



Interreg 
SLOVENIA - HUNGARY
European Union | European Regional Development Fund

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT **2020**

Cooperation Programme
Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary
in the Programming Period 2014-2020

May 2021

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CONTENTS

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.....	3
2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(A) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)	3
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)	5
3.1. Overview of the implementation	5
3.2. Common and programme-specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	7
3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) – submitted in annual implementation reports from 2017 onwards.....	13
3.4. Financial data (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	16
4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) 21	
5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN (ARTICLE 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	23
6. CITIZENS’ SUMMARY (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	23
7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Article 46 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	24
8. WHERE APPROPRIATE, PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (Article 101(h) and Article 111(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)..	25
8.1. Major projects	25
8.2. Joint action plans	27
9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)	28
9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the Programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	28
9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013).....	28
9.3. Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013).....	29

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	29
9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)	29
10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), Subparagraph 1 (a) and (b), of REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013	29
10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations.....	29
10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy	29
11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 14(4), subparagraph 2 (a), (b), (c) and (f), of REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013).....	29
11.1 Progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme.....	29
11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF	30
11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)	30
11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation	30
12. Financial information at priority axis and programme level (Articles 21(2) and 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	31
13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH	31
14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).....	32

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB053
Title	Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary
Version	1.3
Reporting year	2020
Date of approval of the report by the Monitoring Committee	17.5. 2021

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(A) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

Key information on the implementation of the Cooperation Programme for the year concerned, including information on financial instruments with relation to the financial and indicator data.

The sixth Annual Implementation Report for the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary 2014-2020 (Interreg SI-HU) provides information on the progress in terms of Programme implementation in 2020. The report was developed by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy acting as the Programme Managing Authority in cooperation with Programme partners. The Monitoring Committee (MC) approved the Annual Implementation Report 2020 on 10th Monitoring Committee meeting (MC meeting) on 17 **May 2021**.

Programme meetings, selection of projects and preparation of manuals

2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic). Despite the restrictions in place due to the pandemic, 2020 was a very busy year for the Programme. Four additional projects, which were approved at the end of 2019 were kicked off, six projects were successfully completed and four payment requests were submitted to the European Commission (EC).

All projects were affected by the pandemic, although differently depending on the implementation stage or project activity type. From March 2020 onwards, great effort has been made to help projects mitigate the pandemic related issues. The majority of our actions focused on guiding projects how to adjust the implementation of activities, ensure a smooth implementation and realise the set outputs and results. The pandemic related issues that the projects faced were handled on a case-by-case basis. Three scenarios were identified to overcome the implementation-related difficulties, namely amending activities (certain in-person activities had to be redesigned for online implementation, such as meetings, seminars, workshops, etc.), extending the duration of projects (because of the activities that were postponed), cancelling activities or –changing the timeline of activities where in-person events were planned to be carried out in the summer months. To help overcome pandemic related obstacles in project implementation, the Interreg SI-HU also published COVID-19 Guidelines.

Per Article 49(1) of the CPR, the MC should meet at least once a year. Due to the pandemic situation, the 9th MC meeting was held only on 13 January 2021.

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

Programme bodies and structures immediately adjusted to the new working conditions resulting from the pandemic, so Programme beneficiaries received their funds without any delays. Due to the smooth reporting, validating and certifying processes the Programme will not face any decommitment in the future. The project performance also ensured that the Programme overachieved the N+3 target. Project spending is in line with the plans, although changes in the timeline had to be made, an average of 87% of the forecasted costs was reported.

Programming exercise for the new programming period 2021-2027 was underway. The Programme carried out two programming task force meetings and managed to contract external experts to help with the programming process in the frame of developing the Interreg VI-A Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2021-2027. SI-HU Programme also actively participated in the "Core group" for the development of the new eMS (Monitoring system) which is now called Jems.

The fraud risk self-assessment for the Programme was updated on 14 December 2020 based on the audit recommendation.

System audit and audits of the operations

The Annual Control report developed by the Audit Authority (AA) has been approved by the EC. No major errors have been identified and the error rate is well below the 2% threshold.

At the beginning of 2020, the AA performed a thematic audit of the performance framework (performance indicators). This was a joint audit for the programmes Interreg Slovenia-Hungary, Slovenia-Austria and Slovenia-Croatia. The audit showed that the monitoring system (monitoring and reaching set indicators) works well and that no improvements are needed. The only recommendation was made as regards the performance of the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of the Interreg SI-HU which was done internally by the JS staff. The audit report stated that carrying out such an evaluation was not the best approach since impartiality and independence might not be ensured.

In November 2020, the AA also started with the audit of the system by the Certifying Authority and also thematic audit of recoveries, which is part of the system audit. This was also a joint audit for the programmes Interreg Slovenia-Hungary, Slovenia-Austria and Slovenia-Croatia. The AA did not finish these audits till the end of 2020.

The Group of Auditors (AA and Audit Body (AB)) performed audits of operations for the 6th accounting year, where four operations (Guide2Visit, Folk Music Heritage, Green Line, and TA 4 – SI NA/FLC) in the total amount of EUR 1,137,168.51 were audited. The audits identified only some minor irregularities having financial consequences. Due corrections were made promptly with adjustments in the next ERDF payments.

The Programme uses the e-monitoring system (eMS). The eMS system with its set of functionalities complies fully with the e-Cohesion regulatory requirements (according to the final audit opinion). The development of the information system is a work in progress with the system being constantly updated with new and improved features. The activities were carried out throughout 2020.

Publicity and communication measures

In light of the changed, pandemic related circumstances in 2020, more activities were carried out in the field of online communication, in particular on social media, with contests and promotional campaign of projects. As the annual event of the Programme the event for EC Day 2020 took place as an in-person event. The event "Hike along the border guards' paths" took place in September. A one-day hike gathered a group of 50 participants from Slovenia in Markovci, Slovenia where they learned about the Mura Raba Tour and Green Exercise projects. The participants were offered a hiking tour in the area of the Slovenian and Hungarian border however, the tour was carried out only on the Slovenian side due to travel restrictions in

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

place. The event was well accepted. It was a nice opportunity for the general public and representatives of various institutions to exchange experiences, opinions and socialize, although due to travel restrictions fewer people could participate, and unfortunately only from Slovenia. The event was promoted with media coverage.

Great emphasis was put on online communication, especially through social media in 2020. The Programme website in all three language versions was continuously updated, 20 news articles were published (news concerning the activities and novelties of the Programme itself and news articles shedding light on project activities); 155 people subscribed to the Programme Newsletter and received a total of 17 e-newsletters. In 2020, as many as 5,076 visitors visited the Programme website making a total of 21,426 visits. The Programme is building social media presence via its Facebook page with the activities of the Programme and projects being regularly posted. During its operation, 254 people signed up and liked the page, a total of 72 posts were published and the highest number of people reached by a single post was 4,900. In addition to single posts of the diverse project and Programme-related topics, two project promotion campaigns were designed. To make project results visible on social media, an online artwork contest was organised for the general public with the topic of neighbourhood which was also the leading topic of the 30th Anniversary of Interreg.

Financial data

The Programme is financially well on track. The Programme committed all available funds and its reimbursement ratio of 62% is among top EU CBC Programme performers. The FLC carried out its tasks continuously without any major problems. By the MC meeting on 13 January 2021, 666 reports were checked, which financially amounts to EUR 10.5 million in ERDF. The MA submitted 137 project reports to the Certifying Authority, which is responsible for reimbursing funds to projects as quickly as possible.

Four interim payment claims were sent to the Commission in 2020 amounting to EUR 2,955,269.13 in ERDF funding (EUR 3,636,771.00 of total eligible costs). Commission made regular payments following the receipt of reimbursement claims within a one-month deadline or earlier. At Programme level, the share of all contracted EU funds after the last four contracts were signed in the beginning of 2020 stood at 100% at the end of the year. All approved projects and TA projects are being implemented. Pre-financing of project activities is covered by the participating institutions' own resources. Six projects were completed in 2020 (eleven altogether), all others are still being implemented.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

3.1. Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	ATTRACTIVE REGION	<p>All funds available under PA1 were allocated to projects after the 5th submission deadline, so MC members decided to suspend the submission of project proposals under PA1.</p> <p>Altogether twelve projects were approved under this PA. By the end of 2020, seven projects were completed (Green Exercise, GO IN NATURE, ESCAPE, HBT, Guide2Visit, GardEN and Tele-ka-land) with all of them reaching the set objectives, main results and Programme indicators. It can be seen already at this point that projects do not spend 100% of the allocated funds. For this reason, the Programme is considering setting a</p>

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

		<p><i>new submission deadline for project proposals to allocate the remaining funds.</i></p> <p><i>Although projects are still affected by the pandemic, no major problems in terms of implementation were detected. Certain tourism-related activities could not be implemented (the tourism sector is closed) or will not have the immediate effect that was foreseen. Lead and project partners were supported by the JS with proposals on how to overcome the pandemic-related obstacles. In this context, COVID-19 Guidelines were published. The pandemic related issues that the projects faced were handled on a case-by-case basis (extending the duration of projects; cancelling of activities).</i></p>
2	COOPERATIVE REGION	<p><i>Subsidy contracts for four projects selected in the frame of the 6th deadline were signed at the beginning of 2020. At this stage, all the funding available under this PA has been allocated to projects. Altogether 12 projects were approved under this priority. Four (Right Profession II, E-ECONOMY, Back in the day and e-documenta Pannonica) have already been completed.</i></p> <p><i>Although projects were affected by the pandemic, no major problems were detected. Lead and project partners were supported by the JS with proposals on how to overcome pandemic-related obstacles. In this context, COVID-19 Guidelines were published. The pandemic related issues that the projects faced were handled on a case-by-case basis (extending the duration of projects; cancelling of activities).</i></p>
3	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	<p><i>Technical Assistance (TA) activities focus on financing the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Interreg SI-HU Programme, together with the activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for using the funds. The TA budget for the period 2014-2020 amounts to EUR 1,500,000.00 and comes from the ERDF.</i></p> <p><i>The following major activities were implemented under TA in 2020:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• activities regarding Programme implementation and monitoring;</i> <i>• information and publicity measures; organisation of the event "Hike along the border guards' paths" in the context of the EC DAY initiative (18 September 2020);</i> <i>• consultancy and support to partners of approved projects, and organisation of face-to-face meetings with LP/PP of approved projects in the frame of the 6th deadline;</i> <i>• preparation of three written procedures;</i> <i>• site visits for the approved projects carried out according to the site visit plan for 2020 in light of the pandemic;</i> <i>• preparation of Programme documents (COVID-19 Guidelines for the projects and FLC);</i> <i>• signing of four subsidy contracts;</i> <i>• preparation of a procurement procedure for external experts for the preparation of the IP SI-HU 2021-2027;</i> <i>• coordination of the preparation of the first impact evaluation (March 2020);</i>

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>no significant problems have been identified concerning the implementation of PA3 (Technical Assistance) at this stage.</i>
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3.2. Common and programme-specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Data for common and programme-specific indicators by investment priority transmitted using tables 1 to 2 below.

TABLE 1: Result indicators (by priority axis and specific objective); applies also to technical assistance priority axis

Automatic from SFC						ANNUAL VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1.1	Number of overnight stays in the programme area	Number	5,269,268	2014	5% increase 5,532,728					6,601,261		3,258,535				<p><i>official statistics</i></p> <p><i>The reason for such a low number is the fact that 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic which significantly affected the tourism sector.</i></p> <p><i>If we compare the number of overnight stays with 2019 standing at 6,289,194, we see a great difference.</i></p>

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

2.1	The level of cross-border cooperation at institutional level in the programme area	scale	3.05	2015	20% increase 3.66					3.58		3.82				
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TABLE 2: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority); applies also to technical assistance priority axes.

S – Selected operations F – Fully implemented operations*	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value ¹ (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
S	CO09	Increase in the expected number of visits to supported	Visits/Year	10,000	0	0	3,000	28,225	44,325	46,325	46,325					
F					0	0	0	0	0	21,833	30,882					Projects ESCAPE, Green Exercise,

¹ Targets are optional for technical assistance priority axes.

		<i>sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions (EU)</i>														<i>HBT, Guide2Visit, GardEN and Tele-ka-land were completed by the end of 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>
S	6c.2	<i>Number of people participating in interpretation and educational events related to the cultural and natural heritage (P)</i>	<i>Number</i>	2000	0	0	0	3,991	4,261	4,261	4,261					
F					0	0	0	0	0	559	4,213					<i>Projects ESCAPE, HBT, GO IN NATURE Guide2Visit, and Tele-ka-land were completed by the end of 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>
S	6c.3	<i>Number of joint cross-border touristic products/services newly developed (P)</i>	<i>Number</i>	12	0	0	8	75	95	96	96					
F					0	0	0	0	0	30	54					<i>Projects ESCAPE, Green Exercise HBT, GO IN NATURE, Guide2Visit, GardEN and Tele-ka-land were completed by the end of 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>

S	6c.4	Length of cycle tracks and footpaths	km	8	0	0	0	28.14	28.14	28.14	368.44*					<i>* The project Iron Curtain Cycling has a project indicator Length of interconnected cross-border cycle paths equipped with modern infrastructure – 344.3 km (Programme indicator 6.4c). In the beginning, this indicator was incorrectly put in the application form in meters and only later corrected to kilometres. Due to this correction, the Programme indicator is much higher.</i>
F					0	0	0	0	0	0.92	2.21					<i>Projects ESCAPE and Guide2Visis were completed by the end of 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>
S	11.1		Number	100	0	0	0	277	291	455	455					

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

F		<i>Number of institutions/org anizations involved in cross-border initiatives</i>			0	0	0	0	0	373	385				<i>Projects Right Profession, E-CONOMY, Back in the day and e-documenta Pannonica were completed in 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>
S	11.2	<i>Number of joint professional agreements and protocols</i>	<i>Number</i>	20	0	0	0	13	16	23	23				
F	0				0	0	0	0	4	13				<i>Projects Right Profession, E-CONOMY, Back in the day and e-documenta Pannonica were completed in 2020 and reported on these indicators.</i>	
S	3.1	<i>Number of successfully implemented projects</i>	<i>Number</i>	36	0	7	8	19	27	31	31				<i>The subsidy contract was not signed by the end of 2019 for 4 out of 31 approved projects.</i>
F					0	0	0	0	0	6	11				
S	3.2		<i>Number</i>	14	0	14	14	14	14	14	14				

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

F		Number of programme events			0	1	5	9	11	13	14				
S	3.3	Full-time equivalent positions financed by the Technical Assistance for the implementation of the Cooperation Programme	Number	9	0	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.66				
F					0	3.5	9.14	9.14	9.75	10.01	10.49				The number of FTEs already employed and co-financed by Technical Assistance.

* **S** - Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]

F - Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]

3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) – submitted in annual implementation reports from 2017 onwards

Reporting on financial indicators, key implementation steps, output and result indicators to act as milestones and targets for the performance framework (submitted starting with the report in 2017).

TABLE 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Observations (if necessary)
1	Financial indicator	P1.1	Amount of certified expenditure for Priority Axis 1	Euro	600,000.00	11,764,705.89	0	0	0	482,802.29	3,868,442.81	5,647,485.72	8,289,341.84				
1	Output indicator	CO09	Increase in the expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage	Visits / Year	800	20,000	0	0	0	0	12,653	22,353	33,794				

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

2	<i>Financial indicator</i>	<i>P2.1</i>	<i>Amount of certified expenditure for Priority Axis 2</i>	<i>Euro</i>	465,755.10	3,876,488.24	0	0	0	82,474	502,279.34	915,798.94	1,521,539.86				
2	<i>Output indicator</i>	<i>11b.1</i>	<i>Number of institutions /organizations involved in cross-border cooperation</i>	<i>Number</i>	12	100	0	0	0	0	337	383	410				
2	<i>Output indicator</i>	<i>11b.2</i>	<i>Number of joint professional agreements and protocols</i>	<i>Number</i>	3	20	0	0	0	0	4	14	14				

* Member States submit cumulative values for output indicators. Values for financial indicators are cumulative. Values for the key implementation steps are cumulative if the key implementation steps are expressed by a number or percentage. If the achievement is defined in a qualitative way, the table should indicate whether they are completed or not.

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

3.4. Financial data (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

TABLE 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level as set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014² [Model for transmission of financial data]³ and table 16 of the model for cooperation programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation Goal

Priority Axis	Fund	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	Total	11,764,706.00	85.00%	11,793,960.05	100.25%	11,533,125.38	8,677,541.63	73.76%	12
2	ERDF	Total	3,876,489.00	85.00%	3,968,943.10	102.38%	3,790,115.90	1,657,182.13	42.75%	12
3	ERDF	Total	3,000,000.00	50.00%	2,999,999.99	100.00%	2,999,999.99	1,239,071.28	41.30%	7
Total	ERDF		18,641,195.00	79.37%	18,762,903.14	100.65%	18,323,241.27	11,573,795.04	62.09%	31
Grand total			18,641,195.00	79.37%	18,762,903.14	100.65%	18,323,241.27	11,573,795.04	62.09%	31

² OJ L 286, 30.9.2014, p. 1.

³ Structured data required for the report on YEI which is to be submitted in April 2015 in accordance with Article 19(3) and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013.

Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)

Not applicable for the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary.

TABLE 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention (Article 112(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013) as set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 [Model for transmission of financial data] and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount selected for support (EUR)	Expenditure declared by the beneficiary to the MA
1	032 Local access roads (new build)	500,000	260,086.21
1	034 Other reconstructed or improved road (motorway, national, regional or local)	500,000	780,258.63
1	090 Cycle tracks and footpaths	1,500,000	1,190,042.40
1	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	1,500,000	2,410,527.26
1	093 Development and promotion of public tourism services	1,500,000	1,930,452.36
1	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	2,500,000	1,228,669.15
1	095 Development and promoting of public cultural and heritage services	2,000,000	877,505.62

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

2	119. Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance	1,000,000.00	734,717.34
2	120. Capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilize for reform at national, regional and local level	2,295,015.00	871,111.46
3	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	1,300,000.00	978.396,79
3	122 Evaluation and studies	100,000.00	114,386.30
3	123 Information and communication	100,000.00	146,288.19

Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount selected for support (EUR)	Expenditure declared by the beneficiary to the MA
1	01 non-repayable grant	10,000,000	8,677,541.63
2	01 non-repayable grant	3,295,015.00	1,657,182.13
3	01 non-repayable grant	1,500,000.00	1,239,071.28

Dimension 3 Territory Type

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
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ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

1	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	1,000,000.00
1	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5000 population)	4,000,000.00
1	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	5,000,000.00
2	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	1,647,508.00
2	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5000 population)	988,504.00
2	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	659,003.00
3	07 Not applicable	

TABLE 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area

1	2	3	4	5
	The amount of ERDF support* envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%)	Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%)

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020

		(column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)		(column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area ⁴				

* ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

⁴ In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out in Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the Programme that have become available during the previous financial year, including the name and reference period of the evaluation reports used.

In autumn 2018, the preparation of the tender and public procurement for the selection of the external experts began. The evaluators were selected in March 2019 and the evaluation was finished at the beginning of 2020. The First Impact Evaluation of the implementation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary (CP SI-HU 2014-2020) was performed by the external expert ZaVita (with sub-contractor Raskó BCA-Consulting Ltd.). Inter alia, the evaluation focused on finding answers to the evaluation questions (prepared by the Contracting Authority and published in the Terms of Reference - ToR) using evaluation methods and approaches, such as analysis of primary data and available statistical data; interviews with programme management structures, selected project partners and non-beneficiaries; e-surveys for programme structures and project target groups; well-targeted meetings; triangulation of various methods mentioned.

As the majority of the projects included in the study were still in the phase of implementation (projects approved within the last deadline have only just started), the scope of Impact I evaluation of the CP SI-HU 2014-2020 is limited. A more coherent impact evaluation will be performed within the second Impact evaluation.

Within the first priority axis (PA 1), the majority of activities focus on new tourism products as well as on networking and promotion of the region. Activities for educating local tourism service providers and establishing connections and networks among various stakeholders raise the awareness among the service providers of specific needs of tourists/visitors to the area. In addition to sustainable tourism product development, the projects include networking, workshops and trainings that have synergy effects, especially in terms of cross-border cooperation. The project's result change at the local level. The local communities' awareness about the opportunities offered by the region has increased. Particularly with regard to public transport, the cross-border area is still poorly connected. The tourism potential of the area, especially outside the large tourist centres (spa tourism as an example), is still underutilised.

Projects implemented within priority axis 2 (PA 2) generally focus on networking, cooperation and connecting of the institutions and organisations in the whole cross-border area. The main impact directly attributed to the Programme is the stakeholders' perception that it is necessary to establish connections and cooperation with partners across the border for the development of the whole region. This was clearly identified in surveys and interviews and serves as a good basis for future projects and activities. Another important impact is the increased capacity of the involved stakeholders and target groups. This was achieved through workshops, sharing of good practices, study visits and exchange of employees in the field of economic development of the area.

To achieve a greater and longer-lasting impact in the future, the evaluators' opinion is that the next CP should be more effectively built by fostering the achievements of projects already implemented. This can be done for example via strategic cross-border project(s), with capitalisation projects, linking the similar projects that are implemented at the same time, or via small project fund.

The CP SI-HU defined nine specific output indicators for two Investment Priorities (six indicators) and Technical Assistance (three indicators). An overview of all planned values, which take into consideration the planned achievements of 24 approved projects, shows that all respective target values for 2023 will be reached. It is even expected that the values of all output indicators will be significantly exceeded. Such an overview of Programme output indicators represents a useful tool for monitoring Programme progress and identifying areas of support where the generation of future projects can be stimulated. The JS has already used this approach before the deadline of the last (sixth) submission of project proposals and informed (via the website and workshops) potential applicants about the missing values of certain indicators, thus demonstrating what kind of projects the Programme aims to support.

The Programme defined three horizontal principles to which the approved projects should contribute: sustainable development (comprises overlapping social, environmental and economic activities), equal opportunities and non-discrimination (like adapted measures for enabling the experiencing of the tourism offer for physically impaired persons or employment of individuals from vulnerable groups) and equality between men and women. It was recommended for the future that a description should be included in the application form demonstrating how horizontal activities could be implemented. This content should not be scored with points but taken into consideration as a condition for project approval. As a result, a more realistic description and adequate assessment would take place, pointing out whether the proposed activities really do have a positive or just neutral contribution to a specific horizontal principle.

The evaluation indicates that the Programme and projects were presented to target groups efficiently and that target groups selected are adequate, however, in the next financial period, more attention should be focused on the exact definition of target groups (such as the general public) as well as on the description of the monitoring method to be used.

Projects under PA 1 have generally been more successful in reaching the following target audiences: the general public, SMEs and local public authorities. Projects within PA 2 were more successful in addressing regional and national public authorities, business support organisations and education/training centres and schools.

Almost all respondents to the survey (98 %) believe that the project addresses their needs properly, meaning that the target groups were adequately selected. Also, a high share of respondents (88%) is sure that the activity in which they participated will continue after the project has been completed and that project results will have a lasting impact (79% of respondents).

The current socio-economic development impacts the programme area and Programme objectives in a positive manner. Economic development trends have been very favourable in the programme area since the beginning of the Programme period in 2014, which will have a positive impact on the programme area and supports the achievement of the Programme objectives. Apart from the demographic issues, social development trends are likewise positive with decreasing unemployment, increasing activity rate and higher net earnings of the employees. Territorial imbalances in this respect, however, have remained and rural areas are lagging behind the industrial and administrative centres. Rural areas (municipalities in these areas) participating in the Programme are much less active than the industrial and administrative centres.

The set overall and specific objectives of the CP SI-HU 2014-2020 were and remain relevant. Better use of underutilised natural and local values, strengthening of local economy in rural areas through sustainable tourism developments, and improving cross-border co-operation are very important objectives aimed at joint development of the cross-border region. The selected Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities (TO6 – IP 6c and TO11- IP 11b) appropriately supported the achievement of the set objectives and triggered positive changes in the cross-border region.

The implementation system for the Communication Strategy of the CP SI-HU is well established and effectively involves Programme partners at the Programme level (the JS) and in both Member States. Coordination among the JS employees who perform communication activities is sufficient and takes place on a daily basis. The partners involved consider the necessary information exchange as sufficient. Satisfactory communication activities of the Programme follow the phases of communication as outlined in the Communication Strategy and progress appropriately in terms of achieving indicators. Programme communication has covered all the envisaged communication activities and employed the entire range of communication tools, with the Programme website serving as the central source of information and the hub of all communication activities. Beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and target groups find the Programme useful and addressing the relevant needs of the programme area.

Thus far, Programme communication has covered all the envisaged communication activities and employed almost the entire range of communication tools: Programme website, Social media (Facebook), E-newsletter, Publications, Conferences, Seminars and workshops, Events for members of the general public, Media communication (press conferences, press releases, etc.) and Electronic media (radio, TV).

Containing all the necessary information and documents for project partners, applicants and the general public, the Programme website and workshops serve as the basic source of information. Regular updates and administration of the website by the JS provide news about projects, activities and events related to the Programme. Workshops and events are an important source of information for potential applicants.

According to the evaluation, the CP SI-HU 2014-2020 is a well-known and accepted operational programme for funding project ideas. Thus, it is believed that communication activities that aim to motivate potential beneficiaries and communicate the possibilities of using EU funds could be less intense. Considering that, communication activities should be more tailored focusing on networking among the projects and dissemination of project results, thus contributing to greater synergies of the projects/Programme and enabling better capitalisation of the results of the funded projects.

According to time plan, the due date for the Impact evaluation II is September 2022.

5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN (ARTICLE 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

a) Issues which affect the performance of the Programme and the measures taken.

In 2020, performance of the Programme was mostly affected by the pandemic. Project partners faced a variety of difficulties in project implementation: ban on socialising and closure of borders, lack of staff, etc. Jointly, solutions were found to help/enable project partners to implement their planned activities. Project applications were modified. Three scenarios were followed: adaption of activities implementation and online performance (partner meetings, workshops, conferences) if activities could not be carried out online in a given period and situation, they were postponed and the duration of projects was extended or certain activities were cancelled (e.g. closure conference). Certain tourism-related activities could not be implemented (the tourism sector is closed) or will not have the predicted effect.

Cooperation and communication have become more difficult in 2020. JS staff was and partly still is working from home which makes it more difficult to organise meetings with partners (trust in digital technology, openness). Also, on the project partners side high levels of staff absence related to pandemic were recorded (sick leaves, quarantine, waiting for work), which slowed down communication and increased the response time. Despite these obstacles, projects were supported by the JS mostly by providing proposals on how to adjust implementation activities, ensure a smooth implementation and overcome pandemic related obstacles. Also, COVID-19 Guidelines were published.

b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1 (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

An assessment of whether the progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate

6. CITIZENS' SUMMARY (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

The citizens' summary is prepared as a separate document and will be uploaded in the SFC and published on the Programme website.

7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Article 46 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the Managing Authority decided to use financial instruments, it must send to the Commission a specific report covering the financial instrument's operations as an annex to the Annual Implementation Report.

Not applicable for the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary 2014-2020.

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2019

8. WHERE APPROPRIATE, PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (Article 101(h) and Article 111(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Not applicable for the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary 2014-2020.

8.1. Major projects

Not applicable for the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary 2014-2020.

TABLE 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP 1. completed 2. approved 3. submitted 4. planned for notification/submission to Commission	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification/submission date (if applicable) (year, quarter)	Date of tacit agreement / approval by Commission (if applicable)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axis/Investment priorities	Current state of realisation – financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission)	Current state of realisation - physical progress Main implementation stage of the project 1. completed/in operation; 2. advanced construction; 3. construction;	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract ⁵ (if applicable)	Observations (if necessary)

⁵ In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).



ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2019

										compare d to total eligible cost)	4. procurement; 5. design			
												<type='S' maxlength=87 5 input='M'>	<type='D' input='M' '>	<type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'>

Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them.

Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme.



ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2019

8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

Not applicable for the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary.

TABLE 8: Joint action plans

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP 1. completed 2. > 50% implemented 3. Started 4. approved 5. submitted 6. planned	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP 1. normal 2. pilot 3. YEI	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations (if necessary)

Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

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PART B - REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEARS 2017, 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the Programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

FOR EACH PRIORITY AXIS - Assessment of the information provided above and progress towards achieving the objectives of the Programme, including the contribution of the ERDF to changes in the value of result indicators, when evidence is available from evaluations

N/A

9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

N/A



9.3. Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

N/A

9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), Subparagraph 1 (a) and (b), of REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013

10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations

N/A

10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

N/A

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 14(4), subparagraph 2 (a), (b), (c) and (f), of REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

11.1 Progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme



11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF

N/A

11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

Existence of so many funding opportunities creates an important foundation for synergies. Since many programmes are EU funded, they have the same legislative and strategic background, many of them share the same output and result indicators. In practice that means, that all approved projects of the CP SI-HU are related to macro-regional strategies as their activities support common goals and contribute to their respective result indicators

The contribution to the relevant macro-regional strategies is to be described by the project partners in the application, however, in this regard, no additional points are allocated to the projects during the quality check. The 24 projects approved by the end of 2020 under the Open Call of the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary contribute to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

In general, all 24 projects contribute to macro-regional strategies, but only some of them have a distinct impact on the targets and challenges set in the macro-regional framework and are listed below.

Priority areas of macro-regional strategies and projects contributing to their pillars and priority areas:

EUSDR (Slovenia, Hungary)

Pillar 1 Connection the Danube Region

PA 1.4 - Culture and tourism (Green exercise, Guide2Visit, Iron Curtain cycling)

Pillar 2 Protecting the Environment in the Danube region

2.3 Biodiversity, landscapes, air and soil quality (GO IN NATURE, Green line, GreenReg)

Pillar 3 Building prosperity in the Danube region

3.2 Competitiveness (E-ECONOMY, Sens network)

Pillar 4 – Strengthening the Danube region – to step up institutional capacity cooperation

4.1 Institutional capacity and cooperation (Right Profession, Back in the day, E-ECONOMY, capCROSSplan)

11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

N/A.



12. Financial information at priority axis and programme level (Articles 21(2) and 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

For the purpose of assessing progress towards the achievement of milestones and targets set for financial indicators in the years 2018 and 2023, table 4 of Part A of this Annex shall have the following two additional columns:

13	14
Data for the purpose of the performance review and performance framework	
Only for the report submitted in 2019: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries and certified to the Commission by 31/12/2018 Article 21(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013	Only for final implementation report: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries by 31/12/2023 and certified to the Commission Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

N/A	
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14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

N/A

