations to avoid communication problems;
- volunteers and mentors always have the possibility to report problems/issues to AEBR;
- if a serious incident occurs, the volunteer can expect the mentor to establish and maintain appropriate contact with the coordinating organisation, her/his next of kin (if required or requested) and the insurance company, if necessary.

For any additional questions on your role as IVY host organisation, please refer to the following "FAQs" webpage: <https://www.interregyouth.com/host-organizations/faq/>

We look forward to embarking on an exciting experience with you and to establishing a fruitful cooperation. We remain at your disposal should you have further questions on the procedure, and we take this occasion to thank you once more for participating in the "Interreg Volunteer Youth" initiative!

Cinzia, Milena and Bektha of the IVY Team