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Evaluation of the Operational Programme Cross-border Cooperation Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013

FINAL REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS

BWG	Bilateral working group
AA	Audit Authority
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
GOSP	Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy
FLC	First-level control
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
NDA	Hungarian National Development Agency
NORD	Hungarian National Office for Regional Development
OP	Operational Programme
PM Office	Prime Minister's Office
PPS	Purchasing power standard
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SF	Strategic Framework
STADAT	Statistical Data Tables
TA	Technical Assistance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 15 February 2015, the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy (the Contracting Authority) ordered an interim evaluation of the Operational Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013. The evaluation was carried out on two levels. The first interim report was submitted to the Contracting Authority by 1 June 2015 and the final report by 5 November 2015. The first report focused primarily on controlling the relevance of the strategy of the Programme, taking into account the new economic and social circumstances that arose in the period of 2007–2013. Moreover it was focused on the first information on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Programme. The final report carried out a more thorough analysis on the Programme and project level regarding the following main criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability / impact and cross-border added value.

The aim of the final report is to highlight achieved results and indicators of projects and programme. Recommendations for improving the implementation of the Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2014–2020 are also presented.

The Operational Programme Cross-border Cooperation Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013 was designed on the basis of bilateral cooperation between Hungary and Slovenia. The cooperation area – two statistical regions in Slovenia (Pomurje in Podravje) and two counties in Hungary (Vas, Zala) – includes great resemblance in socio-economic structure, in structural problems in the region and expresses interests of reinforced cooperation between two countries.

The key strategic focus of the Programme is to place the cross-border region on the European map as a cultural, health and natural precious area for living and working.

The main results of the Programme are:

- 123 received project applications, 43 projects approved (34,96%).
- Apart from two Calls for Proposals, an additional call was published for so-called Strategic Projects, in which 3 application were subbmited and two projects were approved, one for each Priority Axis.
- Most of the projects were approved in the framework of Activity Field 1.1: Development of Joint Tourist Destination and 1.2: Preservation and Development of Culture (both in equal share of 23,3%).
- One project more was approved in Priority Axis 2 (total number of 22 projects) than in Priority Axis 1 (total number of 21 projects).
- The available ERDF funds for the Programme were equally distributed between the two priority axes (50.98% for Priority Axis 1 and 49.02% for Priority Axis 2).
- Most of the approved projects were in the Pomurje region (64% of the total), and the most projects partners are from this region (41, 61% of the total).

- In the framework of the Programme, 43 projects were approved with 26 Lead Partners, which means that 60.4% of the institutions were Lead Partners in more than one project.
- Lead Partners and other project partners of the Pomurje region (49,63% of the total) received the highest share of ERDF funds.
- At country level, 56.48 % of the ERDF funds were allocated to Slovenia and 43.52 % to Hungary¹.
- In the Podravje region, which was included under the flexibility clause, five projects were approved which were allocated with 2.7 million EUR of ERDF funding (9.41% of the total ERDF funding allocated to the Programme).
- 27,222 participants were included in common trainings and education programmes, out of which 15,247 (56.01%) were women.

Distribution of the implemented projects regarding the Activity fields is the following:

- 10 projects were implemented on the field of Development of Joint Tourist Destination,
- 10 projects on the field of Preservation and Development of Culture,
- 7 projects on the field of Regional Development Cooperation,
- 7 projects on the field of Preventive Health care,
- 6 projects on the field of Environment Protection and Management,
- 2 projects on the field of Efficient Energy Use,
- 1 project on the field of Improvement of Cross border Traffic Connections.

The SI-HU 2007-2013 CBC Programme was implemented during an economically and socially difficult period. Both countries, Slovenia and Hungary, were hit seriously by the economic crisis. Changes in Governments characterized this period. The new Government in Hungary started profound reorganisation in the public administration from 2010 on and introduced several economic measures. Some of them imposed serious burdens on some sectors of the economy meanwhile others made life for the households easier.

The **relevance** of the overall objective of the Programme, “*to make the programme area more visible and to support sustainable and well-balanced development*”, remained valid during the whole implementation period. The relevance of most of the strategic objectives of the SI-HU 2007-2013 CBC Programme did not change either, due to the adverse effects of the crisis period, even if the importance of some of them mitigated.

The overall **effectiveness** of the Programme is positive in the sense that it triggered changes in addressing the relevant needs in the programme area and most of the policy objectives and priorities were achieved.

The achievements of the SI-HU CBC Programme 2007-2013 are in line with the first and third Guideline of the Strategic Framework of the EU since the SI-HU cross-border region has become more attractive for investment and working, and the Programme has

created opportunities for more jobs. The achievements are also in harmony with the first and third aims of European Territorial Cooperation since the programme encouraged entrepreneurship, supported the protection and management of natural and cultural resources, developed cooperation and facilitated joint use of infrastructures and encouraged networking and exchange of experience. It can be stated, that the SI-HU CBC 2007-2013 programme contributed to the development objectives of the EU at overall level.

Majority of the projects were implemented as planned considering the foreseen activities and budget. It can be stated that the use of funds was efficient in project level. The allocated funds were adequate at project level to produce the expected results.

The programme was very effective in addressing relevant needs and generating positive effects in tourism development, health care cooperation, strengthening regional and cultural identity and regional development. It was effective in improving environment protection but several areas foreseen in the OP were not tackled during the implementation. It was less effective to trigger positive changes in the use of renewable energy, improving cross-border accessibility and traffic, developing joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural assets and improving management capacities in the field of environment.

The *efficiency* of achievement of outputs and results of the CBC programme was affected by the delivery mechanisms and implementation procedures which were rated by the beneficiaries as quite efficient though several problems were identified during their operations:

- The assessment period of the application was long.
- In the beginning of the operation, the monitoring system- ISARR – did not function properly. After the elimination of the shortcomings, it became more user-friendly.
- The payment period of the ERDF funds - extending from the signing of the contract to the first transfer of funds to the Leading Partner - was extremely long and caused financial problems for the Leading Partners.
- Reporting was also a critical issue, it was complicated and time-consuming (according to the beneficiaries).
- The control mechanism of FLCs was different in Slovenia and Hungary.
- Most of the programme structures had a positive influence on the implementation of the projects.

Comparison of the allocation of the ERFD funds in the OP with the real allocation for priority themes shows that in this respect the programme was less efficient since several priority themes were not financed which were foreseen in the OP. The ERDF funds, particularly, were in traffic- and environment-related themes underutilized. For this reason, the cost efficiency at Programme and axes level is lower than expected. In several areas, the programme could not reach the expected results.

Assessing programme **results** means examining the changes happening within the group of programme beneficiaries due to the programme's interventions, in relation to the area needs, programme objectives and Community priorities. The examination has been conducted at priority axis and activity level. The assessment of results has been an essential input for the assessment of programme impacts.

The **impacts** of the Programme are linked to the wider objectives of the programme and are observed at the programme area level (increase of incomes, employment or improvement of the quality of life in the programming area).

Enhancement of cross-border **attractiveness and visibility** of the cooperation area were expected through the improvement and development of three key sectors – tourism, culture and traffic.

Sustainable and well-balanced development is reflected in regional development cooperation, preventative health care, environment protection and management, and efficient energy use.

The Programme, due to its size, could contribute to the **economic** recovery just a very limited way, and mainly in the field of tourism. The SI-HU CBC 2007-2013 programme successfully supported the increasing trend in tourism and was able to produce primary effects.

During the implementation of the projects, many new jobs were created. Though impact of the Programme in the field of **labour market** can manifest itself just in long term, with the help of the SI-HU CBC 2007-2013 programme more than 20 persons found new job, which continued also after the closure of the projects. In addition, several projects focused on improving the skills and competences of employees or unemployed people and enhanced their chances to find new jobs. Due to the results of some project activities, some new enterprises were also established.

The **social impact** of the Programme manifest itself in better health condition of the society and the reduction of drop outs from schools in the programme area. The health projects of the programme were very successful in addressing a wide circle of groups of society to improve physical and mental conditions.

Impact of the Programme on the improvement of **cross-border traffic** conditions is marginal. The public transport and railway interconnection remained poor in the CBC area.

Impact of the Programme on improving **environmental conditions** is important in the case a preserving **biodiversity**. Creation of the foundations of sustainable agriculture in the territory of National Parks (in Ōrség and Goričko, as well as along the Mura River) will have a long term positive effect on the protected species living in these areas. Impact

of the Programme on **other environmental areas** is negligible (waste management, waste water management, integrated pollution control).

Impact of the Programme on **efficient energy use** and use of **renewable energy** is low, though one project implemented concrete steps to reduce the use of electric energy (60 % reduction of electric energy for street lighting in the participating settlements, with a secondary effect of lower CO₂ emission). Use of renewable energy did not increase in the Programme area due to the projects aimed at improving its usage. In long term, however, the results of the projects (demonstration centres, pilot campaign) can be manifested in concrete actions to increase the use of renewable energy.

Cross-border cooperation is identified as a strong added value of the programme and is reflected by the projects on all activity fields. Within this financial period, the programme has created good preconditions for positive effects especially on the fields of rural development, tourism and health care. Implementations of project with partners from both sides of the border lead to the exchange of experiences and good practices. Within the majority of project teams, strong and consistent cross-border cooperation has formed which will result in the future by implementing new joint projects.

IZVRŠNI POVZETEK

Služba Vlade RS za razvoj in evropsko kohezijsko politiko (»naročnik«) je februarja 2015 naročila vrednotenje Operativnega programa Slovenija-Madžarska 2007-2013. Vrednotenje je bilo izvedeno dvostopenjsko, in sicer prvo vmesno vrednotenje, ki je bilo pripravljeno in predano naročniku 1. 6. 2015 ter končno naročilo, predano naročniku do 5. 11. 2015. Prvo vmesno poročilo je bilo bolj usmerjeno v preverjanje relevantnosti strategije Programa ob dejstvu novih okoliščin, tako ekonomskih kot socialnih, ki so se izvajalec v obdobju 2007-2013 ter preverbi uspešnosti, učinkovitosti, in trajnosti programa. Končno poročilo vmesnega vrednotenja podaja bolj poglobljeno analizo na programski in projektni ravni na podlagi naslednjih kriterijev: relevantnost, uspešnost, učinkovitost trajnost / učinek in čezmejna dodana vrednost.

Namen končnega poročila je prikazati dosežene rezultate in kazalnike projektov in programa. Podana so tudi priporočila za izboljšanje izvajanja Programa Slovenija-Madžarska 2014-2020.

Operativni program čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska je zasnovan na temelju bilateralnega sodelovanja med Madžarsko in Slovenijo. Območje sodelovanja, ki zajema dve statistični regiji na Slovenskem (Pomurje in Podravje) ter dve župniji na Madžarskem (Vas, Zala) obsega veliko podobnost v socio-ekonomski strukturi, v strukturnih problemih v regiji ter izraženim interesom okrepljenega sodelovanja med državama.

Ključna strateška usmeritev Programa je umestitev čezmejnega območja na evropski zemljevid kot kulturnega, zdravega in naravno dragocenega območja za življenje in delo.

Glavni rezultati Programa so:

- Prejetih je bilo 123 prijavnih vlog, od katerih je bilo odobrenih 43 (34,96 %).
- Poleg dveh javnih razpisov je bil naknadno objavljen še razpis za t.i. strateške projekte, na katerega so bile predložene 3 vloge, odobrena pa sta bila dva projekta, po en za vsako prednostno os.
- Največ projektov je bilo odobrenih v okviru specifičnih ciljev 1.1. Razvoj skupnih turističnih destinacij in 1.2. Ohranjanje in razvoj kulture (oba z deležem 23,3 %).
- Največ projektov (22) je bilo odobrenih na drugem razpisu.
- V okviru prednostne naloge 2 (22 odobrenih projektov) je bil odobren en projekt več kot v okviru prednostne naloge 1 (21 odobrenih projektov).
- Razpoložljiva ESRR sredstva programa so bila zelo enakomerno porazdeljena med prednostnima osema (50,98 % za prednostno os 1 in 49,02 za prednostno os 2).
- Največ odobrenih projektov je bilo v Pomurski regiji (64 % vseh), prav tako se v tej regiji nahaja največ projektnih partnerjev (41,61 % vseh).
- V okviru programa je bilo odobrenih 43 projektov, vodilnih partnerjev pa je 26, kar pomeni, da je bilo 60,4 % institucij vodilni partner v več kot enem projektu.
- Največ ESRR sredstev je bilo preko vodilnih in projektnih partnerjev v Pomurski regiji (49,63 % vseh).

- Na državnem nivoju je bilo 58,48 % sredstev ESRR namenjenih Sloveniji in 43,52 % Madžarski.
- Na območju podravske regije, ki je bila v program vključena pod določilom o fleksibilnosti je bilo odobrenih pet projektov, ki jim je bilo dodeljeno 2,7 milijona ESRR sredstev (9,41 % vseh ESRR sredstev namenjenih programu).
- 27.222 udeležencev na skupnih usposabljanjih ali izobraževanjih, od tega 15.247 (56.01%) žensk.

Porazdelitev izvedenih projektov po področjih dejavnosti je bila naslednja:

- 10 projektov na področju razvoja skupnih turističnih destinacij,
- 10 projektov na področju ohranjanja in razvoja kulture,
- 7 projektov na področju sodelovanja na področju regionalnega razvoja,
- 7 projektov na področju preventivnega zdravstvenega varstva,
- 6 projektov na področju varstva in upravljanja z okoljem,
- 2 projekta na področju učinkovite rabe energije,
- 7 projektov na področju izboljšanja čezmejnih prometnih povezav.

Operativni program čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska se je začel izvajati v socialno in ekonomsko težkem obdobju. Obe državi, Slovenijo in Madžarsko, je ekonomska kriza resno prizadela. To obdobje so zaznamovale vladne spremembe. Nova madžarska vlada je leta 2010 začela temeljito reorganizacijo javnega sektorja in uvedla več ekonomskih ukrepov. Medtem ko so eni prinesli težko breme nekaterim sektorjem gospodarstva, so drugi olajšali življenje gospodinjstvom.

Ustreznost splošnega cilja Programa »povečati prepoznavnost območja sodelovanja in podpreti trajnosten in uravnotežen lokalni razvoj« je ostal veljaven v celotnem obdobju izvajanja. Tudi ustreznost večine strateških ciljev Operativnega programa čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska se zaradi negativnih učinkov v obdobju krize ni spremenila, čeprav so nekateri postali manj pomembni.

Splošna **uspešnost** programa je pozitivna, saj je sprožila spremembe z obravnavanjem ustreznih potreb v programskem območju, zato je bilo doseženih večina ciljev in prednostnih nalog politike.

Dosežki čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska Programa 2007-2013 so v skladu s prvo in tretjo smernico strateškega okvira EU, saj je postala čezmejna regija Slovenija-Madžarska privlačnejša za naložbe in delo. Program je ustvaril priložnosti za nova delovna mesta. Dosežki so skladni tudi s prvim in tretjim ciljem Evropskega teritorialnega sodelovanja, saj je program spodbudil podjetništvo, podprl varstvo in upravljanje naravnih in kulturnih virov, razvil sodelovanje in olajšal skupno uporabo infrastrukture ter spodbudil mrežno povezovanje in izmenjavo izkušenj. Iz tega izhaja, da je program čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska 2007-2013 prispeval k razvoju skupnih ciljev EU.

Večina projektov je bila izvedena v skladu z načrti glede na predvidene dejavnosti in proračun. Uporaba sredstev na projektni ravni je bila učinkovita in dodeljena sredstva so bila ustrezna za izvedbo pričakovanih rezultatov.

Program je bil zelo uspešen v obravnavanju ustreznih potreb in ustvarjanju pozitivnih učinkov v razvoju turizma, sodelovanju na področju zdravja, krepitvi regionalnih in kulturnih identitet in regionalnem razvoju. Uspešen je bil v izboljšanju varstva okolja, toda nekaj področij, ki so bila predvidena v OP, ni bilo izvedenih. Program je bil manj uspešen pri sprožanju pozitivnih sprememb rabe obnovljivih virov energije, izboljšanju čezmejne dostopnosti in prometa, razvoju skupnih upravljavskih sposobnosti za varovanje in ohranjanje naravnih in kulturnih bogastev ter izboljšanju upravljavskih sposobnosti na področju okolja.

Na **učinkovitost** doseženih učinkov in rezultatov programa čezmejnega sodelovanja so vplivali izvedbeni mehanizmi in administrativni postopki, ki so jih upravičenci ocenili kot precej učinkovite, kljub ugotovljenim težavam, ki so nastale tekom izvajanja projektov:

- Dolgo obdobje ocenjevanja prijavnih vlog.
- V začetku izvajanja projektov sistem za spremljanje – ISARR – ni primerno deloval. Ko so bile odpravljene začetne pomanjkljivosti, je postal bolj uporabniku prijazen.
- Izplačevanje ESRR sredstev – obdobje od podpisa pogodbe do prvega izplačila vodilnemu partnerju je bilo zelo dolgo in je vodilnim partnerjem povzročalo finančne težave.
- Ključni problem je bilo tudi poročanje, saj je bilo (po mnenju upravičencev) zapleteno in zamudno.
- Nadzorni mehanizem (FLC) se je razlikoval v Sloveniji in na Madžarskem.
- Večina programskih struktur je imela pozitiven vpliv na izvajanje projektov.

Primerjava razporeditve sredstev ESRR v OP z dejansko dodelitvijo sredstev po posamezni prednostni tematiki kaže, da je bil na določenih tematskih področjih program manj učinkovit, saj več prednostnih tem, ki so bile predvidene v OP, ni bilo financiranih. Manj ESRR sredstev je bilo dodeljenih zlasti pri temah, ki se nanašajo na promet in okolje. Posledično je stroškovna učinkovitost programa po tematskih področjih nižja od pričakovane. Na več področjih programu ni uspelo doseči pričakovanih rezultatov.

Ocenjevanje **rezultatov** programa pomeni preučevanje sprememb, ki se dogajajo znotraj skupine upravičencev programa zaradi delovanja programa, v povezavi s potrebami območja ter programskimi cilji in prioritetami Skupnosti. Pregled je bil opravljen na področju prednostne naloge in na ravni dejavnosti. Ocena rezultatov je ključen dejavnik za oceno vplivov programa.

Učinki programa so povezani s širšimi cilji programa in se spremljajo na ravni programskega območja (zvišanje dohodkov, zaposlitev ali izboljšanje kakovosti življenja v programskem območju).

Okrepitev čezmejne **privlačnosti in prepoznavnosti** na območju sodelovanja je bila pričakovana v obliki izboljšanja in razvoja treh ključnih sektorjev - turizma, kulture in prometa.

Trajnostni in uravnotežen razvoj se odraža v sodelovanju na področju regionalnega razvoja, preventivnega zdravstvenega varstva, varstva in upravljanja z okoljem in učinkovite rabe energije.

Zaradi svoje velikosti bi lahko, na omejen način, Program prispeval k **gospodarskemu okrevanju**, predvsem na področju turizma. Program čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska 2007 – 2013 je uspešno podprl naraščajoči trend v turizmu in proizvedel primarne učinke.

Tekom izvajanja projektov je bilo ustvarjenih več novih delovnih mest. Čeprav je vpliv Programa na področju **trga dela** lahko viden samo na dolgi rok, je s pomočjo programa čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Madžarska 2007 – 2013 20 oseb našlo novo zaposlitev, ki so se ohranile tudi po zaključku projektov. Številni projekti so se osredotočili na izboljšanje spretnosti in kompetenc zaposlenih ali nezaposlenih oseb in povečali njihove možnosti pri iskanju zaposlitve. Zaradi rezultatov nekaterih projektnih dejavnosti je bilo ustanovljenih tudi nekaj novih podjetij.

Družbeni vpliv Programa se na programskem območju kaže v boljšem zdravstvenem stanju družbe in zmanjšanju števila mladih, ki predčasno prekinajo šolanje. Zdravstveni projekti so bili zelo uspešni pri izboljšanju telesnih in duševnih pogojev širokega kroga družbenih skupin.

Vpliv programa na izboljšanje **čezmejnih prometnih** razmer je zanemarljiv. Javni prevoz in medsebojna železniška povezava sta na območju programa čezmejnega sodelovanja ostala slaba.

Vpliv programa na izboljšanje **okoljskih pogojev** je pomemben za ohranjanje **biotske raznovrstnosti**. Ustvarjanje temeljev trajnostnega kmetijstva na območju nacionalnih parkov (Őrség in Goričko, kot tudi ob reki Muri) bo imelo dolgoročno pozitiven učinek na zavarovane vrste, ki živijo na teh območjih. Vpliv programa **na drugih okoljskih področjih** je zanemarljiv (ravljanje z odpadki, upravljanje odpadne vode, celovit nadzor onesnaževanja).

Vpliv Programa na **učinkovito rabo energije in uporabo obnovljivih virov energije** je nizek, čeprav je en projekt izvajal konkretne korake za zmanjšanje rabe električne energije (60% zmanjšanje električne energije za javno razsvetljavo v sodelujočih naseljih, s sekundarnim učinkom znižanj emisij CO₂). Uporaba obnovljivih virov energije se v programskem območju ni povečala zaradi projektov, ki so bili namenjeni izboljšanju njihove uporabe, vendar pa na dolgi rok rezultati projektov (demonstracijski centri,

pilotne promocije) lahko vodijo v konkretne ukrepe za povečanje uporabe obnovljivih virov energije.

Čezmejno sodelovanje je opredeljeno kot močna dodana vrednost programa, ki se odraža v projektih na vseh področjih dejavnosti. V tem finančnem obdobju je program ustvaril dobre predpogoje za pozitivne učinke, zlasti na področju razvoja podeželja, turizma in zdravstva. Izvedbe projekta s partnerji z obeh strani meje so privedle do izmenjave izkušenj in dobrih praks. V večini projektnih skupin se je oblikovalo močno in dosledno čezmejno sodelovanje, ki bo tudi v prihodnje odražalo pripravo in izvajanje novih skupnih projektov.

VEZET I ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

2015. február 15-én a Szlovén Köztársaság Fejlesztéséért és Európai Kohéziós Politikáért felelős Kormányhivatala (Szerződés Hatóság) elrendelte a Szlovénia - Magyarország OP 2007-2013 időközi értékelését. Az értékelés két szinten történt. Az első közbeszerzési jelentés benyújtására 2015. június 1-én, míg a végső jelentés átadására 2015. november 5-én került sor a Szerződés Hatóság részére. Az első jelentés a Program stratégiájának relevanciájára fókuszált, figyelembe véve az új gazdasági és társadalmi körülményeket, amelyek a 2007-2013 időszakban léptek fel. Az első információkat nyújtott továbbá a Program eredményességéről, hatékonyságáról és fenntarthatóságáról. A zárójelentés részletesebb elemzést adott az értékelés összes kritériumával kapcsolatban mind a Program, mind a projektek szintjén, a következő kritériumok vonatkozásában: relevancia, eredményesség, hatékonyság, fenntarthatóság/hatás és határon átnyúló hozzáadott érték.

A végső jelentés célja a projektek és a Program elért eredményeinek és indikátorainak bemutatása. Javaslatok készültek továbbá a 2014-2020 Szlovénia - Magyarország együttműködési program megvalósításával kapcsolatban is.

A Szlovénia - Magyarország Határon Átnyúló Együttműködési Program tervezése Szlovénia, illetve Magyarország bilaterális együttműködésén alapult. Az együttműködési területek: Szlovéniából két statisztikai régió (Pomurje és Podravje), Magyarországról két megye (Vas és Zala). Az érintett területek nagyon hasonló társadalmi-gazdasági struktúrával rendelkeznek, illetve strukturális problémákkal küzdenek, valamint kifejezték készségüket a két ország közötti együttműködés megteremtésére.

A Program fő stratégia célja a ***“közös határmenti terület elhelyezése az európai térképen, mint kulturális, egészségügyi és természeti szempontból értékes terület, ahol érdemes élni és dolgozni”***.

A Program főbb eredményei:

- 123 pályázat került benyújtásra, ebből 43 projektet hagytak jóvá (34,36%)
- A két pályázati felhíváson kívül egy harmadik felhívás is publikálásra került úgynevezett stratégiai projektek megvalósítására, amelynek keretében 3 pályázatot nyújtottak be, amelyből kettőt hagytak jóvá, mindkét prioritási tengely esetében egyet-egyet.
- A legtöbb projektet az első prioritási tengelyhez tartozó 1.1 Közös turisztikai desztinációk fejlesztése, illetve az 1.2 A kultúra megőrzése és fejlesztése célterületen hagyták jóvá (23,3 % mindkét területen).
- A 2. Prioritási tengely esetében eggyel több projektet hagytak jóvá, mint az 1. Prioritási tengelynél (22, ill. 21 projekt)
- Az ERFA támogatás nagyjából egyenlő arányban oszlik meg a két prioritási tengely között (50,98 % az első, és 49,02 % a második prioritási tengelyre)
- A legtöbb jóváhagyott projekttel Pomurje régió rendelkezik (64 %), és innen származik a legtöbb projekt partner is (41,61 %).

- A Program keretében 43 projekt jóváhagyására került sor, 26 Vezet Partner részvételével, ami azt jelenti, hogy az intézmények 60,4 %-a több, mint egy projektben volt vezet partner.
- A legtöbb ERFA támogatást a Pomurje régióból származó Vezet és projekt partnerek kapták (49,63 %).
- Az országok szintjén az ERFA támogatás 56,48 %-át kapta Szlovénia, és 43,52 %-át Magyarország.
- Podravje régió területén, amely a "rugalmassági záradék" alapján került a Programba, öt projektet hagytak jóvá és 2,7 millió EUR ERFA támogatást kapott (9,41 %-a a teljes ERFA támogatásnak).
- A közös tréning és képzési programokon 27,222 f vett részt, ebből 15,247 f (56,01 %) volt a n .

A tevékenységi területeken a projektek megoszlása:

- 10 projekt valósult meg a *Közös Turisztikai Desztinációk Fejlesztése* területén
- 10 projekt a *Kultúra Meg őrzése és Fejlesztése* területén
- 7 projekt a *Regionális Együttműködés Fejlesztése* területén
- 7 projekt a *Prevenációs Egészség-gondoskodás* területén
- 6 projekt a *Környezetvédelem és Menedzsment* területén
- 2 projekt a *Hatékony Energiafelhasználás* területén
- 1 projekt a *Határon Átnyúló Közlekedési Kapcsolatok Javítása* területén

A Szlovénia-Magyarország Határon Átnyúló Együttműködési Program 2007-2013 megvalósítására egy gazdaságilag és társadalmilag nehéz időszakban került sor. Mindkét országot komoly gazdasági válság sújtotta és kormányváltások jellemezték ezt az időszakot. Magyarországon az új kormány a közsférában mélyreható változásokat indított 2010-ben, illetve számos gazdasági intézkedést vezetett be. Az intézkedések egy része komoly terheket rótt a gazdaság egyes ágazataira, míg más intézkedések megkönnyítették a háztartások életét.

A program átfogó céljának, azaz „*a programterület láthatóbbá tétele, illetve a fenntartható és kiegyensúlyozott fejlődés támogatása*” **relevanciája** érvényes maradt a megvalósítás teljes időtartama alatt. A Szlovénia-Magyarország Határon Átnyúló Együttműködési Program 2007-2013 stratégiai céljai többségének a relevanciája szintén nem változott a válság időszakának negatív hatásai ellenére, még ha egyes célok jelentősége mérséklődött.

A program átfogó **eredményessége** pozitív abban az értelemben, hogy változásokat indított el a program terület igényeinek kielégítése érdekében és a legtöbb cél és prioritás elérésre került.

A Szlovénia-Magyarország Határon Átnyúló Együttműködési Program 2007-2013 elért eredményei összhangban vannak az EU Stratégiai Keret első és harmadik irányelvével, mivel a szlovén-magyar határmenti régió vonzóbbá vált a befektetések és a munkavállalás

számára, és a Program több munkahely-lehet séget is teremtett. Az elért eredmények összhangban vannak továbbá az Európai Területi Együttm ködés els és harmadik céljával, mivel a Program ösztönözte a vállalkozások kialakítását, támogatta a természeti és kulturális er források védelmét és menedzselését, fejlesztette az együttm ködést és el segítette az infrastruktúra közös használatát, bátorította a hálózatépítést és a tapasztalatok cseréjét. Kijelenthet , hogy a Program hozzájárult az EU átfogó fejlesztési céljainak eléréséhez.

A projektek többsége úgy valósult meg, ahogy tervezték, figyelembe véve a tervezett tevékenységeket és költségvetést. Kijelenthet , hogy a támogatások felhasználása eredményes volt a projektek szintjén. Az allokált támogatások elegend ek voltak a projektek szintjén a várt eredmények eléréséhez.

A program nagyon eredményes volt az igények kielégítésében és pozitív hatások generálásában a turizmus fejlesztése, az egészségügyi együttm ködés, a regionális és kulturális identitás er sítése és a regionális fejlesztés területén. Eredményes volt a környezetvédelem javítása területén is, bár több, az OP-ban tervezett területet nem érintett a megvalósítás során. Kevésbé volt hatékony, hogy pozitív változásokat eredményezzen a megújuló energia felhasználása terén, a határon átnyúló elérhet ség és közlekedés javításában, közös menedzsment kapacitások fejlesztésében a természeti és kulturális er források meg rzése és konzerválása érdekében, illetve menedzsment kapacitások javításában a környezetvédelem területén.

Az outputok és eredmények elérésének hatékonyságát a CBC programban befolyásolták a beadási mechanizmusok (pályázat, jelentések) és megvalósítási eljárások, amelyeket a Kedvezményezettek általában hatékonynak min sítettek, bár több probléma is felmerült a m ködés során:

- A pályázatok értékelési id szaka túl hosszú volt
- A m ködés kezdetén az monitoring rendszer - ISARR – nem m ködött megfelelő en. A hiányosságok megszüntetése után azonban már sokkal felhasználó-barátiabb lett a rendszer.
- Az ERFA támogatás kifizetési id szaka – a szerz dés aláírásától a Vezet Partnernek történt els kifizetésig – rendkívül hosszú volt és a Vezet partnereknek pénzügyi problémákat okozott.
- A jelentések készítése szintén kritikus kérdés volt, komplikált és id igényes (a Kedvezményezettek szerint).
- Az FLC-k (els szint ellen rzés) ellen rzési mechanizmusa eltér volt Szlovéniában és Magyarországon
- A legtöbb irányító szerv pozitívan befolyásolta a projektek megvalósítását

Az ERFA támogatás OP szerinti allokációjának összehasonlítása a prioritási témákra történt tényleges allokációjával viszont azt mutatja, hogy ebben a tekintetben a program kevésbé volt eredményes, mivel több prioritási területen nem történt finanszírozás, miközben az OP-ban azt tervezték. Az ERFA támogatás különösen a közlekedési és a

környezetvédelmi területeken volt alulhasznosítva. E miatt költséghatékonyság a program és a tengelyek szintjén alacsonyabb volt, mint várták. Több területen a program nem érte el a kitűzött célokat.

A program **eredményeinek** értékelése azoknak a változásoknak a vizsgálatát jelenti, amelyek a kedvezményezettek csoportjain belül történik a program beavatkozásainak hatására a programterület igényeinek, a program céljainak és a Közösségi prioritásoknak a vonatkozásban. A vizsgálatot prioritási tengelyek és a tevékenységek szintjén végeztük el. Az eredmények értékelése lényeges inputot jelentett a program hatásainak értékeléséhez.

A program **hatásai** a program átfogó céljaihoz kapcsolódnak és a program terület szintjén figyelhető meg (jövedelmek növekedése, foglalkoztatás vagy az élet minőségének a javulása a programozási területen).

A határon átnyúló **vonzer és láthatóság** növekedését az együttműködési területen három kulcsszektor fejlesztésén keresztül tervezték – turizmus, kultúra és közlekedés.

A **fenntartható és kiegyensúlyozott fejlődést** a regionális fejlesztési együttműködés, a prevenció, egészség-gondoskodás, a környezetvédelem és a hatékony energiafelhasználás célozta.

A Program, méretének következtében, a **gazdasági** élénküléshez csak korlátozott módon járulhatott hozzá, és elsősorban a turizmus területén. A SI-HU CBC 2007-2013 Program sikeresen támogatta a turizmus növekvő trendjét és elsődleges hatásokat tudott kiváltani.

A projektek megvalósítása során több új munkahely jött létre. Habár a Program hatása a **munkaerőpiacra** csak hosszabb távon nyilvánul meg, a SI-HU CBC 2007-2013 Program segítségével több, mint 200 új munkát, ami a projektek lezárása után is folytatódott. Ezen felül, több projekt is fókuszált a munkavállalók és munkanélküliek tudásának és kompetenciájának javítására és növelte esélyüket új munkát találni. Néhány projekt tevékenységének eredményeképp új vállalkozások is létrejöttek.

A program **társadalmi hatása** a program területén a társadalom jobb egészségi állapotában, illetve az iskolai lemorzsolódás csökkenésben nyilvánul meg. A program egészségügyi projektjei nagyon sikeresen szólították meg a társadalom széles csoportjait, hogy javítsák fizikai és mentális állapotukat.

A program hatása a **határon átnyúló közlekedés** feltételei javításának tekintetében csak marginális. A közúti közösségi és vasúti közlekedés gyenge maradt a határmenti területen.

A program hatása a **környezeti feltételek** javításában nagyon jelentős a **biodiverzitás** megőrzésének területén. A fenntartható mezőgazdaság alapjainak megteremtése a

Nemzeti Parkok területén (részeg, Goričko, valamint a Mura vidéke) hosszú távú pozitív hatással lesz a védett fajokra, amelyek ezeken a területeken élnek. A program hatása a **többi környezetet érint területre** elhanyagolható (hulladékgazdálkodás, szennyvízkezelés, integrált szennyezés elleni védekezés).

A program hatása a **hatékony energia**-, valamint a **megújuló energia** felhasználásra alacsony, bár az egyik projekt keretében konkrét lépések történtek az elektromos energia felhasználásának csökkentésére (60 %-os elektromos-energia felhasználás csökkenés az utcai világításban a résztvevő településeken, másodlagos hatásként a CO₂ kibocsátás csökkenésével). A megújuló energia felhasználása a program területén az erre irányuló projektek eredményeképp nem növekedett. Hosszú távon azonban a projektek eredménye (bemutató központok, kísérleti projektek) konkrét lépésekben nyilvánulhat meg a megújuló energia-felhasználás terén.

A **határon átnyúló kooperáció** a program jelentős hozzáadott értéke volt és az összes tevékenységi területen jelentkezett. Ebben a pénzügyi időszakban a program jó előfeltételeket teremtett a pozitív hatásoknak, különösen a vidékfejlesztés, a turizmus és az egészségügy területén. A projektek megvalósítása a határ két oldalán lévő partnerek együttműködésében a tapasztalatok és jó gyakorlatok cseréjéhez vezet. A projekt csapatainak többségében erős és konzisztens határon átnyúló együttműködés alakult ki, amely a jövőben is közös projektek megvalósítását eredményezheti.

I. PURPOSE, PROGRESS AND EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the Operational Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013 is performed on the basis of Articles 47, 48, 67 and 68 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down the general provisions of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, and the repealed Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, as well as on the basis of provisions of the Operational Programme (Chapter 11: Publicity and Communication) and Communication plan OP SI-HU 2007–2013.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide useful information for assessing the effects of the Programme to the Managing Authority (MA), Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and other partners representing the Programme. Apart from these, the main recipients of the evaluation report are the European Commission, project partners and other interested subjects.

Evaluation results will be published on the Programme web page.

The evaluation was carried out on two levels:

- The first interim report was prepared and submitted to the Contracting Authority in June 2015. The first report comprised a primary analysis of the achieved outcomes and indicators on the programme level, an assessment of socio-economic factors and effects of the expected results, a review of approved projects from the perspectives of their geographical dispersal, activity fields and types of partnership, and an analysis of the implementation and achieved results. The data used for the elaboration of the first report was based on a desk analysis of programme documents (OP, annual reports, and internal evaluation of each call) and an e-survey conducted among beneficiaries.
- The final report is primarily focused on the evaluation of programme results from the perspective of implementation of supported projects with an analysis of result and financial indicators on the project and programme level. From the implementation perspective, communication activities and programme structures are also evaluated.

Concretely, the evaluation, which consists of both reports, is focused on the following evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the programme for achieving results and effects in accordance with programme objectives. Moreover, special stress is put on key programme issues like the implementation of procedures and management structure, with an emphasis on relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The final report is aimed at assessing whether all programme objectives and indicators from programme documents have been achieved, as well as to show the planned and above all the achieved results of the individual projects co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund.

This final report was drawn up based on provisions already approved in the tender document and on the evaluator's proposal for additional proposals. The evaluation process in the preparation of report has been conducted in dialogue with the MA and the JTS.

The report is divided into six main parts:

- The first chapter presents an evaluation of the programme strategy and an analysis of the relevance of programme results. This section aims to answer questions such as: Is the programme consistent with the challenges and concerns of the area and the needs of the target groups? Is the programme efficient? What is the financial realisation of the programme and its division by priority axis and the involved regions? Is the programme effective? What is the impact of the programme?
- In the second chapter focus is given to the project level and to an evaluation of their results and how they correspond with the programme intervention, the needs of the area and programme objectives. This section aims to present findings in the following areas: how the projects addressed horizontal policies; which projects can be regarded as good practices in the fields of innovation, ability to create synergies, effectiveness, efficiency, added value, cross-border effect and sustainability; the partnership structure; the added value of the approved projects, their sustainability and impact.
- The focus of the third chapter is on indicators. The aim of the evaluation of the programme and project indicators is to answer the following questions: Have the pre-set programme indicators on the level of priority areas been fulfilled? Have project-specific result indicators been achieved? What are the most tangible results of the project?
- The fourth chapter deals with communication activities of the programme. The evaluation of the communication plan and related activities seeks the answer to the following questions: How are indicators of the communication plan related to the general objectives? Are the communication activities efficient? Which promotional measures could be strengthened? Were the communicational tools appropriate and effective?
- In the fifth chapter we focus on programme structures and present the findings of an evaluation based on a triangulation of their effectiveness, implementation efficiency and level of cooperation.
- The sixth chapter concludes the final evaluation report, summarising the main findings and presenting key recommendations, which will be more relevant for the implementation of the Operational Programme SI-HU 2014–2020, considering the time of the evaluation.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology and data sources

Different methods and techniques were used for evaluating different levels of the Programme (collecting information/data, data analysis), taking into account our past experience and the Commission's instructions for the preparation of an appropriate Programme evaluation.

The choice of evaluation methods depended on a number of closely inter-related variables, most notably:

- the role of the decision-maker;
- evaluation objectives;
- the availability of human and financial resources and time.

Data collection included the use of primary sources acquired directly from the MA and the JTS, as well as own researches (questionnaires, meetings with the MA and the JTS, interviews with beneficiaries) as secondary sources, drawing from existing monitoring systems (ISARR), from official statistical records and other documents received from the MA/JTS or obtained independently.

For secondary sources of information, the evaluator used the ISARR monitoring system, which allows the analysis of procedural and financial results. The analysis of performance in outcome and output indicators at the Programme level was performed using Annual reports of the Programme.

Additional indicators obtained from official statistical sources (national statistics offices and other Slovenian and Hungarian institutions) were used for assessing the socio-economic circumstances, thus testing the relevance of the Programme strategy with respect to new circumstances (Table 1).

Table 1: Main sources of statistical data

Sector	SI source	HU source
Geography	SI-STAT	Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), STADAT
Demography	SI-STAT	HCSO, STADAT
Unemployment	ZRSZZ	HCSO, STADAT
Economy	SI-STAT, AJPES, UMAR	HCSO, STADAT
Tourism	SI-STAT	HCSO, STADAT
Health	SI-STAT	HCSO, STADAT
Culture	SI-STAT	HCSO, STADAT
Energy	SI-STAT	HCSO, STADAT
Transport	SI-STAT, DI (Direkcija RS za infrastrukturo)	HCSO, STADAT
Environment	SI-STAT, ARSO	HCSO, STADAT

The methods used in the analysis can be divided in three categories:

- for organising the evaluation: these were the basic methods used for forming programmes and the logical framework of the evaluation;
- for analysing changes in the field: the methods aimed at monitoring the changes resulting from the procedures (questionnaires and interviews followed by desk analysis);
- for expressing opinions or classification: expert opinion based on the performed analysis.

The following basic methods were used in preparing the final report:

- **Desk analysis** – a review of programme documents and literature. The review included information from texts and documents of the Communities, national and local documents, programme documents, annual reports, the ISARR system, etc. The review of the literature and documents provided the structure for the theory of change. Subsequently, the results allowed a triangulation of findings in synergy with other data types.
- **Meetings** with key programme stakeholders (the MA, the JTS) to clarify specific parts of the programme. Regular interaction with the Contracting Authority also took place by email and telephone.
- **Statistical data analysis** – context-based statistical data and data from the ISARR system.
- **Interviews** were conducted with beneficiaries of all 43 approved projects, providing a relevant source of data based on the experiences of beneficiaries. Interviews were conducted by evaluators, listed on the second page of this report.
- **Questionnaires** were sent to the programme structures, using the contacts provided by the JTS. The questionnaires contained forms for evaluating other structures and for identifying projects of good practice (as presented in section 4.3).

Cartographic material was prepared using GIS tools.

In order to identify projects that could serve as examples of good practice (as presented in section 4.3), an evaluation spreadsheet containing a database of all approved projects was sent to the following programme structures: the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat, the Hungarian Info Point, the Slovenian first-level control and the Hungarian first-level control. On the spreadsheet, each structure could choose five projects from each priority axis and evaluate them with grades from 1 to 5 (with 5 as the best grade) regarding the following aspects: innovation, ability to create synergies, effective implementation, efficiency of achieved objectives, added value, cross-border effect and sustainability. Cumulative grades were calculated and the best graded project was identified.

The cumulative grades that the projects received identified the examples of good practices in each evaluated aspect, which was then presented combined with the findings from the interviews.

2.2 Interviews with beneficiaries

Interviews with beneficiaries took place from the beginning of July to the end of August 2015. Based on prior agreement with each Lead Partner and a confirmation mail, which they also forwarded to project partners as a formal invitation, in-depth interviews were conducted, lasting two to three hours, depending on the size of the project partnership and the comments from participants. For each interview, an attendance list was signed and can be acquired from the author.

The form with questions that the interviewees were asked is presented in Annex 1. The interview covered the following topics: project and programme indicators, programme strategy, communication activities, programme structures, project sheet, and an in-depth conversation regarding the topics in order to identify examples of good practice. The total number of conducted interviews is 43, but the number of interviewees is much higher (a complete list is presented in the Annex 2), since many of the interviews included not only project leaders but also coordinators of activities, administrators, accountants, partners, etc.

Afterwards, the collected quantitative and qualitative data was analysed and the results are presented in this report.

2.3 Questionnaires for programme structures

In July 2015 a short questionnaire was sent to the programme structures, using the contacts provided by the JTS. The questionnaire contained two parts (presented in Annex 3):

- The first part featured a list of programme structures (the structure to which the questionnaire was sent excluded) and evaluation categories where they would enter a grade from 1 to 5 (with 5 as the highest grade).
- The second part listed all the approved projects, from which they could choose five projects for each priority axis and assess them with grades from 1 to 5 (with 5 as the highest grade) with regard to specified evaluation aspects.

The fact that not all of the structures had contact with many projects and thus some could not provide adequate data was taken into consideration. Therefore, the second part of the questionnaire was sent only to the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat, the Hungarian Info Point and both first-level controls (FLC).

The obtained data was analysed, combined with experiences of beneficiaries and the findings of the evaluation team, and presented in the final report.

2.4 Limitations to the evaluation

The main hindrances in preparing the final report were as follows:

→ High number of unfinished projects

For different reasons, 17 projects (39.5% of all) have not been concluded from the financial point of view at time of submission of this final report. The unavailability of the financial data required to present the final financial realisation of the programme resulted in a 21-day delay in the submission of the final report from the originally planned date. Unfortunately, the extension of the deadline does not mean that the necessary data could be provided, so the final report is unable to provide the final picture regarding the financial realisation.

→ Lack of cooperation of programme structures

The first questionnaires were sent to the programme structures on 2 July 2015, followed by a new, modified version on 13 July (due to some changes in the forms, coordinated with the JTS and the MA). By the first set deadline we received replies from the following structures: the MA, the JTS, the CA and the Info Point. Unfortunately, we have not received any reply from the Audit Authority and the second part of the questionnaire (with an evaluation of projects) from the Slovenian FLC.

Incomplete data means that the evaluation of the programme structures, presented in Chapter 7, could only be based on the data and comments received.

→ Absence of project managers/coordinators

In some of the projects from the first call that concluded more than two years ago, the project manager or coordinator that was actively involved in the project could not be found as they no longer work for the institution that was the Lead Partner. Furthermore, many project leaders/coordinators from the projects of the first call did not provide as many comments as leaders of projects of the second call, which may mean we did not get the most optimal data.

→ Collection of interim data only on an annual basis

Because the data is collected only on an annual basis, we were unable to obtain the data for achievement indicators of the communication plan for 2015. The presented data therefore only cover the period up to 31 December 2014.

3. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANCE OF PROGRAMME RESULTS

3.1 Relevance of the programme

The relevance of the programme is assessed by looking at the extent to which the objectives and design of the programme are consistent with:

- the challenges and concerns in the programme area, and
- the needs and priorities of target groups.

The relevance assessment includes an analysis of whether the objectives and the design of the programme are still appropriate at the time of the evaluation, given that circumstances have significantly changed since the programme was launched.

Based on a socio-economic analysis, the SWOT analysis of the OP SI-HU 2007–2013 defined the needs and opportunities of the cooperation area where the implementation of the programme can generate positive changes. The strategic objective of the programme and the strategy to achieve it were determined in line with the needs of the programme area. The specific objectives of the priority axes also reflected the needs.

The aim of Priority Axis 1 was to make the programme area more visible, while Priority Axis 2 focused on supporting sustainable and well-balanced development.

During the implementation of the programme, adverse economic and administrative changes occurred, strengthening the relevance of some strategic objectives, and reducing the relevance of others. Below, the strategy points to address the strategic objective are considered from this perspective:

Strategy objective 1 (SO1): Develop a competitive and sustainable cooperation area that offers access to work and income opportunities

The economic crisis that hit both countries in the middle of the programme period of confirmed the relevance of this strategic objective. The crisis increased unemployment so any effort to increase competitiveness and any opportunity to create jobs became more valuable. Several projects created new job opportunities or improved the possibilities of special target groups to find jobs. Nevertheless, due to the limited size of the programme, it could not improve the competitiveness of the programme area significantly.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 2 (SO2): Create preconditions for positive effects in the fields of rural development and tourism.

The adverse economic changes confirmed the relevance of this objective in the strategy. The opportunities in rural development and tourism are much higher than exploited in both countries. Rural development is a key issue in both countries. Although development of rural areas is mainly supported through national Rural Development Programmes, there was enough scope for cooperation in this field on cross-border level, particularly in non-agricultural activities.

Tourism can be one of the economic drivers on the cross-border level. The two countries' accession to the Schengen area has improved cooperation opportunities in this field. Moreover, the economic crisis did not hit the tourism sector in the programme area severely, which stresses the relevance of the strategy that supporting joint actions in this field might generate positive effects, particularly in rural areas where the potential for tourism is underused.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 3 (SO3): Develop joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural assets.

The crisis-related administrative changes and the decreased funding from state budgets for environmental protection and cultural assets decreased the relevance of this objective in the strategy in the sense that establishment of joint management capacities in these areas became much harder.

In Slovenia, managers of protected areas, the Institute for Nature Conservation and other public bodies in the field of environmental protection are forced to find additional funding in order to implement essential environmental measures. Also in Hungary, the reorganisation of the environmental protection administration, the cut in financial support for National Parks from the state budget and the decrease of the role of National Parks in national nature protection might have an adverse effect on the establishment and operation of joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural assets. This could be one of the reasons why only a marginal number of projects focused on joint management of natural assets.

Also, no joint management capacities for preservation of cultural assets were established during the implementation of the programme. The reasons could be administrative, but can also be seen in the lack of sustainable financing sources. It is worth mentioning, however, that during the implementation of the programme, valuable connections have been established between non-governmental organisations, institutions, non-profit civil organisations and on the people-to-people level. This can ensure the continuation of cooperation in cultural fields across the programme area.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 4 (SO4): Promote regional and cultural identity

The economic and administrative changes did not concern the relevance of this strategic objective. Minorities and ethnic groups live on both sides of the border. They have their own cultural and bilingual background, which also provides favourable conditions for cultural exchange between the majority population and the minority/ethnic groups. Awareness about neighbouring cultures is growing and it can lead to a better understanding of each other's traditions.

The programme area has a very rich and diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Promotion and revitalisation of cultural heritage is not only important from the perspective of preserving valuable historical buildings, monuments or folk traditions, but it can also be used to extend economic activity in such fields as cultural tourism or traditional handicraft industry.

Cross-border cooperation is an outstanding platform for minorities, and also for ethnic groups, to preserve and strengthen their cultural identity, to get each other acquainted with their cultural heritage and traditions, and further to exploit cultural heritage as a driver of economic activity.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 5 (SO5): Strengthen regional development and healthcare cooperation

The economic crisis of 2008 reinforced the legitimacy of this objective. In times of economic crisis, stress, mental problems and depression grow considerably among the population due to unemployment, financial difficulties of households, etc. This means the need for healthcare services (for example: therapies) to cope with these problems increases.

Administrative changes in the health sector and the critical financial situation of healthcare institutions in Hungary (including the programme area), however, decreased the relevance of this strategy in the sense that sustainability of the results achieved by the programme in healthcare cooperation can hardly be ensured in the long term.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 6 (SO6): Create better connections in cross-border traffic and transport

The two countries' accession to the Schengen zone in the period of the programme implementation, further highlighted the relevance of this strategic objective. It should be noted, however, that it is beyond the scope of cross-border programmes, considering the continued shrinking of financial means allocated to such programmes and the huge financial requirements for building adequate traffic and transport infrastructure. Unless

the philosophy of cross-border programmes changes and programmes focus only on a few large-scale projects, this strategic objective cannot be properly achieved in the framework of CBC programmes.

Status: not relevant for CBC programme

Strategy objective 7 (SO7): Support environmental protection and increase the use of renewable energy sources

In principle and ideally, economic development should go hand in hand with a sustainable use of natural resources, maintaining biodiversity and preserving ecosystems. Although the importance of environmental protection is stressed in both countries, there are clear signs in Hungary that economic aspects are prevailing over environmental ones. The reorganisation of the Hungarian environmental protection administration and the decreasing role of National Parks in nature protection reduced the relevance of this objective.

According to Slovenia's forecast, renewables should cover approx. 40% of the country's electricity consumption in 2020. Slovenia has the lowest forecast penetration of wind power in 2020 in the EU. The newly adopted feed-in tariff may be hindering the prospects for wind power development. Slovenia intends to cover its EU requirements in renewable energy mainly with hydro power and biomass.

According to Hungary's forecast, renewables should cover 14.7% of gross energy consumption by 2020. Hungary has the lowest forecast penetration of renewables in the electricity demand in 2020 in the EU, only 11% (6% with biomass and 3% with wind power).

The strategic objective of increasing the use of renewable energy sources is still valid, particularly on the Slovenian side, where renewable energy sources play a greater role in energy production than in Hungary.

Sustainable long-term cross-border cooperation in the use of renewable energy sources is jeopardised by the facts that the current Hungarian government prefers atomic energy, while most of the nature-protection civil organisations are against hydro power (they oppose building dams on rivers). These groups prefer wind and solar energy, while in Slovenia wind power is less important and hydro power accounts for an important share of the energy supply.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 8 (SO8): Improve management capacity, including environmental management

In general, improving management capacity is always a very common strategic objective and the new social and economic circumstances have not changed its relevance. On the cross-border level, however, this can be limited mainly to the exchange of good practices.

Status: still relevant

Strategy objective 9 (SO9): Encourage networking (i.e. development of cross-border institutions, capacities for regional development)

On the cross-border level, this strategy can generate the highest added value, particularly in a crisis period. Networking can address the establishment of cooperation structures on different levels: institutions, NGOs and people-to-people. While accession to the Schengen area has symbolically brought down borders, networking can help abolish the borders in the minds of the people living in the border area. Networking can further ensure that cooperation under a certain programme/project will not be just a one-time action but could continue for a longer period of time.

Status: still relevant

Recommendations: the strategic objectives of the next SI-HU CBC programme should reflect the real needs of the cross-border region. Fewer and focus oriented objective should be defined which can be achieved with planned amount of funds. Economic needs (e.g. development of rural and eco-tourism) and environmental aspects (protection of environmentally sensitive areas – Nature 2000 territories) should be harmonized.

3.2 Effectiveness of the programme

The assessment of effectiveness and achievements is based on an analysis of the extent to which the intervention of the CBC programme headed towards the expected changes in addressed the most relevant needs within the programme area and whether the defined policy objectives and priorities have been achieved.

The EU's development guidelines for the 2007–2013 programming period in the EU Strategic Framework were:

- Guideline 1: Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work;
- Guideline 2: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth;
- Guideline 3: More and better jobs.

Further, the aims of the European Territorial Cooperation for this period were:

- development of cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development. This involved, for example, encouraging entrepreneurship, protection and management of natural and cultural resources, and the development of collaboration, capacities and the joint use of infrastructures;
- establishing and developing transnational cooperation, including bilateral cooperation between maritime regions. The priorities were innovation, the environment, better accessibility and sustainable urban development;
- reinforcing the effectiveness of regional policy by encouraging regional and local authorities to form networks and exchange experience.

The achievements of the Operational Programme CBC SI-HU 2007–2013 are in line with the first and third guideline of the SF since the SI-HU cross-border region has become more attractive for investment and work, and the programme has created opportunities for more jobs (for example the following projects: AC 2, UPKAČ, ECO-HUB, Harmóniában a tájjal, Jó borszomszédság, Határtalan borkultúra).

The achievements are also consistent with the first and third aim of European Territorial Cooperation since the programme encouraged entrepreneurship, supported the protection and management of natural and cultural resources, developed cooperation and facilitated joint use of infrastructure, and encouraged networking and exchange of experience.

Overall, it can be said that the Operative Programme SI-HU 2007–2013 contributed to the development objectives of the EU.

The analysis of the different development fields of the programme shows diverse effectiveness of the programme in achieving objectives.

The programme was very effective in addressing relevant needs and generating positive effects in tourism development, healthcare cooperation, strengthening regional and cultural identity and regional development. It was effective in improving environment protection but several areas foreseen in the OP were not addressed. It was less effective in triggering positive changes in the use of renewable energy, improving cross-border accessibility and traffic, developing joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural assets, and improving management capacities in the field of environment.

The following table summarises the achievements of the specific objectives using the categories very effective, effective and less effective. It provides reasons for the assessment, taking the following aspects into consideration:

- Is the objective still relevant?
- To what extent were the planned activities implemented?
- To what extent did the implemented activities trigger results?

➔ To what extent are the achieved results sustainable?

Table 2: Achievements of specific objectives

Specific objective	Justification
Very effective	
To improve the tourist offer in the cooperation area	<p>Tourism is a key economic driver of the programme area and this objective will remain relevant in the next programming period.</p> <p>Although much fewer projects were implemented than planned, the approved projects focused on all activities envisaged in the OP. Infrastructural development was carried out. Joint marketing strategies and new tourist products were developed. Cooperation of the tourism sector with other fields (cultural and natural heritage) was also strengthened. Less attention was paid to upgrading tourism infrastructure.</p> <p>The programme triggered measurable results in the field of wine, eco- and cultural tourism and contributed to the improvement of the tourism offer on the cross-border level.</p> <p>The tourism infrastructure built in the framework of the programme and the cooperation between cross-border partners can ensure long-term sustainability of the achieved results.</p>
To strengthen the cultural identity and exploit the cultural potential of the cooperation area	<p>The cooperation area is rich in cultural heritage and cultural identity is an important element in the life of minorities living in the cooperation area. This objective will remain relevant in the next programming period.</p> <p>Most of activities planned in the OP were carried out as part of the approved projects. The projects focused on supporting small-scale revitalisation and restoration of cultural heritage, establishing networks of local media providers, cooperation of cultural institutions, cooperation between schools, implementation of joint events, and development of culture-related products.</p> <p>The projects have very positive results on the preservation of cultural heritage and identity, keeping alive folk traditions and handicrafts and the use of minority language. Furthermore, the projects have strengthened the institutional background of minorities and improved cooperation possibilities in the field of arts.</p> <p>Civil society organisations can play an important role in</p>

Specific objective	Justification
	<p>maintaining the results although they are facing decreasing financial support. The link created between tourism activity and cultural heritage can support the sustainability of the results.</p>
<p>To contribute to effective preventative health care and increase cooperation between health institutions</p>	<p>Although the economic crisis has been overcome, preventive healthcare remains very important, particularly from the perspective of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Nearly all activities planned in the OP were carried during the implementation of the programme. The projects improved cooperation between healthcare service providers, identified healthcare needs, led to exchange of experience, and spread awareness about a healthy lifestyle in the context of preventive health care. In addition, many professional staff / skilled workers in this field improved their knowledge, especially through the transfer of good practices. Most of the involved institutions acquired new equipment and improved the quality of their services.</p> <p>The most recognisable results of the programme are visible in the field of preventive health care. The approved healthcare projects addressed the vulnerable groups of people in particular. A lot more participants than predicted got the opportunity to go through preventive healthcare programmes and received counsel on appropriate therapies. The desperate need for preventive healthcare can be seen in the number of participants, which was almost twice as high at the end of the project as foreseen (1610 predicted, 3558 realised).</p> <p>Adequate professional knowledge and skills are available to maintain the results. Sustainability of the results, however, is subject to the financial situation of healthcare institutions.</p>
<p>To strengthen cross-border cooperation at the local and regional level</p>	<p>Development of sustainable networks of regional development institutions and of common labour services is still relevant but hindered by the fact that less financial support will be available for joint cross-border actions in these fields.</p> <p>All activities foreseen in the OP were carried out. Projects developed sustainable networks of regional development institutions, and supported labour services through training and research activities, development plans for harmonising demand and supply of human resources. Strategies for further development of the region were also elaborated.</p> <p>The programme achieved results by financing several projects</p>

Specific objective	Justification
	<p>that offered educational and training programmes for more than 1350 participants in order to improve entrepreneurial abilities and professional skills and to strengthen the competitiveness of individuals on the labour market. As part of a special training programme for different handicraft professionals, more than 20 people became either employed or self-employed, and at the same time the programme raised awareness about the handicraft cultural heritage.</p> <p>Networking between different organisations on the two sides of the border has been strengthened. The programme made an important step forward in building a comprehensive knowledge basis about the cross-border region through extended networks operating in different important thematic fields. This mutual knowledge could be a good basis to be capitalised in future projects.</p> <p>Sustainability of the results depends on several external factors (overall economic development, administrative measures with respect to the labour market). Sustainability of the networks can be ensured by the programme in the new programming period</p>
Effective	
To contribute to effective preservation and management of natural resources	<p>The relevance of this objective is still high but it has lost in importance since economic considerations currently have priority over environmental ones (at least in Hungary).</p> <p>Several activities planned in the OP were carried out as part of the projects. Preservation of biodiversity was supported, joint strategies related to risk prevention were developed, public awareness towards national parks was raised, and plans were developed for the use of joint water resources. There were no joint actions in the field of environment management (noise, fine dust, waste management).</p> <p>Considerable results were achieved in joint preservation of biodiversity. Cooperation among National Parks in the programme area has also been strengthened. Joint risk-prevention activities contributed to the improvement of flood protection. However, there was no cooperation in the field of environmental management. Joint management solutions have only been developed in the field of nature park management.</p> <p>Sustainability of project results is threatened by the fact that the</p>

Specific objective	Justification
	role of National Parks in Hungary is decreasing. Results in the joint protection of shared water resources can be expected only in the long term. Sustainability of flood protection can be ensured by good cooperation of the relevant organisations.
Less effective	
To improve accessibility and connections in the cooperation area	<p>The relevance is high but cross-border programmes, due to their limited financial scope, are not suitable for this purpose unless the philosophy of the programmes changes and they will concentrate on large-scale projects in the future.</p> <p>Only one activity of those foreseen in the OP was carried out. The single project focused on road construction. Cycling tracks were not built. The public transport system was not tackled. Transport planning was not part of project activities.</p> <p>Only one project was implemented but the result is important since residents of several villages no longer need to make a detour to the Rédics border crossing.</p> <p>Sustainability of the result is ensured, the roads built in the framework of the programme are used by local residents and tourists. Maintenance of the roads is carried out by public companies.</p>
Rationalisation of energy consumption including promotion of alternative and renewable energy	<p>The relevance of this objective is high but it can be confined to the exchange of experience and good practices at cross-border level.</p> <p>Some activities foreseen in the OP were carried out in the projects, including development of concepts and strengthening of cross-border cooperation in raising awareness about alternative energy sources.</p> <p>The cross-border energy effectiveness and renewable-energy innovation and competence centre, as well as a pilot demonstration centre established as part of the programme could serve as a basis for further development actions.</p> <p>Sustainability of the results is jeopardised by the fact that the two countries have different strategies regarding the use of renewable energy.</p>

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA, interviews with beneficiaries and project analysis

Recommendation: In order to improve the effectiveness of the next SI-HU CBC programme capitalisation projects, (projects which are based on results of previous projects) should be preferred for implementation.

3.3 Programme efficiency

Efficiency of the programme (besides financial realisation, which is explained in the following chapter) has been assessed by delivery mechanism and implementation procedures.

In 2007, the programming process was still underway and programme structures had not yet been established. The OP was approved in December 2007, so no expenditure was incurred that year that would be paid to the beneficiaries or to the MA for Technical Assistance. In June 2008, the first Call for Proposals was launched and no project had yet started that year. In 2009, the first approved projects started implementing their activities, with the first reporting periods concluding at the end of 2009. Therefore, no applications for reimbursement of funds, except for Technical Assistance, were received by then.

The two calls were open for an average of 4.3 months, which is sufficient time for potential beneficiaries to get acquainted with the documentation of the call and the application forms. A notable exception was the period of more than 8 months allowed for preparing the so-called Strategic Projects. Regardless of the fact that the elaboration of such projects needs more extensive preparation and coordination, this is quite a long period. If we compare these periods to similar calls in comparable CBC programmes, we can conclude that applicants were given enough time.

The period between the submission of project applications and the signing of contracts (which is closely connected to the date of approval of the projects) was 11.3 months on average for each call, and almost one year and three months for Strategic Projects. Since only three Strategic Projects were submitted, this assessment period was much too long.

In order to manage and monitor the programme efficiently, the MA has established a central information system ISARR on programme level, designed as an online application. The ISARR system provides informational support for planning and reporting on the programme implementation, ranging from the level of operational programmes, priority axes to the level of units.

The ISARR could be used by the following users:

- the Managing Authority,
- the Joint Technical Secretariat,
- the info point,
- first level controllers,
- the certifying authority,

- the national authority (limited access),
- the audit authority,
- beneficiaries.

At first, the system did not operate smoothly and users were sometimes confused which module should be used. To overcome the shortcomings, major (a common entry point) and minor changes were introduced in December 2011. After that, the system became more user-friendly.

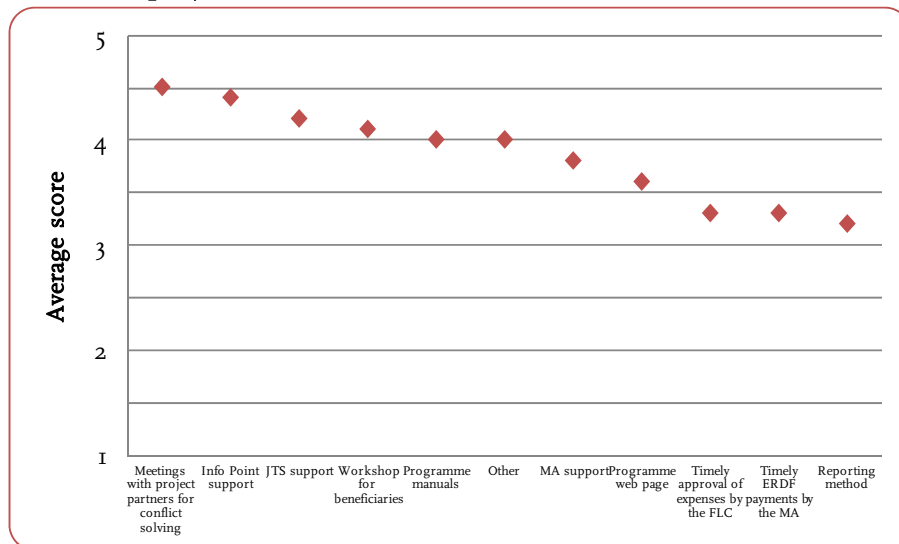
From the procedural point of view, long payment periods – from the signing of the contract to the first transfer of funds to the Lead Partner – caused the most problems. This took 1 year and 4 months on average for projects in the first call. Even more time was needed for projects in the second call, where an average of almost a year and a half passed from the signing of the contract to the first payment. This may have prevented beneficiaries from keeping to financial plans or even realising their projects according to plans.

This delay was identified also by the MA and the JTS, as noted in their Annual Implementation Report for 2010 that delays are occurring on Lead Partner level due to the slow process of checking partner reports. The shortest time to the first payment was for the two Strategic Projects. The results of the survey among beneficiaries showed that many Lead Partners and also other partners were complaining that reporting periods and especially the time needed for disbursement of funds were much too long.

Despite all this, the delivery mechanism and implementation procedures were quite efficient, according to beneficiaries, except for the reporting and disbursement of ERDF Funds.

According to beneficiaries, most of the administrative factors and programme structures had a positive influence on the implementation of the projects. The highest average score was given to problem-solving meetings with partners. Reporting methods and payments of ERDF funds received low average scores, which indicates that beneficiaries expected higher efficiency in these areas.

Graph 1: Average grades that beneficiaries gave to factors influencing successful implementation of projects



Source: Interviews conducted with beneficiaries

The interviews with beneficiaries highlighted certain problems in the implementation of the programme from the procedural point of view, which can be summed up as follows:

- excessively complex call documentation in the second Call for Proposals;
- language problems with respect to applications. The translation of texts written by the applicants from the Slovenian into the Hungarian language, or the other way around, was not always correct. Some lead beneficiaries expressed the opinion in their interviews that a single common language (English) should be used as the language of application in case of CBC programmes;
- complicated and time-consuming process of writing reports, insufficient instructions how and when to report, too many reports. Different time periods for approving reports in Slovenia and Hungary. Several disputes arose between project partners due to the different reporting requirements on the Slovenian and the Hungarian side;
- FLC mechanisms were different in Slovenia and Hungary;
- pre-financing of project activities caused serious financial problems for several lead and non-Lead Partners. Some of them needed to get bank loans to bridge the financial gap, which exposed them to additional financial burden (paying interest);
- Hungarian partners received pre-financing from national co-financing and Slovenian partners did not.

Recommendations:

- *Reduction of administrative burden of beneficiaries should be achieved in the next programming period. In the programming period 2007-2013 they had to face several administrative requirements and problems, concerning the application and implementation procedures, including the long decision making process, delays in contract signing, as well as in verifying the expenditures by*

FLCs, and too complex reporting requirements.

- *Using harmonized approach from the application to the implementation procedure, including reporting and payments, is strongly proposed. Harmonized implementation tools are seen as one of the main simplification measures that aim at reducing the administrative burden for both ETC programme bodies and beneficiaries, shifting the focus of programme implementation towards results and quality.*
- *The application process should be carried out through on-line system in the future as well, but Application Form should be simplified. Further, it is proposed to use the same AF if there are more Calls for Proposal. The role of the Lead Partner should be reconsidered and disbursement to the Lead Partner should not be subject to the acceptance of the reports of other Partners, except the final reports. It should be considered to limit the maximum number of Partners as well, (not only the minimum number). It would facilitate the better and more efficient cooperation of the partners. During the evaluation of the Applications, preference should be given for those eligible projects which are built on previous CBC projects. Further, it should be considered, to prefer those projects which concentrate just on a few activities but can produce tangible and measurable results. This would facilitate reporting and control of project expenditures, as well.*
- *Since all expenditure has to be financed by project partners, disbursement procedure of ERDF funds should be accelerated, including verification of expenditure and payments. It should be ensured that the same verification system is used on both sides of the border.*

3.3.1 Financial realisation

Cost-efficiency is studied by looking at the size of the budget and its division between axes and individual measures, as well as examining the sufficiency of the budget for achieving policy objectives and contributing to Community priorities.

To assess the programme's cost-efficiency, we took a look at the relationship between the allocated resources and achieved programme outputs and the consequential actual financial realisation. An analysis of programme cost-efficiency reveals whether more outputs and results could have been obtained with the same budget, or whether the same outputs and results could have been achieved at a lower cost.

Total allocated amount of EUR 29,279,283.00 of ERDF funds was distributed almost equally between the two priority axes of the OP:

- EUR 14,150,000 was allocated for Priority Axis 1,
- EUR 13,372,283 for Priority Axis 2, and
- EUR 1,757,000 for Technical Assistance.

The nearly equal allocation of the funds between the two axes reflected the philosophy of the programme that conditions for economic growth should be created in a sustainable and well-balanced manner.

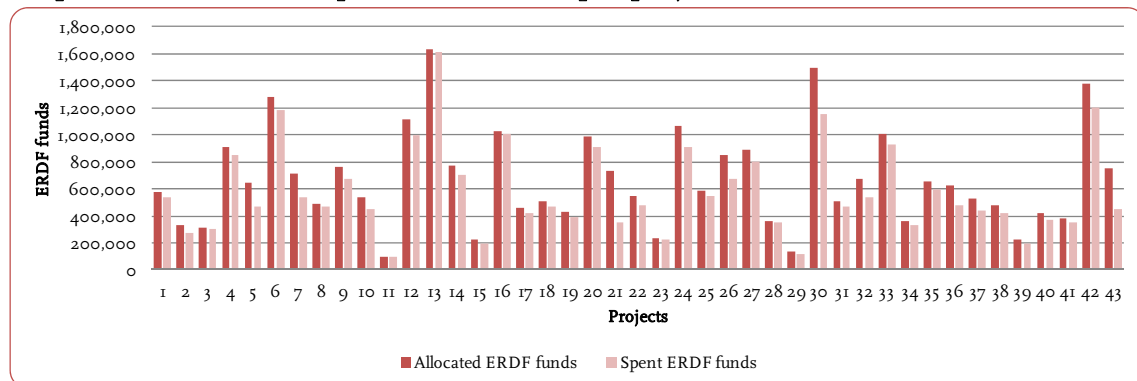
The actual allocation of ERDF funds by priority axis confirmed this philosophy since

- EUR 14,392,379 was approved for projects under Priority Axis 1, and
- EUR 14,287,169 for projects under Priority Axis 2

The OP document envisaged that 150 projects would be approved, which was an unrealistic forecast and would mean a very low budget for each project (approx. EUR 183,000 on average).

In reality, 43 projects were approved with an average ERDF funding of EUR 666,966. The actual ERDF funding per project ranged from EUR 96,957 to EUR 1,633,458.

Graph 2: Allocated and spent ERDF funds per project in EUR



Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

For 26 projects the allocated ERDF funding was below and for 17 projects it was above the average. The required ERDF support per project was determined by the beneficiaries. Considering the fact that most of the projects were implemented as planned as regards the foreseen activities and budget, it can be stated that the use of funds was efficient on the project level. The allocated funds were adequate on the project level to produce the expected results.

An analysis of the current financial realisation of projects identified the project “3 PARKI” as the one with the highest financial realisation – standing at 98.82%. More than half of all projects (22) have a financial realisation above 90%, and the average realisation for all projects is 87.41%. Because some of the projects still have not submitted final requests for payment (Tourism&Media, Healthy) the project with the lowest financial realisation cannot be identified at this point.

A comparison of the allocation of ERFD funding in the OP with the actual allocation by priority theme shows that the programme was less efficient in this respect since several

priority themes foreseen in the OP were not financed. ERDF funding was particularly underutilised for traffic- and environment-related themes.

For this reason, the cost-efficiency on the programme and axis level is lower than expected. In several areas, the programme could not reach the expected results.

Table 3: Comparison of planned and actual allocation of ERDF funds by priority theme

Code	Priority theme	Share of Community funding envisaged in the OP	Share of Community funding allocated to selected operations
13	Services and applications for citizens (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)	15.03%	14.63%
23	Regional/local roads	7.17%	3.72%
24	Cycle tracks	3.42%	0.00%
25	Urban transport	1.30%	0.00%
43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management	7.27%	6.58%
44	Management of household and industrial waste	1.64%	0.00%
45	Management and distribution of water (drinking water)	2.90%	2.66%
46	Water treatment (waste water)	2.90%	0.00%
47	Air quality	0.41%	0.00%
48	Integrated prevention and pollution control	0.41%	0.00%
51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000)	2.73%	7.28%
52	Promotion of clean urban transport	2.05%	0.00%
54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks	4.10%	11.65%
55	Promotion of natural assets	0.68%	0.00%
56	Protection and development of natural heritage	0.68%	0.00%
57	Other assistance to improve tourist services	10.25%	18.62%
58	Protection and preservation of cultural heritage	6.83%	15.35%
59	Development of cultural infrastructure	4.10%	6.40%
60	Other assistance to improve cultural services	4.10%	1.73%
61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration	1.37%	0.00%
63	Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work	5.36%	1.64%
80	Promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives	4.82%	3.71%

Code	Priority theme	Share of Community funding envisaged in the OP	Share of Community funding allocated to selected operations
	through the networking of relevant stakeholders		
81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation	4.48%	0.00%
85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	4.80%	3.02%
86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication	1.20%	3.01%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%

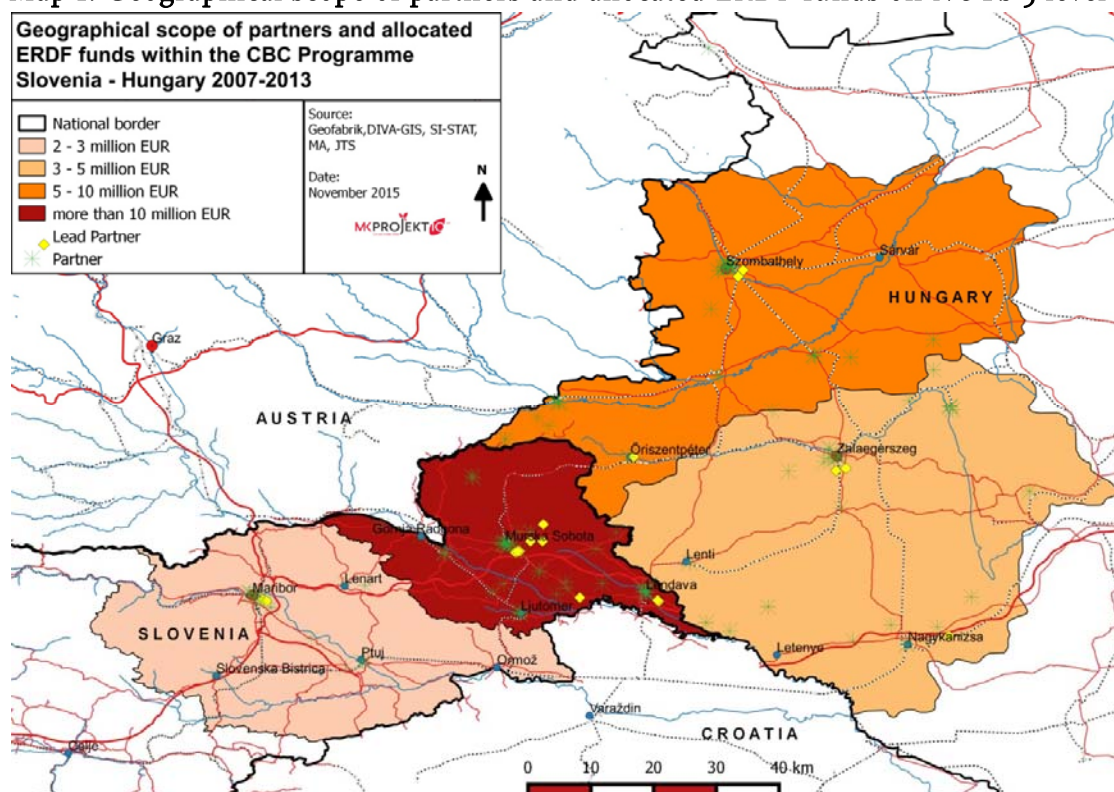
Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

It is difficult to assess whether project results could have been achieved with a lower financial contribution from the ERDF, but it can be stated that most of the projects would not have been implemented without the ERDF funding at all. In this sense, the use of ERDF funds was very efficient.

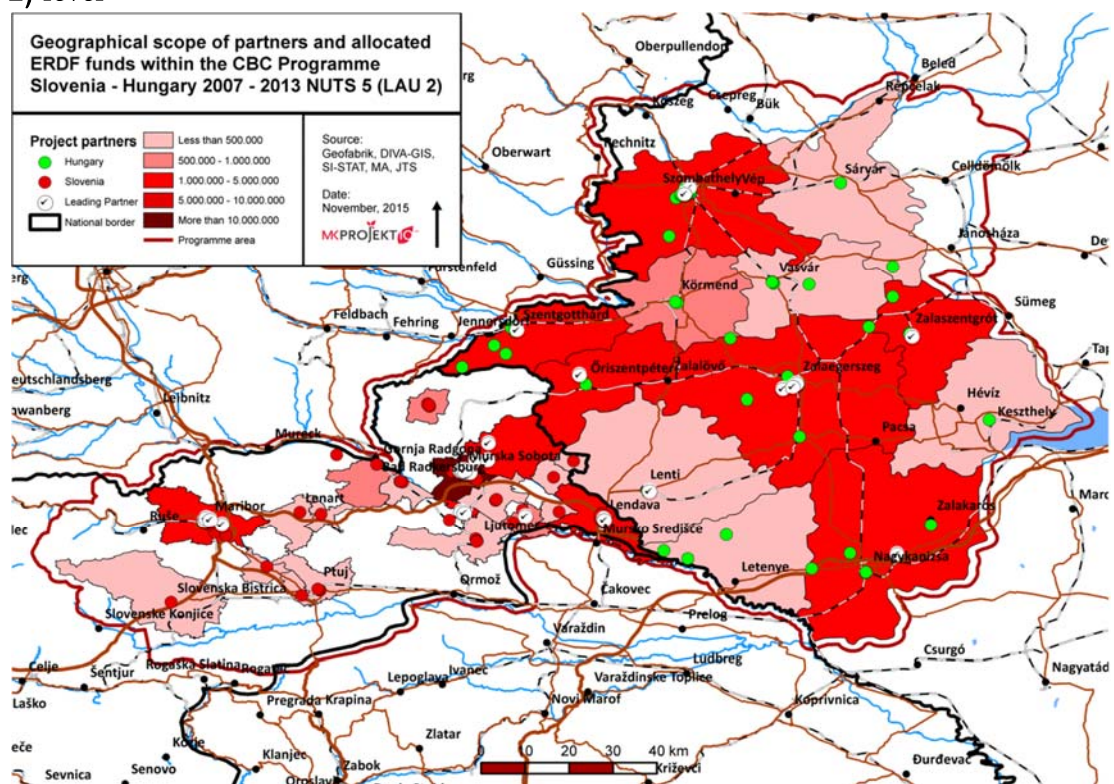
The distribution of ERDF funds among the participating regions was uneven and more or less reflects the number of partners from the regions. The highest share of allocated funds (46.80%) went to the Pomurje region, while the Vas (23.80%) and Zala (15.61%) counties and the Podravje region (8.50%) together received the other half of the ERDF funds. 5.29% of the funding went outside the programme area (1.16% SI, 4.13% HU)¹.

¹ Source: Annual Implementation Report 2013, page 10, Table 4

Map 1: Geographical scope of partners and allocated ERDF funds on NUTS 3 level



Map 2: Geographical scope of partners and allocated ERDF funds on NUTS 5 (LAU 2) level

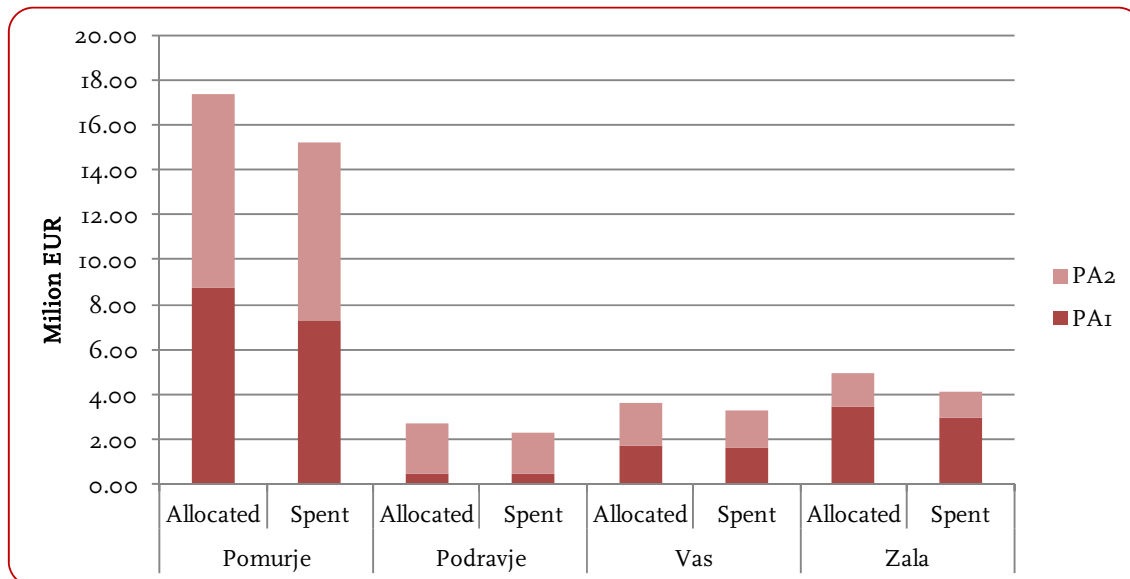


On the country level, 56.48% of the ERDF funds went to Slovenia and 43.52% to Hungary¹. The uneven distribution of the funds may be justified by the different economic situation of the participating regions, and with the flexibility clause in the case of Podravje. Great differences in the distribution of ERDF funds on the programme area level will, however, not support the willingness for cooperation of the participating regions in the long term.

The graph below shows the allocation of ERDF funds to approved projects by priority axis and region of the Lead Partner within the programme area. The majority (60.56%) of the allocated funds went to projects with the Lead Partner from the Pomurje region, followed by the Zala (17.30%) and Vas counties (12.73%) and the Podravje region (9.41%). If we take a look at the national distribution, 69.96% of the allocated funds went to projects where the Lead Partner was a Slovenian organisation.

The used ERDF funds on the programme level until 27 October 2015 amount to 86.91% of all allocated ERDF funds. Most of the spent ERDF funding was within projects with the Lead Partner from the Pomurje region – 61.16% of all the spent ERDF funds, which is 0.6% more than its share of all allocated ERDF funds. In the Hungarian Zala county 16.45% of all ERDF funds were spent, which is 0.85% less than the allocated share, and in the Vas county 13.24% of all ERDF funds were spent, which is 0.51% more than its share of all allocated funds. The Slovenian region of Podravje remains the region with the lowest share of funds as only 9.15% of all the spent ERDF funds, went to projects with the Lead Partner from Podravje, which is 0.26% less than its share of allocated funds.

Considering the distribution of the allocated funds by priority axis, more funds in the first call were allocated to Priority Axis 2, and Priority Axis 1 received more in the second call. Generally speaking, the difference is relatively small (EUR 94,184.04 in favour of PA1) and the distribution is quite even.

Graph 3: Allocated and spent ERDF funds per priority axis and the origin of Lead Partner

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

In 2007, the programming process was still underway and programme structures had not yet been established. The OP was approved in December 2007, so no expenditure occurred that year that would be paid to beneficiaries or to the MA for Technical Assistance. In June 2008, the first Call for Proposals was launched and since no project had been started yet, no expenditure was incurred in 2008 that would be paid to beneficiaries. In 2009, the first approved projects started implementing their activities with the first reporting periods ending at the end of 2009. Therefore, no applications for reimbursement of funds, except for Technical Assistance, had been received.

In 2010, the first expenditures were paid to beneficiaries based on their reports. In the same year, a new Council Regulation was adopted, stating that decommitment shall not apply to the annual budget decommitment related to the 2007 total annual contribution. This enabled the programme to retain the ERDF funds as initially planned. In accordance with the implementation of the approved projects, 49 applications for reimbursement were received in 2011 based on beneficiaries' expenditures. At the end of 2011, more than halfway into the programme period, financial realisation was only 13.14%. There are two main reasons for this delay: first projects were not approved before May 2009, and there was a delay in reporting on the Lead Partner level.

The year 2012 was intense for first level controllers, as projects from the 1st call were still being implemented, and in addition projects from the 2nd call were launched in 2011, so the first reports were due at the end of 2011. Consequently, a total of 116 applications for reimbursement of beneficiaries' expenditures were received in 2012. The problem with delays continues because the process of first-level control checks is still slow, while the financial crisis has also slowed down the payment of national co-financing parts,

especially on the Slovenian side. Many projects indicate significant differences between the planned use of ERDF funds and the actual use of the funds in each reporting period due to liquidity problems and lack of pre-financing. This problem is even bigger because many partners are involved in different projects and so a delay in receiving funds can have a domino effect, multiplying the liquidity problem. At the end of 2012, financial realisation of the programme reached 29.6%.

By the end of 2013, all the projects from the 1st call had been concluded. On average, project partners from the 1st call spent 91% of the approved funds. The remaining funds were relocated to the projects in the 2nd call. By the end of 2013, 206 applications for reimbursement of beneficiaries' expenditures had been received. Reporting delays continued and the MA contracted a few new first-level controllers in order to speed up the first-level control process. Partially, the delays also occurred due to the financial crisis, which had slowed down the payment of national co-financing (especially on the Slovenian side), and the constant changes in institutional structure in Slovenia. On the project level, the difference between the planned use of ERDF funds and the funds spent in each reporting period became even more evident. Total realisation of programme funds by 31 December 2013 was 57.02%.

In 2014, 16 projects were concluded but only two managed to send their final reports, which were checked and approved. Due to the influence of financial crisis, some projects requested to be extended. In 2014, a total of 261 applications for reimbursement were received. According to the Annual Implementation Report, first-level control checks of the expenditures in peak times took more than three months, which was also criticised by the Audit Authority at the conclusion of the audit of the monitoring and control system by the national control unit. Due to these delays in first-level control checks, a lot of expenditures of beneficiaries were certified in 2014 where the expenses had occurred in previous reporting years. Total realisation of programme funds by 31 December 2014 was 72.99%.

In 2015, the main focus was to conclude the still ongoing projects of the second call. Late submission of reports and delayed checking of the requests for payment also resulted in delayed submission of this evaluation since not all the data required to analyse the financial realisation was available as initially predicted. The Managing Authority and the Joint Technical Secretariat agreed to mark 28 October 2015 as the cut-off date in order to present the financial realisation of the programme.

By the cut-off date, 28 October 2015, the status of the 43 projects as regards their finances is as follows;

- 26 are financially closed, meaning that Lead Partners and all project partners have been reimbursed for all certified expenses.
- 11 projects are waiting to receive payments for their submitted final reports.
- 4 projects are waiting to receive payments for their submitted interim and final reports.

- 2 projects have not yet submitted the final reports due to irregularities identified by the audit.

Technical Assistance activities terminate on 31 December 2015, and consequently the data about the total funds used are not yet available. Since the partner report for the period 1 January 2015 – 30 June 2015 has not yet been prepared, there is no data on the financial use of TA1. The only known data is for TA2, which relates to the first half of 2015 (EUR 7,500.59 in ERDF funds). The use of ERDF funds for TA in this report is therefore based on data from 31 December 2014 for TA1 and from 1 July 2015 for TA2.

Due to the reasons stated above, the final financial realisation of the programme cannot be presented at this point. Taking into consideration the available data regarding the already closed projects and used funds for Technical Assistance, the financial realisation on the programme level is 67.66% (by 28 October 2015).

If we consider the certified expenses of submitted interim and final reports as paid, the financial realisation of the programme raises to 74.78%. A division and realisation by priority axis is presented in the table below.

Table 4: Financial realisation of the OP SI-HU 2007–2013*

Priority Axis	Planned ERDF funds in the OP in EUR	Total amount of paid ERDF funds to the beneficiaries in EUR	Realisation (%)
Priority Axis 1	16,647,059.00	12,283,720.42	73.79
Priority Axis 2	15,732,098.00	12,640,648.39	80.35
Priority Axis 3 - TA	3,514,000.00	1,916,859.63	54.55
TOTAL	35,893,157.00	26,841,228.44	74.78

*Total amount of certified expenses on 28 October 2015

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from OP Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013, Annual Implementation Reports 2007–2014 and data provided by the MA.

A more detailed breakdown of certified expenditures per year and the financial realisation of the programme by 28 October 2015 are presented in the next table.

Table 5: Amount of certified eligible expenditures paid to beneficiaries per year*

Field	Planned funding in OP	Total amount of paid ERDF funds to the beneficiaries										Realisation (%)
		31.12.2007	31.12.2008	31.12.2009	31.12.2010	31.12.2011	31.12.2012	31.12.2013	31.12.2014	27.10.2015	until 27.10.2015	
Priority Axis 1	16,647,059.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	432,799.35	1,311,203.17	2,314,277.22	4,515,589.28	3,645,494.85	64,356.55	12,283,720.42	73.79
Priority Axis 2	15,732,098.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	426,739.95	2,377,348.78	2,536,461.80	4,656,475.17	2,072,257.64	571,365.05	12,640,648.39	80.35
Technical Assistance	3,514,000.00	0.00	0.00	7,745.98	24,517.59	21,235.54	960,790.72	550,194.83	344,874.38	7,500.59	1,916,859.63	54.55
TOTAL	35,893,157.00	0.00	0.00	7,745.98	884,056.89	3,709,787.49	5,811,529.74	9,722,259.28	6,062,626.87	643,222.19	26,841,228.44	74.78

*Total amount of certified expenses on 28 October 2015

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from OP Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013, Annual Implementation Reports 2007–2014 and data provided by the MA.

Recommendations:

- *Before launching calls in the 2014–2020 period, a clear decision should be made whether fewer larger projects or more smaller ones are preferred. Allocation of funds should be reduced to fewer priority themes than in the 2007–2013 period.*
- *The use of simplified cost-calculation options (e.g. unit cost, lump sums, flat rate, shared costs, etc.) that have been made available by the ESI Regulations² is strongly suggested. This would reduce the amount of paperwork needed and speed up the reporting, verification and control procedures.*
- *Pre-financing available for all beneficiaries would facilitate the implementation of projects, reduce delays and liquidity problems, thus reducing the administration time related to individual projects.*
- *An adequate number of controllers at FLC units should be provided already at the beginning of the programme, thus preventing delays and increasing timely efficiency of spending ERDF funds.*

² COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to specific rules on eligibility of expenditure for cooperation programmes.

3.4 Impact of the programme

The ex-post evaluation assesses the CBC impact by scrutinising the extent to which the change observed in the programme area can be attributed to the programme and the extent to which the programme has addressed Community priorities for cross-border cooperation, bearing in mind the influence of other intervening factors.

Impacts are linked to the wider objectives of the programme and are observed on the programme-area level (increase of income, employment or improvement of the quality of life in the assisted programme area).

In general, impacts produced by programme intervention are expressed in “net terms” after subtracting the effects that cannot be attributed to the intervention (e.g. confounding factors, double counting, deadweight) and by taking into account indirect effects (displacement and multipliers). However, proportionality should also be considered when assessing the impact of very small programmes (e.g. for some small regional programmes the evaluation may consider the assessment of gross impacts or programme results). This approach has been used in the case of the Operational Programme SI-HU.

The Operational Programme CBC SI-HU 2007–2013 was implemented during an economically adverse period in both countries. The economic crisis, which started in 2008, seriously hit the four participating regions. Slow economic recovery in both countries started only in 2012, when most of the projects were finished or close to conclusion.

Due to its size, the contribution of the programme to the economic recovery could only be very limited and mainly in the field of tourism. The tourism sector in the four programme regions recovered very soon (already in 2010), and the number of guests and their overnight stays increased continuously in all the regions. Although this is a result of several factors, the SI-HU 2007–2013 CBC programme successfully supported this trend and was able to produce primary effects.

The unemployment rate only decreased in the Vas County during the programme period, while the other regions experienced an increasing trend. Although direct creation of job places is not the primary aim of CBC programmes, more than 20 people found a new job with the help of the Operational Programme SI-HU 2007–2013. In addition, several projects focused on improving the skills and competences of employees or unemployed people and enhanced their chances of finding new jobs. The impact of the programme in the field of the labour market can manifest itself in the long term.

During the programme period, the number of enterprises was increasing in the Slovenian regions, but the Hungarian ones had a decreasing trend. The SI-HU CBC programme had a positive effect, since new enterprises were established as a result of some project activities.

The social impact of the programme is manifested in a better health condition of the society and a decrease in school dropouts in the programme area. The health projects of the programme were very successful in addressing a wide range of groups of society to improve physical and mental conditions. Dropout rate is high in Hungary (15% on average), while in Slovenia the situation is somewhat better (10%). The EU and the Hungarian government regard reducing the dropout rate as a priority issue. The target is to get the rate below 10%. The developed methods can contribute to achieving this target in the participating Hungarian regions.

The impact of the programme on the improvement of cross-border traffic conditions is marginal. The public transport and railway interconnection remained poor in the CBC area. Two long-term European bicycle routes cross the region, there are favourable conditions for biking; however, the bicycle routes are discontinuous, and the connection of individual sections across the border remains unsolved. The two access roads which were built under the programme, however, improved cross-border mobility of the population and facilitated the tourism flow. The residents no longer need to make a detour to the Rédics border crossing; they can save fuel and gas emissions are decreased.

The impact of the programme on improving environmental conditions is important in the case a preserving biodiversity. The creation of foundations for sustainable agriculture in the territory of National Parks (in Órség and Goričko, as well as along the Mura River) will have a long-term positive effect on protected species living in these areas.

The impact of the programme on other environmental areas is negligible (waste management, waste-water management, integrated pollution control).

The impact of the programme on efficient energy use and use of renewable energy is low, though one project implemented concrete steps to reduce the use of electric power (60% reduction of power consumption for street lighting in the participating settlements, with a secondary effect of lower CO₂ emissions). The use of renewable energy did not increase in the programme area due to the projects aimed at improving its use. In the long term, however, the results of the projects (demonstration centres, pilot campaign) can manifest in concrete actions to increase the use of renewable energy.

<p><i>Recommendation: Some impact indicators should be established in the next programming period to assess the impact of the CBC programme.</i></p>
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4. PROJECT LEVEL EVALUATION

4.1 Implementation and results

Assessing programme results means examining the changes within the group of programme beneficiaries brought about by the programme's interventions with respect to the needs of the area, programme objectives and Community priorities.

The examination is conducted on priority-axis and activity fields. The assessment of the results is an essential input for assessing the impacts of the programme.

4.1.1 Priority Axis 1 – Increase the attractiveness of the cooperation area

The Pomurje and Podravje regions and the Vas and Zala counties have similar preconditions for development in terms of cultural heritage and natural resources, which can be exploited to increase the attractiveness of the cooperation area, and to support sustainable and balanced regional and local development and improvement of the quality of life.

Cross-border attractiveness and visibility of the cooperation area were expected to be enhanced through the improvement and development of three key sectors – tourism, culture and traffic.

Development of joint tourist destinations

The tourism sector has the most potential for successful development in the cooperation area through developing joint tourist destinations with a focus on new tourism products, rural development and promotion. The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- preparation of business/marketing strategies and plans for the development of joint tourist destinations,
- development of existing and new tourism products and services,
- an upgrade of tourist infrastructure (e.g. cycling/walking paths),
- cooperation of the tourism sector with other fields (cultural and natural heritage, ethnology, religion, rural products, arts, etc.).

Project types

Ten projects were approved and implemented in this activity field. Two projects promoted tourism activity as a whole, while the other projects focused on special areas – wine tourism (4), cultural tourism (3), culinary and gastronomy tourism (3), rural and ecotourism (2), and biking – where the maximum effect can be achieved through joint development. Several projects promoted more than one tourism activity.

The projects implemented a wide range of activities, including:

- ➔ elaboration of tourism development concepts and priorities, definition of strategy orientations for the cross-border regions, reinforcement of the thematic flagships;
- ➔ development of marketing strategies and new tourism products;
- ➔ establishment of tourism infrastructure (Tourism Product Development and Innovation Centre, Wine Tourism Centre, Civilian Tourism Centre and Wine House, information centres, wine and culinary centres, protocol and exhibition centre, resting places with tables, benches and trash bins, theme park, riding and hiking resting places with park units and a look-out tower, bike centres);
- ➔ purchase of equipment;
- ➔ special trainings (women wine producers, sommeliers, rural and ecotourism service providers, caterers);
- ➔ organisation of tourism-related events (exhibitions, workshops, conferences, festivals, study tours);
- ➔ dissemination of tourism-related information through publications, web pages, DVDs, radio and television, brochures, leaflets, maps;
- ➔ promotion of organic agricultural products as an integral part of the tourism offer in the cross-border area;
- ➔ participation in international fairs.

Contribution to programme objectives

The implemented tourism projects have contributed in a very positive way to the primary objectives of the programme and improved the attractiveness and competitiveness of the cross-border region. The projects have created better conditions for further development of the tourism sector, better access to work and income opportunities.

The main activity areas defined in the programme have been covered by the projects almost completely. Considering the projects as a whole, development strategies and plans have been elaborated, new products have been created, new tourism infrastructure has been developed or old infrastructure upgraded, and cooperation of the tourism sector with other sectors has been strengthened. Joint efforts of partners have further reinforced the cross-border dimension of the tourism supply in the participating regions, which has manifested in joint promotion and networking.

The projects have facilitated the involvement of the private/business sector into the tourism activity, which is a key element for the development of the tourism sector. Furthermore, they have facilitated the integration of tourism with other activities of rural areas, such as organic agricultural production and folk handicrafts.

An important positive feature of most of the projects was that they focused on rural areas that have natural and cultural heritage but where tourism and tourist infrastructure are less developed.

The tourist destinations created or supported by the projects have received adequate media platforms (web, local radio and television channels). Publications, brochures, leaflets and other promotional material has also assisted in the dissemination of information on the tourist destinations.

Project results

The available cultural and natural heritage and the similarities of the two sides of the border region regarding tourism development provide excellent opportunities to create integrated cross-border tourism products and develop a joint and competitive regional tourist destination.

The problem of the border region is that most of the tourist locations are dispersed across the region, with lacking physical connections among them (and especially between the two sides of the border). Moreover, services offered to connect different attractions are poor or even non-existent.

The implemented projects were good initiatives aimed at connecting – first of all virtually – individual attractions (e.g. wine routes, cultural heritage routes, biking and hiking routes), and improving tourism-related services.

The real results of the projects can only be measured in the long term. In short term, the projects aimed at developing wine tourism were able reach the greatest effect, as they have created proper infrastructure for supporting wine tourism and trained wine growers, who have launched their own businesses. Creating a tourist destination with infrastructural background is a critical condition for a common approach. In this respect, the wine tourism projects implemented as part of the programme are good examples, but other projects that included infrastructure development also have good potential for further development.

The result of the training programmes is positive since they have improved competences and boosted entrepreneurship.

The result of new tourism products is also positive, particularly the ones with brand names – such as St Martin's path, 5 mail-coaches, Bio-Experience – since they can easily be identified by the public as tourism products of the programme area.

It is difficult to measure the results of the development concepts and strategies, marketing plans and research studies. These are important parts for the development of the tourism sector but they are only effective if they are translated into practical steps executed either by the public or by the private sector.

The results of the appearance of projects on media platforms (internet, radio, television, newspapers), at events (fairs, exhibitions, conferences) and in publications are limited. On the programme-area level, the presence was strong and project partners were able to

raise attention towards the tourism supply they are offering. However, apart from the internet, the activities and project results only appeared in the local media. This is why outside the programme area the presence of the project results is most likely modest and it hardly helps boost tourism demand in the cross-border region.

On the other hand, the results of the new or reinforced partner connections and networks are considerable. They make up the basis for further development in the tourism sector at cross-border level. During the evaluation of the programme, it has become clear that partners are strongly committed to continue their cooperation in tourism development. It is their mutual interest even if the participating regions of the programme area are competitors on the tourist market. They have realised that the total profit that can be achieved through joint actions is higher than the sum of partial profits made individually.

Project sustainability

The adequate foundations – partner relations, infrastructure, development concepts and strategies - for the sustainability and further development of the projects are available. There are two risk factors which can jeopardize the long term positive effects of the projects and the implementation of further actions: limited financial means in the next programming period for cross-border programs and the inclination of the private sector to invest into tourism, by utilizing the results of the CBC projects.

Development of the tourism sector is a priority field of the next SI-HU CBC programme which is a positive sign for the implementers of tourism-related projects under SI-HU CBC 2007-2013. The competition for obtaining ERDF support will be much higher.

Tourism development is also a priority area of several national programs (economic development, rural development programs) in both countries. The private sector has therefore good chances to receive public financing for the implementation of tourism-related investments. These programs, however, support investments and development actions at national and not cross-border level.

Preservation and development of culture

Culture can be used to preserve the identity and vitality of a region, prevent exclusion, increase employability of its inhabitants and increase the attractiveness of the area. The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- Activities supporting small-scale revitalisation and restoration of cultural heritage, which should be used not only for tourism purposes, but should also offer development possibilities in the fields of information society and traditional handicrafts.
- Establish networks among local media providers acting in public interest and for better understanding of cultural differences and similarities of the area.
- Cooperation of cultural institutions such as museums, libraries and archives in the field of promotion of contemporary culture and arts.

- Cooperation between schools and other vocational institutions raising awareness and emphasising cultural diversity.
- Implementation of joint events, festivals, exhibitions by artists in the cooperation area, that is, writers, painters or others.
- Development of new culture-related products, services and events.
- The culture of different areas should become the topic of exchange and research projects, stressing the diversity in languages (Slovenian, Hungarian, sporadically German, Croatian, Roma and the variety of dialects), art tradition, ethnology, religion, etc. The reading culture shall be encouraged.

Project types

Ten projects were approved and implemented in this activity field. The aims of the projects were to increase cultural identity and cultural recognition (3), to support minorities and the use of their language (3), to get acquainted with each other's customs and contemporary culture (4), and to preserve traditional folk crafts (2).

Main activities

The projects implemented a wide range of activities, including:

- research on the cultural heritage of the region;
- learning traditional crafts, adapting of existing training programmes for crafts to present-day needs;
- organisation of events to present cultural heritage (exhibitions, workshops, film festivals, theatre performances);
- digitalisation of different types of Slovenian and Hungarian cultural heritage (historical monuments, crafts, folk dance, photos, etc.);
- establishment of a virtual museum database, a folk music sound archive, local heritage collections, culture-based internet sites;
- cooperation of local media providers;
- organisation of cultural events (film festival, exhibitions, archives camp, ethnography camp, furniture painting camp, reading camps, media camps, historical competition, dance courses, dance houses, dance stage performances);
- common learning of minority languages, getting acquainted with the heritage;
- publishing bilingual culture-related publications, a local history encyclopaedia, a culinary dictionary, a bilingual handbook for museum pedagogues, teachers and mentors, a multimedia application for interactive learning;
- improvement of communication technology and digital connection.

Contribution to programme objectives

The implemented projects successfully contributed to the achievement of the main programme objectives. They have developed joint capabilities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural heritage and promoted the regional and cultural identity.

The preferred activity areas defined in the programme have been fully covered by the projects. Altogether, the projects supported revitalisation and restoration of cultural heritage, including built heritage, folklore traditions, handicrafts; strengthened cooperation among cultural institutions, schools and vocational training institutions; organised culture-related events (festivals, exhibitions, stage performances, etc.); established networks among local media providers; developed new culture-related products and services and published bilingual publications presenting the cultural heritage of the participating regions.

An important positive feature of the projects was that they promoted the use of minority languages and information tools.

Project results

Identity, keeping folk traditions and handicrafts alive, and the use of minority languages. Furthermore, the projects have strengthened the institutional background of minorities and improved cooperation possibilities in the field of arts.

Particularly important was that most of the projects aimed at involving the young generations into project activities since inclusion of the youth is a condition for preserving the traditions and languages of minorities, and folk handicrafts.

The project activities have also improved the opportunities of cultural tourism. Connecting tourism with cultural heritage is an important aspect for sustainability of cultural assets in rural regions, since this can generate financial revenues for covering the costs of maintaining cultural assets.

Another positive result of some of the projects is that they provided employment possibilities in traditional handicrafts.

The results of the projects' presence on media platforms are similar as in the case of tourism projects.

Project sustainability

The partners in all of the projects are committed to maintain the project results and continue their cooperation. Sustainability of culture-related projects and assets, however, usually depends on either the availability of public funding or revenues from culture-related tourism activities.

Improvement of cross-border traffic connections

There is a mixture of general and specific regional priorities related to accessibility, from encouraging a shift to a more sustainable transport strategy to improving accessibility and links for cross-border cooperation. This is also of great importance because the border is shared physically, and the cooperation area is thus also important for the transport

crossing from the east to the south of Europe. The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- Small-scale investments regarding the upgrading of roads were encouraged, e.g. roads between cross-border villages, cycling tracks which cross the border.
- Improvement of the public transport system across the border was targeted. This was to offer better access to cross-border opportunities to employees, customers and tourists.
- Transport planning for the improvement of cross-border links and level of services, joint market research, feasibility studies, organisational concepts, promotion of public transport use could be supported.

Project type

Only one project was approved in this activity field, and it involved a reconstruction of public roads between cross-border villages.

Activities:

- reconstruction of two small roads in total length of 3.26 km.

Contribution to programme objectives

The project contributed to the programme's objectives. It has created a new possibility for crossing the Slovenian-Hungarian border and the residents of several villages no longer need to make a detour to the Rédics border crossing.

Most of the programme objectives (improvement of public transport, transport planning, building of bicycle paths), however, have not been achieved.

Project results

The result of the single project is that it has contributed to the strengthening of cross-border cooperation between residents, municipalities, enterprises and other institutions. Moreover, it has facilitated economic development, particularly in the field of tourism.

Nevertheless, the general results in this activity field of the programme are very modest. CBC programmes are not suitable for large-scale infrastructure development projects due to the limited financial resources available for this type of programmes.

Project sustainability

Road maintenance is regulated by law in both countries. Designated organisations are responsible for maintaining the adequate physical parameters of the two reconstructed minor roads.

4.1.2 Priority Axis 2 – Sustainable development

The field of sustainable and well-balanced development covered regional development cooperation, preventive healthcare, environment protection and management, and efficient energy use.

The strategy recognised the benefits that environmental efficiency could bring to the regional economy in a broader sense. In addition, renewable energy and alternative technologies represent opportunities for sustainability of the region. Activities for the creation of a quality environment and sustainable development of municipalities can lead to a better place for living and working. It is important to strengthen the cooperation of different sectors with environment and nature protection to achieve synergies. Medical communication and cooperation must be enhanced to facilitate the exchange of information for developing the social and healthcare system.

Regional development cooperation

The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- Development of sustainable networks of regional development institutions in different sectors was to develop a pipeline of joint cross-border projects for further development initiatives. Preparation of new projects for further development potentials.
- Development of common labour services, such as the exchange of information on legislative requirements, training programmes designed to tackle common needs

Project types

Seven projects were approved and implemented in this activity field. The projects aimed at:

- improving employment opportunities for women, physically disabled people, the youth and long-term unemployed individuals (4);
- promoting education activities for target groups with a weak labour-market position (4);
- promoting research (labour market, environment) activities (2);
- fostering business cooperation (1);
- improving conditions of spatial development (1);
- strengthening joint operation of protection forces (1).

Main activities

The projects implemented a wide range of activities, including:

- training programmes for target groups;
- interactive, systematic introduction of knowledge and materials regarding employment with up-to-date information and communication instruments;
- preparation of long-term plans for human resources supply and demand;
- establishment of virtual information centres;

- development of pilot projects;
- research activities on environment protection;
- investment in reducing electricity consumption;
- activating and involving actors in the field of spatial development;
- elaboration of a cross-border development programme strategy and action plan;
- creating a Slovenian-Hungarian spatial information system to serve development objectives;
- exchange of good practices;
- preparation of joint plans for exercises for protection and rescue.

Contribution to programme objective

The implemented projects successfully contributed to the achievement of the main objectives of the programme. They have developed networks of regional development institutions and supported the strengthening of labour services.

Project results

Main result of the projects is that they have contributed to the harmonisation of demand and supply on the labour market in the time of an economic crisis by encouraging joint spatial planning, providing training courses and developing pilot projects.

Furthermore, they have improved the skills and competences of disadvantaged groups on the labour market (women, physically disabled people, the youth and long-term unemployed individuals, school dropouts) and enhanced their chances of finding jobs in a period when unemployment was growing due to the economic crisis. They have inspired several target groups to start their own businesses and help in reducing unemployment-related problems.

The result of the implemented joint system (action plan) for protection and rescue can be properly measured only under real circumstances. The common action plan is therefore an output and the result is if (when) will be successfully tested under the real circumstances.

Project sustainability

Harmonisation of labour market supply and demand is always a primary objective of each government and professional trade organisations. Moreover, governments in both countries support SMEs. Improving the economic situation also creates favourable conditions for increasing the number of new jobs. Participants of the training programmes organised as part of the projects have good chances to find employment or launch their own enterprise.

Preventative health care

The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- Cooperation between healthcare service providers: identification of health/social care needs; planning and implementation of resource sharing initiatives; joint

purchase and use of medical equipment; joint R&D activity and trainings; exchange of good practices and assistance to people living in the closest vicinity to the border.

- Creation of joint services: joint emergency-response planning including the development of communication links; cooperation in the field of special healthcare; online cooperation on patient coordination, etc.
- In the field of preventative health care, different institutions should be linked in order to spread awareness about a healthy lifestyle: e.g. food preparation and consumption, drug prevention, risk prevention of typical diseases.

Project types

Seven projects were approved in this activity field. The projects focused on prevention (4), promotion of a healthy lifestyle (5), strengthening cooperation between medical service providers (4), and improving rehabilitation services (2).

Main activities

- strengthening cooperation between health organisations;
- development of prevention programmes;
- health filter programmes;
- coaching physically handicapped people for a healthy lifestyle;
- trainings in handicrafts;
- workshops, seminars;
- establishing web information platforms;
- preparing guidelines for preventive healthcare and nutrition treatments;
- search of market niches and business opportunities with healthy foods;
- strengthening post-rehabilitation services;
- raising awareness on preventing risks (brain injuries, celiac diseases, stress, mental problems).

Contribution to programme objectives

The implemented projects contributed to the programme objectives by supporting the establishment of networks for prevention programmes, strengthening the awareness about a healthy lifestyle and mental health, and ensuring prevention (particularly among the youth) or rehabilitation programmes for target groups struggling with health or mental problems (the physically handicapped, people with brain injuries, people with celiac diseases). The projects facilitated the transfer of good practices.

Project results

The main result of the projects is that the exchange of good practices has occurred in several areas of the health system and these practices are now integrated into the health services.

Some projects have contributed considerably to the improvement of the quality of life of specific target groups (people with brain injuries or celiac diseases).

Promotion of a healthy lifestyle, healthy nutrition, regular physical exercises and a lifestyle without tobacco, alcohol, drugs could also have important positive effects on the target groups but the real impact can only be measured in the long term and with a well-designed research project.

Project sustainability

The differences in of the healthcare systems of the two countries and their constant reforming hinder deeper cooperation in healthcare services at cross-border level. Nevertheless, enough space remains for cooperation in prevention programmes, promotion of a healthy lifestyle and exchange of good practices in the future. A critical issue is the financing of such types of common programmes. In the next SI-HU CBC programme very limited financial sources will be available for these purposes. Without public financial support, there is a risk that these types of cooperation will fade away.

Environment protection and management

The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- Joint management solutions in the field of managing existing and planned nature parks/protected areas, e.g. public awareness raising, joint park promotion, elaborating development potentials, transfer of know-how.
- Preservation of biodiversity should be supported both by means of direct activities connected to preservation, as well as by increasing the awareness of the wider population and visitors, and the promotion of cooperation with other land users.
- Cooperation in the field of environmental management, such as know-how transfer and technology development in the field of noise, fine dust, waste management and activities concerning the protection of joint water resources.
- Cooperation in the development of joint strategies and plans related to risk prevention; environment protection and actions in case of natural hazards (e.g. flood protection).
- Activities concerning the protection of joint water resources (e.g. connection of households into small WWTP) and access to joint systems of clean drinking water.

Project types

Six projects were approved in this activity field. The projects supported preservation of biodiversity (3), development of sustainable forms of nature conservation (3), development of models for the best use of natural resources (water, aquifer, agricultural land) (3), and environment-friendly production (1).

Main activities

- development of a sustainable land-use model based on the natural, economic and social potentials of the area;
- investments and procurement of equipment;
- publications;
- development of new agricultural and tourism products;
- nature-friendly methods of agriculture;

- development of a joint strategy in the field of flood protection, a forecast model;
- research and analysis in the cross-border area for a thorough evaluation of the transboundary thermal aquifer;
- establishment of a sustainable protection system for meadow orchards;
- establishment of a cross-border partner network;
- establishment of an informational and educational ECO-HUB, which will motivate SMEs to develop environmentally friendly products.

Contribution to programme objectives

The projects contributed to nearly all the planned objectives of the programme. They promoted the preservation of biodiversity, developed joint management solutions for nature protection, strengthened cooperation for joint protection of the aquatic environment and elaborated a joint strategy and forecast model for flood protection.

Project results

Protected areas in the cooperation area can be seen as an obstacle to development, but on the other hand they also offer a good opportunity for ecological agricultural production or ecotourism. A very positive result of some of the projects was that they attempted to link preservation of biodiversity with the economic interests of different stakeholders (agricultural producers, tourism service providers). The sustainable land-use model or the protection model for meadow orchards will be a good compass for agricultural producers on how to adjust their activities for an environment-friendly production.

Several projects promoted the development of environment-friendly agricultural and tourism products; which have twofold results: decreasing the burden on the environment and increasing the opportunity to improve profitability of local enterprises.

Another important outcome of the projects was increased awareness about protected natural areas and their special habitats.

The result of the joint flood-protection strategy and forecast model can only be measured in practice. With the changing climate, floods are frequent also along the Mura River and its affluents. The high-water forecast model can be a very useful tool for taking the necessary measures in time and protecting human life and physical assets.

The real results of the identification of the transboundary geothermal potential will be manifested when this potential is exploited.

Project sustainability

Nature protection and preservation of biodiversity is an important objective in both countries, even if economic interests currently have priority over environmental interest (at least in Hungary). The national nature parks and Natura 2000 sites will continue to have an important role in this process in the future. Sustainability of the projects can be ensured in the long term.

The institutional system for flood protection is available in both countries. The forecast model will help them take the necessary steps in time.

Tourism based on thermal water is very popular and the cross-border area is host to several spa resorts. Reasonable exploitation of the transboundary thermal aquifers is in the interest of both countries. The research and recommendations made by the relevant project can be used for this purpose.

Efficient energy use

The following activities were expected to be carried out:

- The development and implementation of pilot projects in various fields was to be supported in order to promote the use of renewable energy sources.
- The transfer of best practices and concepts should be encouraged, e.g. the use of renewable energy sources in public transport and at local levels.
- Cross-border cooperation in the field of efficient energy use, e.g. the development of measures for reducing energy consumption in households and in the enterprise sector, the implementation of pilot projects, awareness raising, training and promotion activities were to be supported.

Project types

Two projects were approved and implemented under this activity field. They focused on energy efficiency (2) and use of renewable energy (1).

Main activities

The project activities involved:

- establishment of a cross-border energy efficiency and renewable-energy innovation and competence centre;
- establishment of a pilot demonstration centre, which will incorporate a one-stop-shop for demonstration and applicability of energy data and approaches;
- strengthening the partnership in environment-friendly energy use;
- analysis of the current situation, data processing and a cross-border strategy for energy efficiency;
- establishment of an information system and web page;
- a pilot campaign “Do-It-Yourself”, aimed at achieving energy efficiency in the construction industry.

Contribution to programme objectives

The two implemented projects have contributed to the programme objectives. They promoted the use of renewable energy and developed recommendations and solutions for efficient energy use.

Project results

The results of the two projects were modest, but the cooperation established in the projects at cross-border level can serve as a basis for further joint actions. Increasing

energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy also depends greatly on investments by households and enterprises.

Project sustainability

Institutional cooperation at cross-border level in the field of energy efficiency and renewable-energy use can be maintained and strengthened in the future, also through exchange of good practices. However, the very different approaches of the two countries to renewable energy will not make cooperation in this field any easier.

Recommendations:

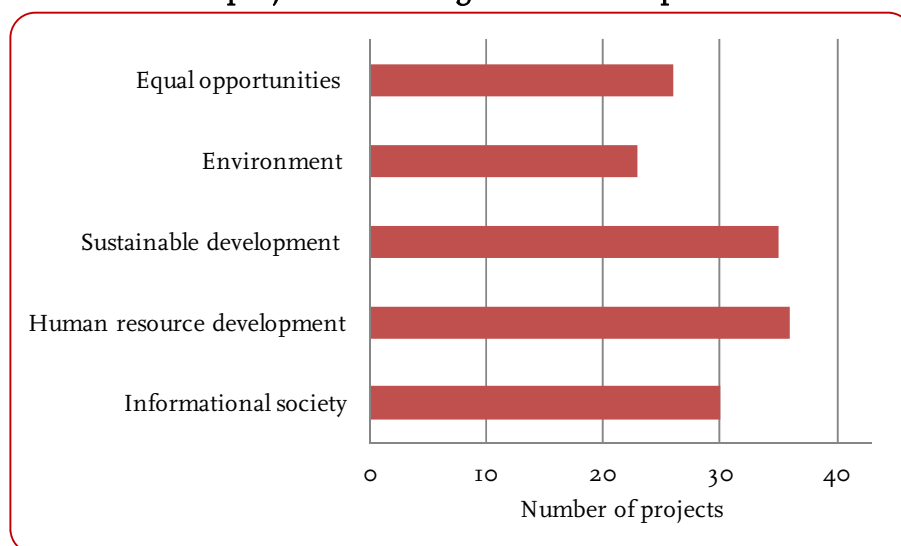
- *Some real, quantifiable result indicators should be established in the next programming period for each priority axis to measure the results of the programme at axis and programme level.*
- *The monitoring system at project and programme level should be improved (use of e-monitoring) in order to obtain the necessary data for measuring the result indicators.*

4.2 Contribution to horizontal policies

Horizontal priorities are crucial for the development of a society and run across all areas and operational programmes. They should also be respected by all applicants for public funding. In the 2007–2013 programming period, programmes and projects had to observe the three horizontal priorities of economic and social cohesion policy: equal opportunities, sustainable development and avoiding discrimination. The European Union considered these topics to be its fundamental policies and principles and, as such, tried to promote them through its structural funds and Cohesion Fund. Incorporation of horizontal policies was assessed in project applications so all applications addressed them, but not all in the same manner.

In the interviews with beneficiaries, the addressing of horizontal policies was verified in a sense whether the project really addressed horizontal policies stated in the application form, and if so, which activities were performed to address them. In the application forms for the first and second call, the sections on horizontal policies were not identical. In the first call, applicants could choose four horizontal policies (equal opportunities, information society, environment, sustainable development), whereas the application form for the second call included five horizontal policies (equal opportunities, environment, sustainable development, human resource development and information society). In the interviews, addressing of all five horizontal policies was verified, thus ensuring a consistent evaluation method for all projects.

The following graph presents an overview of how many projects addressed a particular horizontal policy.

Graph 4: Distribution of projects according to horizontal policies

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

Equal opportunities

The European Union sets out the principle that the gender perspective should systematically be taken into account in all Community policies and actions. This is a question of equal economic independence for women and men, reconciliation of private and professional life, equal representation in decision-making, eradication of all forms of gender-based violence, elimination of gender stereotypes.

This is also a question of non-discrimination in general that needs to be respected by all beneficiaries. It refers to discriminatory treatment based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementation. On the contrary, increased accessibility for disabled persons is encouraged.

All projects implemented under the Operational Programme SI-HU 2007–2003 respected the principle of equal opportunity and none of them violated this during the implementation period. 60% of the projects dealt with equal opportunity issues (developed activities that addressed these issues). Several projects – particularly in the fields of culture, economic development and health – focused on the improvement of the situation of disadvantaged groups – women, disabled people, handicapped people, the unemployed and people suffering from diseases or mental problems.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a fundamental and overarching objective of the European Union, enshrined in its treaties since 1997. The concept aims to continuously improve the quality of life and well-being for present and future generations by linking economic development, protection of the environment and social justice.

The overall aim is to continually improve citizens' quality of life by creating sustainable communities that manage and use resources efficiently and tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, thus ensuring prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion.

The basic requirements of the sustainable development principle are:

- social equity,
- improvement of the quality of life,
- sustainable use of natural resources, and
- protection of the environment.

The improvement of sustainable development elements can take the form of an increase (increased use of renewable energy sources) or a decrease (decrease of the uncontrolled waste deposits).

Sustainable development actions can also manifest themselves in the social and cultural environment (reducing unemployment in a small region, respecting the topology of the cultural landscape, etc). Nevertheless, respecting the principle of sustainable development is strongly related to environmental actions.

In certain situations, sustainable development issues are not relevant to the projects. In these cases, the activities should at least be neutral to these factors, and by any means they should not have a negative impact on the environment.

Sustainable development can be facilitated in two ways:

1. as a cross-cutting issue for all projects,
2. as the key purpose of certain projects.

Sustainable development issues vary in different projects and it was not expected that all projects should tackle all aspects related to sustainable development. However, it was expected that all projects should consider sustainable development and take appropriate steps to contribute to the development of their project in a sustainable context.

Ensuring sustainable development was a critical point for most of the projects (81%), but even the projects that did not deal with this issue due to the nature of the project avoided a negative effect on the above factors of sustainable development. Most of the projects tackled this issue as a cross-cutting one, but for some of them it was a key purpose (particularly in the fields of economic development and environment protection).

Environment

Protecting the environment is part of sustainable development. Not only environment protection and energy projects tackled the issue of the environment, but also several tourism, cultural and economic-development projects. Altogether, 53% of the projects dealt with environment as a primary or secondary target area of development.

Human resource development

Education and training lie at the heart of the strategy of the EU and are seen as key drivers for growth and jobs. At the same time, education and training help boost productivity, innovation and competitiveness of the economy.

The target of the EU 2020 strategy on educational attainment, which tackles the problem of early school leavers, is to reduce the dropout rate to 10% from the current 15%, while increasing the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40% by 2020.

Young people who leave education and training prematurely lack crucial skills and run the risk of facing serious, persistent problems on the labour market and experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Early leavers from education and training who do enter the labour market are more likely to be in precarious and low-paid jobs and to draw on welfare and other social benefits.

A key objective of all educational systems is to equip people with a wide range of skills and competences. This encompasses not only basic skills such as reading and mathematics, but also more transversal ones such as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and establishing enterprises. Enhancing digital competences to exploit the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) is also a key priority.

Educational attainment levels are another important factor for explaining the variation in employment rates between different groups in the labour force.

These findings underline the importance of people's education for their employability. Increasing educational attainment and equipping people with skills for the knowledge society are therefore major concerns for European employment policies.

Human resource development was a key issue of nearly all projects through different training programmes. A total of 84% of the projects improved the skills and competences of the training participants and/or developed training materials and curricula for further training activities, which can be integrated in the regular education system.

Information society

The information society continues to be a key driver of growth and employment, and was at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy. Information society is to be understood as a horizontal tool, which can be used for the purpose of environment management and protection, preservation and revitalisation of nature and culture, as well as in setting up and using coordination mechanisms. Activities such as courses in specific fields of knowledge, the establishment of infrastructure and equipment, the development of information services and applications, and an increased use of these services will result in increased work efficiency due to improved performance of information infrastructure, equipment and services.

Developing the means of information society was a key element of most of the projects (70%). In the framework of all projects, at least a website was set up and the activities and results were presented through these web pages.

All training courses supported the use of the internet and other ICT tools.

Recommendation: meeting the requirements of horizontal objectives should remain important element of the projects in the next programming period, as well. It should be not expected, however, that each project meet all horizontal objectives.

4.3 Identification of good practices

Based on the interviews with beneficiaries and questionnaires from programme structures, projects with cases of good practices were identified for the following fields: innovation, ability to create synergies, effective implementation, efficiency of achieved objectives, added value, cross-border effect and sustainability. These aspects have been chosen since they are the most important indicators of successful projects and are all (especially the ability to create synergies and sustainability) growing in importance in the next financing periods of all programmes of the ERDF.

Below we present the identified examples of good practice by field and priority axis, along with an explanation.

Innovation

Priority Axis 1: VIA SAVARIA

Establishment of cross-border cooperation in the vast area on the basis of common cultural heritage and its integration not only in the tourism offer but also in the lives of local residents.

Priority Axis 2: LQ-CELIAC

Involvement of well-known local restaurants in workshops for gluten-free food preparation for and with celiac disease patients. Active involvement of newly identified patients in the project, providing personalised e-cards and a mentor.

Ability to create synergies

Priority Axis 1: AC

The project has, on the one hand, prepared an inventory of intangible cultural heritage and, on the other hand, made a gallery for the works of craftsmen. This strengthened mutual trust, which was a major effort that resulted in long-term cooperation (continuing in the project AC 2). The project combined traditional knowledge and artisanship to produce modern products and present them to costumers in an innovative way.

Priority Axis 2: UPKAČ

The project has created an important synergy between the conservation objectives of the project (establishment of permanent protection of tall meadow orchards) and establishment of a cross-border partnership network in the project area, which resulted in greater environmental awareness among the general population and is a starting point for many economical activities.

Effectiveness

Priority Axis 1: VIA SAVARIA

In order to effectively coordinate the activities of 15 project partners, the Lead Partner used (in case of unresponsiveness of project partners) unannounced visits to stimulate activities and successful implementation of the project.

Under Priority Axis 2, two projects received the same number of points for effectiveness:

UPKAČ

The project has achieved many multiplier effects, particularly on the target groups. Fruit growers deepened their professional knowledge and now have the possibility to produce their own products, and the general public is informed about the significance of birds and biodiversity.

LQ-CELIAC

Within the project, more than 50 new patients with celiac disease were identified. Numerous training, educational and promotional events helped make an important step towards overcoming taboos and improving healthcare on both sides of the border.

Efficiency

Priority Axis 1: VIA SAVARIA

This complex project with many partners, which brought extensive infrastructure renovation, was successfully implemented. After the project, the number of visitors is growing and products are successfully being sold. The project achieved all the measured result indicators and three were exceeded. The project also generated additional results that were not predicted in the application form (especially with respect to the effect of the project).

Under Priority Axis 2, two projects received the same number of points for efficiency:

UPKAČ

The project achieved all output and result indicators set in the application form and has a significant impact in the project area. There are many project activities that continue even after the conclusion of the project due to the good response from the target groups.

Among the local population, the project has brought new activities that have a positive influence on the local economy and their implementation continues.

LQ-CELIAC

The project not only achieves all the indicators set in the application form but has also exceeded many of them. More than one third (19 out of 54) of output indicators and more than two thirds (16 out of 26) of result indicators were exceeded. The response of the target group was much greater than planned and consequently the project generated a greater impact.

Added value

Priority Axis 1: AC

The project created an inventory of intangible cultural heritage and collected documentation regarding artisanship, thus preserving the knowledge and tradition of ancestors and making it available for future generations.

Priority Axis 2: UPKAČ

Establishment of activities that have positive economic, environmental and social aspects – all three elements of sustainable development.

Cross-border effect

Under Priority Axis 1, two projects received the same number of points for cross-border effect:

AC

Establishment of a strong regional partnership between individual craftsmen and their associations and institutions (notably schools and museums), which resulted in newly prepared educational programmes and preservation of knowledge equally on both sides of the border.

VIA SAVARIA

Introduction of new tourism products enhancing the tourist destination along a path that runs on both sides of the border, thus presenting a unique way for tourists to experience the natural and cultural assets of the wider area.

Under Priority Axis 2, two projects received the same number of points for cross-border effect:

UPKAČ

Promotion of developing sustainable forms of nature conservation among stakeholders on both sides of the border. The project provided possibilities for the local population to acquire professional knowledge and skills regarding the use of technical equipment in

order to economise their activities and strengthen their identity in the joint cross-border area.

ATT

Hungarian and Slovenian project partners joined their pedagogical and andragogical knowledge to develop training programmes, which were then integrated into educational institutions and secondary schools.

Sustainability

Priority Axis 1: VIA SAVARIA

The newly established path has become a new tourist destination of the wider area. Much of the infrastructure that was renovated as part of the project is now used as protocol and culinary centres where more and more events are hosted, which are not necessary directly linked to the content of the project.

Priority Axis 2: UPKAČ

The successful implementation of the project and well-established cooperation among project partners is already reflected in the elaboration of a new project proposal that will be based on the achieved results.

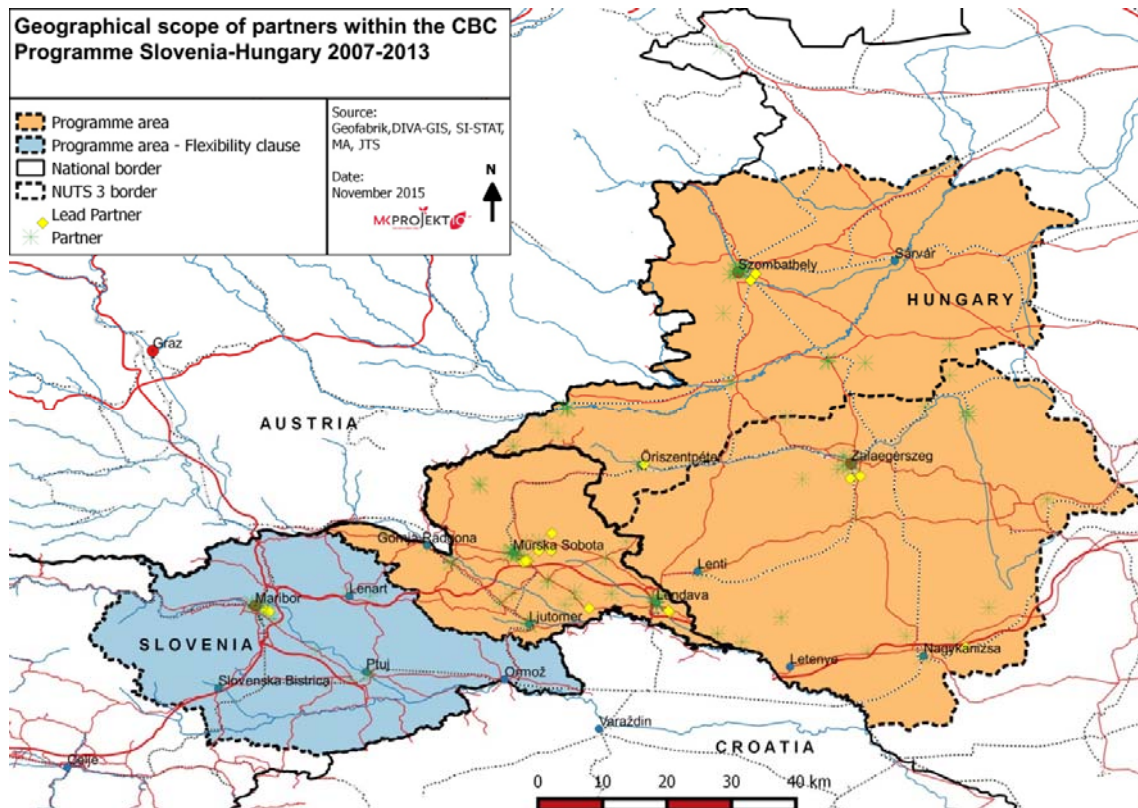
Generally, none of the implemented projects stands out in the sense that it could be called an example of “bad practice”. Nevertheless, certain problems did arise that consequently effected or hindered a good implementation of some of the projects:

- The restructuring of the Hungarian administration had an important impact on the projects, since many lead or project partners had to restructure or ceased to exist, which necessitated changes to the structure of the project.
- Delays in payments of funds due to a long process of first-level control had a negative effect especially on small private institutions. For many beneficiaries this meant they could not implement some of the activities or threatened their future involvement in the project. Thanks to innovative solutions of other partners, they have found many suitable solutions to overcome this problem (some activities were taken over by other partners, bridging loans between partners, etc.).
- Due to financial problems, some partners delayed the submission of their reports. This also caused problems for the Lead Partner.
- Bankruptcy of a partner in most cases led to the transfer of activities and funds to other partners.
- Bankruptcy of the Lead Partner (RRA Mura) that occurred after the conclusion of all the activities hinders the financial closure of a project, which is delaying the transfer of funds.

4.4 Partner level

The analysis on the partner level presented in this chapter is based on the matrix of approved projects obtained from the MA. In the evaluation, the following parameters were analysed: tender, priority axis, activity field, location and legal form of the partners.

Map 3: Geographical scope of partners



The purpose of this chapter is to present the characteristics of partnerships and in particular the relationship between the public and private sector, geographical distribution of partners and the median number of partners, according to priority axes and activity field.

At this point it should be noted types of beneficiaries that the OP (chapter 7) considered eligible from the private sector:

- Non-governmental organisations, such as associations and foundations;
- Chambers of commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, clusters registered as non-profit legal persons;
- Legal entities established by private law (societies) with non-profit status and purpose of operating, such as local and regional development agencies registered as companies, local tourism organisations, training organizations etc..

Only types of private organisations that are in line with one of the listed categories above were eligible to participate in the programme as beneficiaries and are therefore considered as “PRIVATE” in the following tables.

Table 6: Share of projects by status of the Lead Partner and activity field (%)

ACTIVITY FIELDS		PRIVATE	PUBLIC
PA 1	Development of Joint Tourist Destination	26.32	20.83
	Preservation and Development of Culture	21.05	25.00
	Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections	0.00	4.17
PA 2	Regional Development Cooperation	15.79	16.67
	Preventative Health Care	15.79	16.67
	Environment Protection and Management	10.53	16.67
	Efficient Energy Use	10.53	0.00
TOTAL		100	100

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

In more than 55% of all approved projects, public institutions were in the role of the Lead Partner (24 Lead Partners were public institutions and 19 were private). 25% of Lead Partners (6) that were public institutions implemented projects in the field of Preservation and Development of Culture, followed by Development of Joint Tourist Destination (5). No public institution as Lead Partner was represented in the activity field of Efficient Energy Use. However, that does not mean that public institutions were not involved in projects that were also very active in the field of Efficient Energy Use (such as OCR). More than a quarter of private Lead Partners focused on the Development of Joint Tourist Destination (5), followed by Preservation and Development of Culture (4), Regional Development Cooperation and Preventative Health Care (3 each), Environment Protection and Management and Efficient Energy Use (2 each).

Table 7: Number of Lead Partners per type, priority axis and country

PRIORITY AXIS	SLOVENIA		HUNGARY	
	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
PA1	5	7	4	5
PA2	8	7	2	5
Partial SUM	13	14	6	10
SUM	27		16	

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

Out of 43 Lead Partners, 62.8% were from Slovenia, where the private and public sector were almost equally represented (one public institution more was represented). On the Hungarian side, the ratio between the types of Lead Partners is more in favour of public institutions, as 62.5% of all Lead Partners were public institutions.

On the priority axis level, public institutions were equally represented among Lead Partners. One private institution more was in the role of Lead Partner in priority axis 2 in

comparison with priority axis 1. Only non-profit legal persons, established by public or private law for the purposes of public interests were eligible to apply, thus understandably more public institutions were eligible to apply and later assume the role of Lead Partner. An important factor that has influenced the number of private institution Lead Partners (and beneficiaries) was the delays in reimbursement of funds and lack of pre-financing. According to interviews, liquidity problems in some cases resulted in the Lead Partner from the first call not being involved in the partnership for the second call.

The following table presents the scope of established partnerships, regardless of the legal form or location of partners. The highest number of partners was within the activity field Development of Joint Tourist Destination (25.45% of all partners) and the least in Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections (0.91%).

The broadest partnerships were formed in four activity fields: Development of Joint Tourist Destination, Regional Development Cooperation, Environment Protection and Management, and Efficient Energy Use, where the median³ number of project partners is 5. If we exclude the activity field Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections, where only one project was approved and it had two partners, the median number of partners does not vary significantly among objectives, reaching values from 4 to 5 partners per project.

Table 8: Number of project partners and median per activity field and each approved projects

ACTIVITY FIELD		TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTNERS	PROJECT MEDIAN
PA 1	Development of Joint Tourist Destination	56	5
	Preservation and Development of Culture	53	4
	Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections	2	2
PA 2	Regional Development Cooperation	38	5
	Preventative Health Care	32	4
	Environment Protection and Management	29	5
	Efficient Energy Use	10	5
TOTAL		220	5

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the MA

The operational programme set six groups of eligible beneficiaries that are non-profit legal persons established by public or private law:

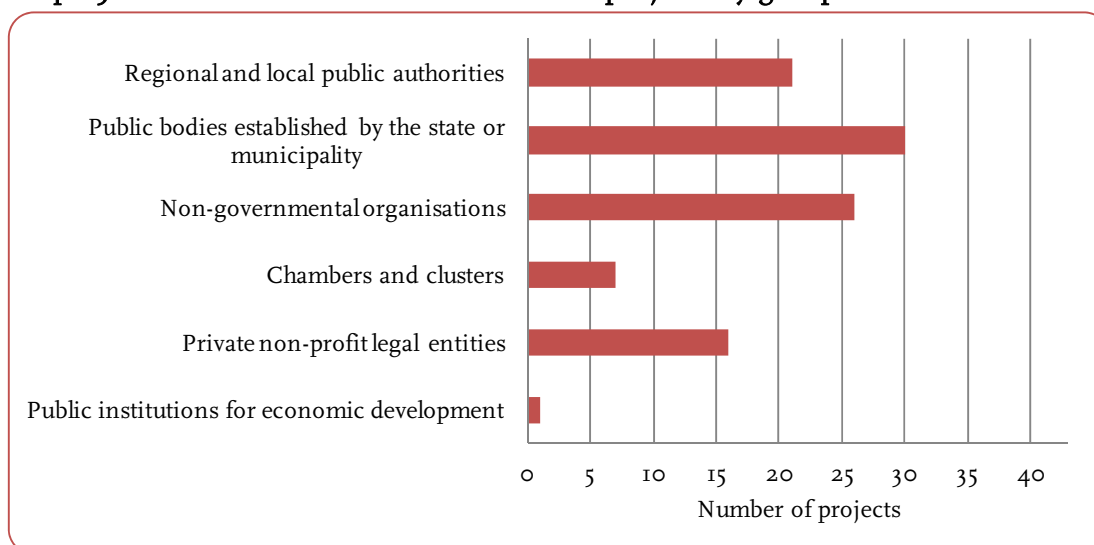
- regional and local public authorities;
- public bodies established by the state or a municipality;
- non-governmental organisations, such as associations and foundations;
- chambers of commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, clusters registered as non-profit legal persons;

³ The centreline (median) value was chosen as an alternative indicator to the arithmetic mean, since it is much more stable due to extreme values in the sample.

- legal entities established by private law (societies) with non-profit status and purpose of operating;
- public institutions for economic development, public companies, as well as other legal entities with predominant impact of the state or municipalities on their management.

The following graph shows in how many projects each group of beneficiaries was represented.

Graph 5: Involvement of beneficiaries in the projects by group



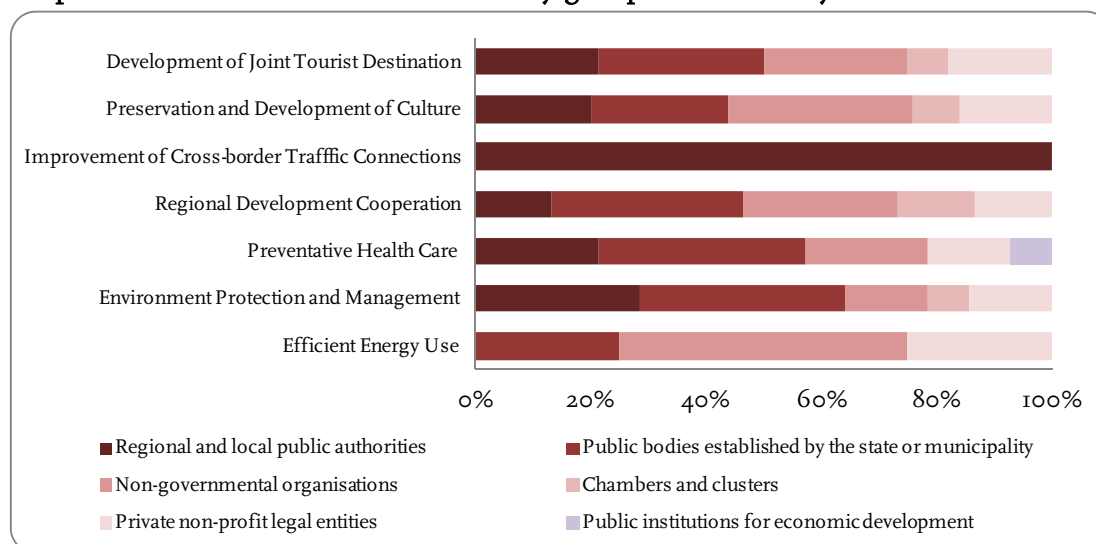
Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from interviews with beneficiaries

Public bodies (institutions, agencies, faculties, etc.) established by the state or a municipality are a predominant group, as they were involved in 30 (69.77% of all) projects. Non-governmental organisations were the most frequent group of private institutions (26 or 60.47% of all). Regional and local public authorities (in most cases municipalities and regional bodies) took part in almost half (48.84% or 21 projects) of the partnerships. The second group of private institutions, non-for-profit legal entities, was involved in 16 partnerships (37.21% of all projects). Chambers (predominantly of commerce and crafts) were involved in 7 partnerships (16.28%) and public institutions for economic development in only one (2.33%). At this point it should be noted that there was much more than one institution for economic development included in the partnerships. In several projects they were even the Lead Partner but their legal status in most cases is not a public institution.

Representation of groups of beneficiaries on the level of activity fields is presented in Graph 2. It reveals that none of the groups is presented in all activity fields and that all groups are presented in only one (Preventative Health Care). Within the activity field Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections only one project was approved and it had only two partners, both of which were public authorities, so this activity field is not

representative and should not influence strongly the general overview. In four activity fields (and most projects), at least five groups of beneficiaries were represented.

Graph 6: Involvement of beneficiaries by group in the activity fields



Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from interviews with beneficiaries

In our interviews, we asked beneficiaries to assess the quality of their partnerships with grades from 1 to 5, with 5 as the best one. Assessments were primarily provided by Lead Partners, since they had the best overview of their partnerships and most correspondence regarding the activities of reporting and administrative management. A total of 23 partnerships (53.49%) received the best grade (5), followed by grade 4 (15 partnerships or 34.88%) and grade 3 (5 partnerships or 11.63%). The average grade of all partnerships is 4.42 and the median is 5.00, which represents a high quality and efficiency of partnerships and a strong indication that many of them will continue in the next programme period. One example of such a partnership can be found in the project “Right profession” where project partners cooperated also on other common activities of their organisations that were not directly linked to the project itself. Consequently, they have intensified interaction to an almost daily (but at least a weekly) basis. They organised regular and frequent project meetings to discuss project issues in person. Moreover, they have developed their own internal monitoring tool, indicating in different colours the tasks of each partner, deadlines and progress. This (together with regular communication) has proved to be an effective and efficient tool for cross-border cooperation and any project that involves a large number of partners.

Recommendations:

- *We recommend considering the possibility of including SMEs as eligible beneficiaries (not as Lead Partners) in the next programme period as is the case in some other operational programmes.*
- *MA could stimulate (approve) new projects that are based on the achieved results of previous projects, which would lead to the capitalisation of existing results.*

4.5 Added value

The added value was evaluated through four components: social capital, work and process management, recognisability and partnership. Initial information was gathered in an e-survey conducted among beneficiaries in May 2015. More detailed information regarding the four components was gathered in interviews, with a stronger emphasis on the partnership experience. Thus, this report presents a more detailed analysis of added value and a continuation of the results presented in the first evaluation report.

Social capital

Social capital, notably *exchange of experience* was recognised as the highest added value already in the e-survey. Based on the discussions with beneficiaries (Lead Partners as well as other partners), exchange of experiences from both sides of the border can be highlighted as the main added value of the programme. Many projects initiated and encouraged cooperation through direct communication among public institutions (municipalities, museums, hospitals, etc.) in the area. The border between Hungary and Slovenia was part of the “Iron Curtain” 26 years ago and crossing it was not a common practice. Therefore, cross-border interaction does not have such a long tradition as in many other cross-border programmes, especially those in which Slovenia is included.

Further important added value of the projects is that in many cases they have established foundations for future collaboration (e.g. the project “Rešujmo skupaj”). This is visible in projects that included investments in infrastructure or elaboration of expert studies and models, as well as projects that addressed social needs of the people in the programme area, where grants can be identified as an investment in future work rather than a subsidy.

Work, process management

Most of the partnerships, especially those among public institutions (municipalities), were newly formed, which means partners had not worked together before on such a vast project. New experiences gained in the partnerships contributed greatly to the development of joint projects, which is reflected in the intention of a majority of Lead Partners to cooperate with the same partners on new projects in the future.

In order to ensure successful implementation of the projects, many Lead Partners have developed their own (internal) tools for effective project management. They did this primarily because they were working with partners for the first time, but such tools proved efficient in ensuring the implementation of the projects within the timeframe and funds, envisaged in the contract. Although e-mail is the most common communication tool today, personal communication (via telephone or web conference) and especially meetings for problem solving have been assessed as the most efficient tool in the field of process management on the partner level.

Recognisability

The added value of the projects with respect to recognisability varies between the two priority axes. Projects under Priority Axis 1 were more oriented towards the promotion of the area. Infrastructure (especially in the field of tourism) can be seen as an opportunity for employment and earnings as a multiplying effect. It will definitely take some time for this effect to be more clearly visible. Projects under Priority Axis 2 were more oriented towards the people living in the area, and therefore contribute less to the recognisability of the area, but more to sustainable development and better living conditions.

Partnership

During the implementation of the programme, 43 cross-border partnerships involving a total number of 220 institutions were formed. Because the number of institutions involved as Lead Partners (25) is lower than the number of approved projects (43), in some cases a Lead Partner was involved in more than one partnership (and they also participated in other projects as partners). A similar thing occurred among project partners who were involved in more than one project, thus benefiting in many cases from more than one cross-border project experience. Such a case is understandable if we consider the size of the programme area and its absorption capacity.

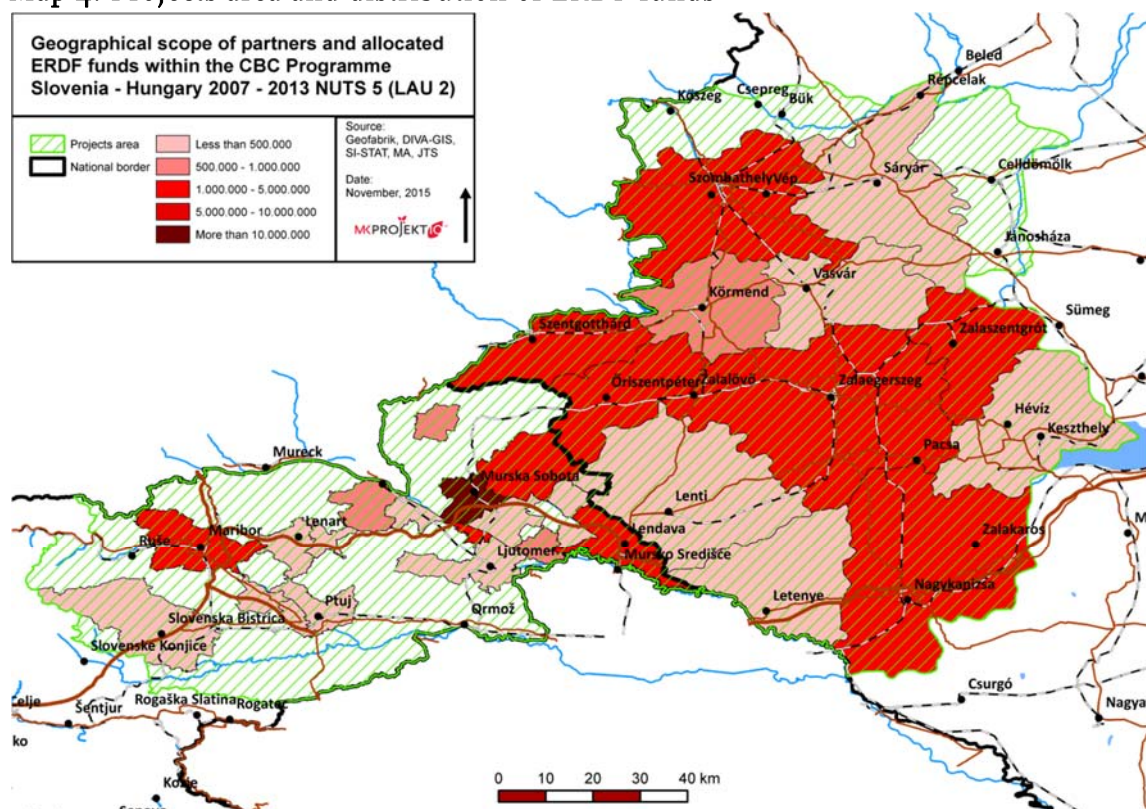
Partnerships established within the programme area created positive effects in various fields reflecting cross-border cooperation (e.g. collaboration in the field of public services and developing joint use of infrastructure). According to the experiences of beneficiaries, the programme has significantly contributed to the integration of stakeholders, cross-sector cooperation and development of joint services in the entire programme area.

4.6 Sustainability of project results and impact

The impact of individual projects was assessed according to the effect of the project on the addressed target groups and sustainability of project results. Data was gathered in part from the achieved indicator values on project level, and in part from the interviews with beneficiaries. The results of the e-survey conducted in May 2015 indicated that in all cases the financial support that projects received was used as an initial investment with a view to long-term effects. This was additionally evaluated in the course of the elaboration of this document on the site of approved projects through personal discussions with beneficiaries and seeing the results achieved.

The following map indicates the area where projects have their effect (according to the interviews with beneficiaries) and distribution of ERDF funds on NUTS 5 (LAU 2) level.

Map 4: Projects area and distribution of ERDF funds



The results of the interviews indicate that most of the projects are sustainable and that the benefits of the activities continue also after the funding has ceased. Understandably not all project activities are likely to continue or they are carried out on a smaller scale, but we present some examples of such sustainability in the following table.

Table 9: Examples of sustainable project results

PROJECT	SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES/EFFECTS
Doživetje panonske gastronomije (<i>Experience of Pannonian Gastronomy</i>)	In many restaurants, presentations of local food producers still take place and are becoming an important added value. Local restaurants and food producers that were not initially included in the project have identified the approach as an example of good practice and are now using it themselves.
Doživetja tradicije (<i>Experience of tradition</i>)	Assessments of the quality of wines and integration (joint promotion) of wine producers.
Sense of Place	Workshops and lessons for children are still taking place on locations on both sides of the border, where learning material produced within the project is distributed.
Via Savaria	Increased number of visitors on the renovated sites which are also used for protocol events and weddings (multiplier effect).
Roma caravan	Dissemination of project results in other Roma settlements in

PROJECT	SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES/EFFECTS
	the programme area and integration of the offer of cultural tourism in the agenda of two tourism agencies.
Határtalan borkultúra (<i>Wine culture without borders</i>)	A civil tourist centre was built in Zalaszentgrót (240 m ²), including a cellar, a hall suitable for organising programmes for 60 people and office spaces. Programmes are regularly organised here, and the Zala Wine Association uses the offices. Most of the female wine producers who took part in the training programme run their own enterprises.
Mura Raba TV I & II	Establishment of a modern ICT connection (broadband internet) in a rural area.
AC 2	National Vocational Qualification programme.
Rédics-Göntérháza	The two access roads (No. 74192 and JB 707001) built as part of the project are used now by local residents and tourists to cross the border.
Jó borszomszédság (<i>Good wine neighbourhood</i>)	A Centre of Wine Tourism in Lendava has been established and furnished. Programmes are regularly organised there, not only for tourists interested in wine tasting. Most of the female wine producers who took part in the training programme run their own enterprises.
Pannon Pleasure	Infrastructure for cyclists on both sides of the border
Tourism & Media	Info point
Harmóniában a tájjal – (<i>In harmony with landscape</i>)	The project created foundations for sustainable agriculture by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – purchasing agriculture machinery that is now used by the National park, – a dairy plant that purchases the milk from local farmers and produces dairy products, – educational activities that are still used by farmers (such as what is the most suitable time of mowing for protected species, and what measures can farmers take to protect the values of their environment during mowing and cultivation of their lands), – the “National Park Product” trade mark was created for agricultural products, which is very popular among farmers, and 36 farmers have joined this network.
3 Parki (<i>3 Parks</i>)	Renaturation of urban parks and continuous awareness activities.
Biofuture	Two ecology demonstration and education centres
Energó Optimum	They still receive invitations from schools and kindergartens to perform their workshops (but in a smaller extent).
!Naprej-!Előre	New therapeutic programmes for people with consequences of brain injury were developed through the project, and are implemented continuously in schedules of partner institutions.

PROJECT	SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES/EFFECTS
OCR	Introduction of environmentally friendly and sustainable street lights. The effects of the project are continuously monitored (lower energy consumption) and serve as a case of good practice.
Rešujmo skupaj (<i>Let's rescue together</i>)	System of direct and immediate activation of rescue teams on both sides of the border was established, along with joint education and training.
Right Profession	Visits in schools with promotion of professions still take place (on the initiative of schools).
Upkač	A parent fruit orchard, two demonstration centres for processing apples and a mobile fruit processing plant.

NOTE: The list is not exhaustive and does not mean that other projects do not have any sustainable impact.
Source: Interviews with beneficiaries

The implementation of the activities mentioned above after the conclusion of the projects indicates that the projects have an important impact on the target groups, since they are the ones who in most cases expressed their wish for the activities to continue. On the programme level, the number of participants in the trainings organised (as part of the projects) totals 27,222, of which 56% (15,247) were women. If we compare this to the planned numbers from the application forms, the value is exceeded by a factor of 10.35.

As seen, investment in infrastructure is not a condition that the project can be marked as sustainable, since many projects that developed educational, health or other social programmes are also sustainable. In some cases, we can definitely say that their impact on the target groups is even greater and more direct (e.g. “!Naprej-!Elöre”).

Many of the projects that were approved in the second call have just concluded (e.g. the project “Rešujmo skupaj” finished in July 2015) and therefore their long-term sustainability and effect cannot yet be assessed. Because the OP itself did not require any monitoring measures for sustainability of project results, no detailed monitoring system has been set up in any the projects. Consequently, the long-term effects of the results cannot be quantified.

An important sustainable aspect is also indicated in the level of partnership. In most projects, strong partnerships were formed that are already planning cooperation, either in terms of continued collaboration (in the case of municipalities and social services) or by preparing new projects together.

Recommendation: In order to evaluate the long-term impact and effect of the programme, an effective monitoring system that measures sustainability of approved projects should be foreseen.

5. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT INDICATORS

5.1 Programme indicators

Indicators for measuring and monitoring the progress and success in the implementation of specific objectives are divided into two categories:

- Programme level,
- the level of each Priority Axis.

It should be noted, however, that the “result” indicators of the Programme are not real result indicators. A result indicator measures the direct and immediate effect of a measure/activity. It provides information on changes in, for example, behaviour, capacity or performance of direct beneficiaries and is measured in physical or monetary terms. The “result” indicators of the Programme measured just the number of projects in connection with activities.

The program did not determine any impact indicator which refer to the benefits of the programme both at the level of measures but also more generally in the programme area. They should be linked to the wider objective of the Programme.

The indicators were proposed in the OP and were designed to measure the impact of the programme on the increase and quality of cross-border cooperation in the programme area. The following table presents the target values to be achieved by the end of the programme and the target values that were achieved by the conclusion of all approved projects.

Table 10: Achievement of Programme indicators

Level	Name	Code	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achieved value - annual reports	Achieved value - field review	% of achievement
PROGRAMME LEVEL	Operational Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2007-2013	Indicators reflecting the degree of cooperation						
		42	Number of projects respecting two of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	30	1	3	10
		43	Number of projects respecting three of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	30	4	4	13.33
		44	Number of projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	90	38	36	40
		Result indicators reflecting the cross-border cooperation						
		46	Number of projects developing joint use of infrastructure	0	3	30	28	933.33
		47	Number of projects developing collaboration in the field of public services	0	20	16	29	145
		48	Number of projects regarding traffic connections (road, cycle, railway, waterways, etc.) – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	4	3	4	100
		48a	Number of projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport along with ICT networks and services – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	8	6	7	87.5
		49	Number of projects encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of the environment	0	25	11	15	60
		50	Number of people participating in joint education or training activities	0	200	5951	27222	13.611
			female	0	at least 50%	3096	15247	15.247
PRIORITY 1	Increase the Attractiveness of the Cooperation Area		Number of tourism projects	0	35	16	13	37.14
			Number of cultural cooperation projects	0	25	19	13	52
			Number of projects regarding traffic connections	0	10	8	2	20
			Number of projects regarding traffic connections (road, cycle, railway, waterways, etc.) – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	2	4	3	150
			Number of projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport along with ICT networks and services – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	5	6	4	80
PRIORITY 2	Sustainable Development		Number of regional initiatives or crossborder partnerships	0	15	23	22	146.67
			Number of networks regarding health	0	10	10	7	70
			Number of joint protection and management of environment projects	0	35	15	8	22.86
			Number of energy projects	0	5	7	4	80
			Number of projects regarding traffic connections (road, cycle, railway, waterways, etc.) – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	2	1	1	50
			Number of projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport along with ICT networks and services – measuring projects with activities listed in section 6.1.3	0	3	2	1	33.33
TA	Technical assistance	Result	Number of projects approved and monitored	0	150	43	43	28.67
		Output	Number of promotional events	0	15	23	23	153.33

Source: OP Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013, annual implementation reports 2009–2014 and interviews with beneficiaries.

Upper table shows two columns of achieved values. The data for the first one is collected from annual reports, provided by the MA and JTS, while the second one is based on the data obtained in the interviews with Lead Partners. In each interview, an assessment of the indicators on the programme level was performed as to whether after the conclusion of the project – with respect to the activities performed, achieved indicators and its impact – it could still be included in the indicator selected in the application form. Since the values that are based on data from application forms and the values obtained from the interviews after the projects represent the real situation, the share of achievement of indicators is calculated based on the values obtained from the interviews.

The indicators that reflect the degree of cooperation show a low achievement ratio. However, these figures reflect two important aspects. First, the third indicator “number of

projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing” shows that a greater majority (83.72%) of approved projects reflect a high degree of cooperation than anticipated (the target value was 60% of all projects). The second aspect is the argument presented in the Annual Implementation Report for 2013 that, theoretically, the first and second indicators are also achieved if a project meets all four of the cooperation criteria. The reasoning means that the indicators (not only the target values) were not set appropriately.

Among the indicators that reflect cross-border cooperation, 5 out of 7 were achieved (even though much fewer projects were approved), which is two more than according to data from application forms alone. A majority (29) of the projects were developing collaboration in the field of public services and not (as presumed in the OP) encouraging and improving joint protection and management of the environment.

On the level of Priority Axis 1 – Increase the Attractiveness of the Cooperation Area, the achieved values in all indicators are lower than according to data from application forms. Consequently only one indicator out of 5 is achieved. A majority of the projects (13) were in the field of tourism and cultural cooperation, which is in line with the results of the SWOT analysis, which indicated tourism as an underdeveloped field in the programme area. Considering the number of approved projects, the achieved values of indicators that address traffic and ICT infrastructure were satisfactory.

Under Priority Axis 2, major emphasis was given to the field of regional initiatives or cross-border partnerships (22 projects), followed by projects for joint protection and management of the environment (8 projects), and networks regarding health (7 projects). Only one project dealt with the improvement of traffic connections, thus achieving only the half value of given indicator. The performance in indicators regarding energy projects (4 projects) and reducing isolation through improved access to transport (1 project) was in line with the number of approved projects.

The result in the indicator for Technical Assistance reflects the number of approved projects compared to the target value (28.67%). According to the target value for the output indicator, the number of promotional events envisaged in the OP was exceeded by 53.33%, since eight more promotional events were organised than planned. However, the Communication Plan of the programme envisaged 20 events, and therefore the indicator is exceeded only by 15% (three events).

With respect to the data obtained in the interviews with beneficiaries, only one indicator (number of projects regarding traffic connections under PA1) was achieved in the exact value as estimated in the OP. 7 indicators were exceeded (by an average of 4,340.90%) and 15 indicators did not achieve the target values (the average realisation was 46.00%). This means that 8 indicators out of the total 23 were achieved, and that the general realisation of the indicators was at 34.78%.

The main reason that the majority of indicators were not achieved remains (as stated in the first evaluation report) that the expected number of projects in the framework of the programme was set too high. Consequently, since only 43 of the targeted 150 projects (28.66%) were approved, this had a domino effect on many indicators on the programme level, as well as the level of each priority axis. Based on the analysis above, we can conclude that the financial scale of individual projects was underestimated in the phase of drafting the OP. It is evident that, due to the great scale of the projects and the programme budget, fewer projects were approved.

Recommendations:

- *Benefiting from the experience from this programme period regarding the average financial value of projects, an achievable and realistic target value of approved projects could be set.*
- *According to the disparity presented in this chapter between the values of indicators based solely on the data from application forms and the data obtained from the beneficiaries after the conclusion of their projects, the contracting parties in projects should give a greater emphasis on the programme-level indicators and deviations from initial predictions, so that the values in annual reports would be more accurate.*

5.2 Project indicators

In the phase of the writing a project proposal, applicants had to select indicators on the programme level (presented in the previous chapter), and then state project-specific indicators that are divided into two groups:

- output indicators,
- result indicators.

This chapter analysed project indicators from the quantitative and qualitative point of view. In the first part, the distribution of output and result indicators among activity fields is reviewed. The second part features an analysis of result indicators based on a reasonable grouping of indicators aimed at presenting the results of the approved projects.

Table 7 shows the distribution of the implemented projects by axis and corresponding activity fields. For each field, the total number of output and result indicators of projects is given, together with the share of achieved output and result indicators. Initial data was gathered from application forms, which were provided by the MA, and the achieved values were obtained in the interviews with beneficiaries.

Table 11: Achievement of project-specific indicators

Activity field	Number of projects	Number of output indicators	% of achieved output indicators	Number of result indicators	% of achieved result indicators
Priority Axis 1 - Increase the Attractiveness of the Cooperation Area					
Development of Joint Tourist Destination	10	227	96.50	127	92.90
Preservation and Development of Culture	10	161	98.10	103	98.10
Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connections	1	5	100	1	100
<i>Partial sum and average where %</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>393</i>	<i>98.20</i>	<i>231</i>	<i>97.00</i>
Priority Axis 2 - Sustainable Development					
Regional Development Cooperation	7	154	100	66	100
Preventative Health Care	7	176	100	67	100
Environment Protection and Management	6	174	99.4	88	94.30
Efficient Energy Use	2	77	100	50	92.00
<i>Partial sum and average where %</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>581</i>	<i>99.85</i>	<i>271</i>	<i>96.58</i>
TOTAL SUM AND AVERAGE WHERE %	43	974	99.03	502	96.79

Source: Application forms provided by the MA and interviews with beneficiaries.

The first observation regarding the project-specific indicators is that their number varied significantly from project to project, and that the vast majority of the projects had a large number of output and result indicators.

Under Priority Axis 1, 21 projects have 393 output and 231 result indicators, with an average of 18.7 output indicators per project and 11 result indicators per project. Achievement rate was high in all activity fields, with the highest in the field of Improvement of Cross-border Traffic Connection, where only one project achieved all indicators (only 6 in total). In the other two activity fields, the same number of projects was approved, but projects developing joint tourist destinations had more indicators and lower realisation (92.9%) than the projects in the field Preservation and Development of Culture (98.1%). The realisation on the level of Priority Axis 1 was 98.2% for output indicators and 97% for result indicators.

More indicators were set within Priority Axis 2, where 22 projects identified 581 output indicators and 271 result indicators. All the projects in two activity fields (Regional Development Cooperation and Preventative Health Care) achieved all output and result indicators. The lowest achievement rate is indicated in the activity field Efficient Energy Use, where the realisation of output indicators was 100% but 92% for result indicators. The realisation on the level of Priority Axis 2 was 99.85% for output indicators and 96.79% for result indicators.

On the level of all projects (both priority axes), 43 projects set forth 974 output indicators, of which 962 (98.77%) were achieved, and of these 68 (7.07%) were exceeded. Out of 502

result indicators, 482 (96.02%) were achieved, and 93 (19.29%) of those were exceeded. In total, the projects set and consequently had to achieve 1,476 indicators. At this point we would like to emphasise that we present this number with a reservation because during the field survey we found out that all indicators have not been set adequately. We assume that the reason for that is in the absence of knowledge of appropriate methodology of setting indicators.

An analysis of result indicators was conducted to answer two questions: How strong is the compliance with result indicators and the strategic objectives of the programme? What are the concrete results of the supported projects? In order to answer the first question, projects were initially arranged by priority axis and then result indicators were allocated to the identified strategic objective corresponding to the priority axis. Due to a very high number of result indicators (in total 502, see Table 7), most of the indicators were meaningfully grouped to make the overview clearer.

Table 12: Qualitative analysis of result indicators for Priority Axis 1

Strategic objective	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Accieved value	% of achieved result indicators
Priority axis 1 - Increase the Attractiveness of the Cooperation Area					
To create preconditions for positive effects in the fields of rural development and tourism	Created opportunities for new jobs	18	394	452	114.72
	Increased number of overnight stays	2	1,200	1,200	100.00
	Increased number of tourists	8	12,260	56,308	459.28
	New producers of local goods	2	1,445	1,449	100.28
	New products	13	4,166	4,171	100.12
	New tourist/cultural attractions	14	847	746	88.08
	Promotional activities	28	242,425	242,425	100.00
	Qualified personnel	26	154,265	157,600	102.16
	Restaurants offering locally produced food	5	44	94	213.64
	Users of new products	4	86,000	86,400	100.47
Develop joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural assets	Unified database on cultural heritage of minorities	1	1	1	100.00
	Inclusion of slovenian and hungarian craftsmen in the handicraft academy	1	40	89	222.50
	Increased level of protection of cultural heritage	1	10	10	100.00
	Digitalized documentation (plans) of researched buildings	1	30	30	100.00
	Wine-gastronomic database	1	1	1	100.00
To promote regional and cultural identity	Activities regarding preservation of culture	4	1,199	1,224	102.09
	Development of new products	2	17	17	100.00
	Improvement of cultural infrastructure	1	5	5	100.00
	Improvement of employment opportunities	1	8	8	100.00
	Increased cooperation	1	200	200	100.00
	Increased number of readers of publication in the border area	1	100	100	100.00
	Increased visits of cultural heritage exhibitions	1	1,000	1,000	100.00
	Info point	2	44	44	100.00
	New tourist attraction	1	505	505	100.00
	Promotional activities	12	9,066	9,066	100.00
To create better connections in cross-border traffic and transport	Qualified personnel	8	7,140	7,140	100.00
	Users of new infrastructure	1	33,460	33,460	100.00

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is "1" name of the group of indicators is the same as listed result indicator in the project.

Source: Grouping done by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on the data from the application forms provided by the MA and interviews with beneficiaries.

Out of the 159 result indicators that were set by the applicants of the projects within Priority Axis 1 we have highlighted the following (by corresponding group of indicators):

- **Created opportunities for new jobs:**
 - ➔ cooperation between major tourism operators and small suppliers,

- ecological slaughterhouse,
 - cooperation of major tourism subjects with small operators,
 - increased revenue in the service and tourism sectors,
 - creation of the common tourism offer compatible with the needs of tourists and guests in the project area,
 - bio study and demo centre in Hungary and Slovenia,
 - Bioanalytical Laboratory.
- **Increased number of tourists:**
 - increased number of tourists visiting the region,
 - increased number of people using common tourism capabilities,
 - GPS treasure hunters.
- **New products:**
 - established cross-border tourism products,
 - new tourist destination,
 - new useful and packed handicrafts in both countries,
 - biotourism packages,
 - pilot package containing organic food,
 - development of tourism products based on the exchange of experience,
 - sale of 20 cross-border tourism packages.
- **New tourist/cultural attraction:**
 - opening a section of a European cultural route,
 - renewed and modern equipped facilities,
 - identified structure of providers, type of tourism offer and identified needs of existing and potential tourists and guests,
 - cross-border tourist route,
 - increased number of wine-related cultural programme,
 - increased number of overall investments in tourist destinations.
- **Promotional activities:**
 - effective project promotion to end users (schools, media, local community) as a condition for visibility of the programme, which is to be introduced permanently after the end of the project,
 - promotion of the tourist destination on radio stations,
 - promotion of the tourist destination and events on television,
 - strengthening of the image of the wine-growing area,
 - encouraging an innovative approach in the use of modern technology,
 - number of website visitors,
 - number of awareness-raising events,
 - exploration of the impact of regional media on cross-border cooperation,
 - informing general Slovenian public about the problems, life and developments in the Raba region.

- **Qualified personnel:**
 - ➔ qualified expert working group: mentors, animators/museum professionals, educators, teachers, volunteers and others who took part in the programme implementation,
 - ➔ qualified participants taking part in the educational programme in both countries,
 - ➔ training and education of potential ecological producers,
 - ➔ training of the caterers regarding the use and offering of ecological products,
 - ➔ study visits for exchange of good practices,
 - ➔ increased number of people participating in common events, media and tourism conferences,
 - ➔ empowerment of female winemakers with professional competences,
 - ➔ knowledge development of winegrowers and wine experts,
 - ➔ enhancement of communication.
- **Activities regarding preservation of culture:**
 - ➔ elaborated record of old local recipes,
 - ➔ culture preservation (especially language) among children,
 - ➔ mobile exhibition about handicraft professions.

Table 13: Qualitative analysis of result indicators for Priority Axis 2

Strategic objective	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Accchieved value	% of achieved result indicators
Priority axis 2 - Sustainable development					
Develop a competetive and sustainable cooperation area that offers access to work and income opportunity	Created opportunities for new jobs	2	12	10	83.33
	Educational program	8	274	279	101.82
	Increased number of visitors	3	1,500	11,555	770.33
	Info point	1	7	7	100.00
	New enterprises	1	10	10	100.00
	New jobs	1	1	1	100.00
	New products	1	10	5	50.00
	New tourist/cultural attractions	1	3	3	100.00
	Number of involved enetrprises and organisations	1	200	218	109.00
	Promotional activities	3	106,000	164,072	154.78
Develop joint management capacities for preservation and conservation of natural and cultural assets	Qualified personnel	8	4,648	4,974	107.01
	Users of new products	11	18,450	62,178	337.01
	Educational program	2	200	200	100.00
	Guidelines for implementation of sustainable development	6	35	35	100.00
	Planted trees	2	300	300	100.00
Strengthen regional development and health cooperation	Qualified personnel	1	50	50	100.00
	Restauration of natural area	4	38	38	100.00
	Mown grasslands	1	180	180	100.00
	Created opportunities for new jobs	1	5	5	100.00
	Educational program	1	20	20	100.00
	Guidelines for implementation of sustainable development	5	5	5	100.00
	Implementation of new infrastructure	1	3	2	66.67
	Identified new patients	1	15	23	153.33
	Mapping of water bodies	1	60	90	150.00
	Network of civil organisations	2	5	5	100.00
	Network of public organisations	5	5	5	100.00
	New products	1	2,500	2,500	100.00
	Promotional activities	9	4,589	4,589	100.00
	Qualified personnel	8	762	2,572	337.53
Support environment protection and increase the use of renewable energy sources	Involved people in the project	20	7,008	10,989	156.81
	Informerd peple about the project	5	1,002,085	3,006,087	299.98
	Results of analysis	1	3	9	300.00
	Users of new products	1	40	40	100.00
	Evaluation of activities	1	1	1	100.00
	Guidelines for implementation of sustainable development	3	12	12	100.00
	Network of public organisations	1	20	20	100.00
Improve management capacity, including environmental management	Pilot activities regarding energy efficiency	7	3,543	3,543	100.00
	Qualified personnel	2	580	2,580	444.83
	Raising awarness	3	105	185	176.19
	Ellaboration or reccomendations	1	1	1	100.00
	Guidelines for implementation of sustainable development	2	2	2	100.00
	Identification of geothermal potential	1	1	1	100.00
	Investment documentation	1	3	3	100.00
	Pilot activities regarding energy efficiency	1	1	1	100.00
Encourage networking (i.e. development of cross-border institutions, capacities for regional development)	Pilot activities regarding water infrastructure	3	3	3	100.00
	Qualified personnel	2	11	11	100.00
	Demonstration model	5	5	5	100.00
	Crossborder info centre	1	1	1	100.00
	Interactive consultancy	1	150	150	100.00
	Implementation of new infrastructure	1	1	1	100.00
	Network of crossborder institutions	6	6	6	100.00
	Promotional activities	1	10,000	10,000	100.00

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is "1" name of the group of indicators is the same as listed result indicator in the project.

Source: Grouping done by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on the data from the application forms provided by the MA and interviews with beneficiaries.

Out of the 163 result indicators that were set by the applicants of the projects within Priority axis 2 we have highlighted the following (by corresponding group of indicators):

- **Educational programme:**
 - ➔ prepared educational programmes for different target groups: households, public and private sector,
 - ➔ planning and organisation of meetings about a scholarship scheme,
 - ➔ training programme for teachers/mentors,
 - ➔ educational programmes for adults and young people,
 - ➔ increased ecological awareness about the importance of special habitat types,
 - ➔ increased awareness regarding the ecological value of the meadow orchards among the youth in education.
- **Increased number of visitors:**
 - ➔ number of visitors at info points,
 - ➔ number of website visitors,
 - ➔ number of visitors at the presentation of professions.
- **Promotional activities:**
 - ➔ informed the population through media,
 - ➔ increased information about life in the Natura 2000 area: Őrség, Goričko and Mura (habitats, plants, butterflies),
 - ➔ developed a model for encouraging healthy nutrition and physical activity,
 - ➔ developed a model for encouraging life without tobacco, drugs and alcohol.
- **Qualified personnel:**
 - ➔ number of qualified unemployed persons,
 - ➔ number of people informed about demonstration studies implementing the eco-approach in companies in the cross-border area,
 - ➔ number of people involved in training programmes,
 - ➔ number of participants at expert lectures for healthcare personnel,
 - ➔ number of participants at meetings, sports days and excursions with educational and rehabilitation content,
 - ➔ qualification of participants for tasks related to civil protection, rescue and assistance and the use of related equipment,
 - ➔ number of users of jointly developed bilingual material covering eco-design in integrated environment protection,
 - ➔ number of people participating in basic education in the field of ICT and basic language courses.
- **Users of new products:**
 - ➔ number of users of offline packages with an introduction to independent learning about entrepreneurial environment protection (accessible on CDs),

- number of users (visits) of collected foreign material in the field of entrepreneurial protection of the environment.
- **Guidelines for implementation of sustainable development:**
 - elaborated guidelines for implementation of further sustainable-development measures (protection and water use),
 - strategy on responsible energy consumption,
 - elaborated common management and environmental protection guidelines for meadow orchards,
 - guidelines for common cross-border thermal aquifer governance,
 - establishment of a cross-border spatial development strategy,
 - preparation of foundations to establish a Slovenian-Hungarian umbrella organisation for spatial development,
 - prepared evaluation of national programmes for support to energy efficiency,
 - elaborated common strategy on flood protection and improved protection against harmful water activity.
- **Restoration of natural area:**
 - increase of ecological quality in existing areas of meadow orchards.
- **Network of public organisation:**
 - established innovative cross-border cooperation among kindergartens and schools promoting a healthy lifestyle,
 - established a network to support regional structures in the field of health investment.
- **Pilot activities regarding energy efficiency:**
 - pilot activities: Energy-saving house – virtual model in two languages,
 - pilot activities: energy efficiency in the economy – EE analysis,
 - establishment of an ecological model house,
 - installation of elements that reduce energy consumption,
 - demonstrational heat pump.
- **Pilot activities regarding water infrastructure:**
 - enabled coherent development of water infrastructure, ensuring an appropriate level of flood safety,
 - more precise high-water prediction using modern ICT through SI-HU collaboration (+ AT + CRO).
- **Network of cross-border institutions:**
 - established interregional and cross-border cooperation,
 - established a network of key actors in the field of energy efficiency,
 - improved cross-border cooperation of healthcare institutions and cross-border cooperation of experts in the field of research and development,

- formation of a cross-border alliance connecting key stakeholders.

Recommendation: in the next programme period, activity of monitoring project results should be an essential part of the tender documentation in the phase of project implementation process. That would provide a much needed overview of achievement of project specific results to the MA and the JTS. Monitoring of projects is also in line with recent EU policies that strive to deliver of results, as it is in the case of the MED Cooperation Programme 2014-2020.

6. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

6.1 Communication plan

First a Communication Plan on the information and publicity for the OP SI-HU 2007–2013 was prepared in April 2008, and was consolidated with the requirements of Commission Regulations No 1828/2006 and No 1083/2006. It was prepared for the implementation of measures on information and publicity of the programme as the basis for specific measures. In January 2012, the Communication Plan was revised and indicators were modified. The modified version of the Communication Plan is used as a basis for the evaluation of the programme communication activities.

The Communication Plan is based on three **strategic objectives**:

- to raise public awareness and understanding of the territorial cooperation among the programme participants and the general public;
- to support Hungarian and Slovenian administrative (management) departments in acquiring comprehensive knowledge and skills in implementing and managing European territorial cooperation projects;
- to promote the establishment of a widely covered communication network among potential beneficiaries, the implementing bodies (at the European, national, regional and local levels) and the general public.

Strategic objectives are further divided among general and specific objectives. Since the Communication plan did not present a direct link between general objectives and indicators, we have elaborated the following table to present a more clear and structured overview of the objectives and their connection with the indicators.

Table 14: Structured overview of general objectives and their link with indicators set in the Communication Plan

GENERAL OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Ensuring transparency about the contribution of the EU and the use of EU funds through general public information and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of visits to the website - Number of different visitors
Strengthening partnerships on the interregional level between the Slovenian and Hungarian border regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studies and opinion polls (analysis of questionnaires etc.)
Presentation of the OP and all its participants from the viewpoint of their contribution to the development of the border regions in all areas envisaged in the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of publications / printed copies
Encouraging integration of potential beneficiaries in Slovenia and Hungary to drawing European resources for cross-border cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of mailing list members - Number of submitted electronic messages with informative

	content
Strengthening awareness about the advantages and good effects of European resources used for cross-border cooperation	- Number of events / workshops performed

Specific objectives were set to ensure greater efficiency of implementation of measures for information and publicity. But since they cannot be directly linked to the listed indicators, they cannot be properly monitored and evaluated in terms of performance.

Recommendation: The Communication Plan should include a table representing concrete links between objectives and indicators.

The Communication Plan addressed the following three basic **target groups**:

- the general public in the programme area,
- potential applicants,
- beneficiaries.

For each target group, a specific type of information, effect and media channel was identified. This clarified the methods for addressing a specific target group and with which information, but it again has no direct link with the indicators for measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of communication measures.

Table 15: Indicators of implementing the Communication plan

Indicator	Indicator Type	Unit of Measurement	Initial Value	Target value at the end of programme period	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	% of achievement
Number of visitors to the website*	Result	Visits	0	40,000	0	2,821	949	2,194	1,810	0	0	0	7,774	19.44
Numer of different visitors*	Result	Visitors	0	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,798	1,337	1,272	9,242	132.03
Number of visits to the website*	Result	Visits	0	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	3,414	2,605	2,114	20,672	51.68
Number of events/workshops performed	Result	Events	0	20	0	3	1	6	7	2	1	3	23	115.00
Number of publications	Output	Issues	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
		Copies	0	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Number of mailing list members	Result	Addressee	0	200	0	0	85	59	14	0	6	571	735	367.50
Number of submitted electronic messages with informative contents	Result	Messages	0	25	0	3	9	16	17	7	10	12	74	296.00
Studies and opinion polls (analysis of questionnaires etc.)	Result	Issues	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	33.33
the number of website visits. The total of the number of different visitors and the number of website visits is higher than the sum of the respective values in 2012, 2013 and 2014 because it is a total sum since 2008.														

Source: Communication Plan on information and publicity for the Operational Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2007–2013 and annual implementation reports.

Since the JTS monitors indicators on an annual basis, data for the first half of 2015 is missing. The realisation of indicators until the end of 2014 is exactly 50.00%. Out of 8 indicators (in the revised version of the Communication Plan) four are achieved. As can be seen from Table 11, the total number of different visitors is already higher than the target value, but the number of visits is only half the target value. The MA and JTS organised 23 events and workshops in total, which is three (15%) more than the target value.

One publication in 2,000 copies with a presentation of all approved and funded projects is planned at the conclusion of the programme and is expected to be realised in full by the end of 2015. The number of mailing list recipients is more than three times higher than the target value, which shows greater interest of the general public for programme activities than initially expected. A target value of 200 e-mail subscriptions was underestimated, especially if compared to the target of 150 approved projects (in accordance with the OP). The number of electronic messages with informative content (newsletters) sent is almost three times higher than the target value, which indicates a proactive attitude in communication with target groups. Out of the planned three issues of studies and opinion polls, one survey on cross-border cooperation was performed in 2014.

For the implementation of the Communication Plan, an indicative budget of EUR 250,000.00 was planned. It represents 0.70% of the entire programme resources and is accounted for within the budget for Technical Assistance. This amount is 50% financed from ERDF funds and 50% from national co-financing. Since programme authorities did not monitor the use of funds for communication activities, we cannot evaluate the cost-efficiency of the measures or realisation of the financial plan.

***Recommendation:** During the implementation of the Communication Plan, an effective system should be set up for monitoring the funds spent and the cost-efficiency of the activities carried out. This would also contribute to the quality of external evaluation, which is foreseen in the Communication Plan.*

6.2 Communication activities

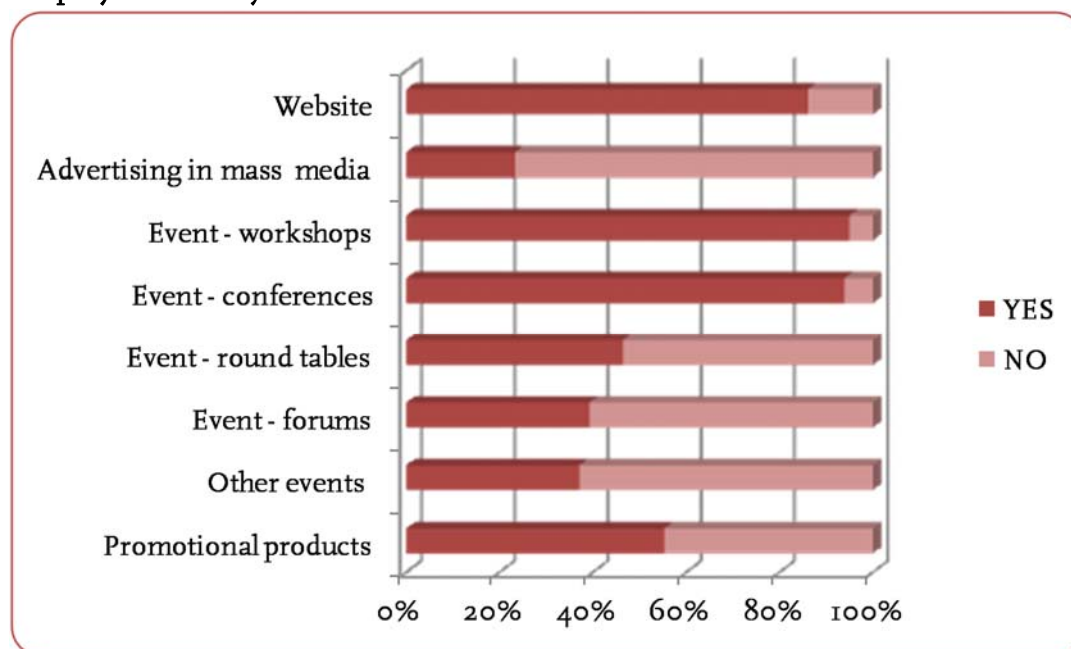
The communication strategy defined a set of communication tools, which are divided among three measures:

- promotional measures,
- information measures,
- support measures.

Since promotional measures took place throughout the entire programme period and consist of the most visible components that reach the widest circle of target groups, we paid special attention to this kind of measures.

In the interviews with the beneficiaries of the programme, we asked them to assess (with yes or no) the efficiency of communication tools.

Graph 7: Efficiency of communication tools



Source: Interviews with beneficiaries

According to the experience of beneficiaries, the most effective communication tools were events, especially workshops and conferences, followed by the programme website and promotional products. Only 20% of the beneficiaries have seen programme posts or other news in mass media.

Even though a majority of beneficiaries consider a website as effective, many of them pointed to possible improvements. They were able to find the necessary information and documentation on the website but were missing more regular updates to information and news related to programme activities and the implementation of projects. A regularly updated FAQ section would be useful for beneficiaries and would also partially relieve contract administrators and contact persons at the JTS by providing answers to repeating questions.

During the interviews, we noticed a poor knowledge of other projects approved within the OP SI-HU among beneficiaries. Institutions that were Lead Partners in projects knew little about other projects, even if some addressed similar activity fields, or knew some of them but thought they were approved within some other cross-border OP. This is a result of weak promotional activities of the programme, especially since these were people who were actively involved in the programme and regularly followed its activities. Consequently, the ability to create synergies on the programme level was weak.

Most beneficiaries are in favour of inclusion of social media (beneficiaries mentioned especially Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) in the programme communication activities, since they have also used them to promote their projects. However, their use should be carefully planned and target-orientated for the promotion of the programme and projects only. Communication channels between programme structures and beneficiaries should stay primarily limited to the website, e-mails and personal contact. In most cases, the target group using social media is not the same as the target group of the beneficiaries in the programme, but it contributes to better visibility of the programme in the area. As was indicated in some cases, people knew the project but were not aware that it was implemented as part of the OP SI-HU. A common profile / page on social networks that would share activities and posts of project profiles / pages would significantly contribute to greater visibility of the programme.

Recommendations: In order to improve the efficiency of communication measures in the next programme period, we have elaborated the following recommendations:

- *The programme should lease media space in local and regional media (newspapers, radio and TV stations) to promote the activities within approved projects. Such an integrated approach would contribute to more rational use of funds for promotion activities and better value for money.*
- *It would be useful to include the activities of individual projects that focused more on promotion (e.g. Mura Raba TV and Mura Raba TV II) in the Communication Plan for the next programme period.*
- *More regular updates of news on the website, preparation and regular updates to the FAQ section.*
- *Establishing direct links on the programme website to the websites of the projects. This would enable potential applicants, beneficiaries and other interested public to easily see the projects.*
- *Integration of social media in the promotional activities of the programme.*

All Lead Partners have read the OP before submitting their projects, and half of them said that the participation in this programme expanded their knowledge about the functioning and the structure of the EU. A majority of Lead Partners also have good knowledge about other programmes that are financed by the EU, where they mentioned other cross-border programmes first, followed by transnational and centralised programmes. Public institutions are slightly less familiar with other programmes than private organisations and NGOs, but generally speaking their knowledge about funding possibilities from the EU is good.

7. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURES

This chapter and the following subsections present an in-depth evaluation of the organisational structures. It is composed of two parts and based on two sources of data. The first part reviews the experience of beneficiaries with individual structures regarding their effectiveness and implementation efficiency. Data for this evaluation was obtained through interviews with beneficiaries.

The second part of the analysis is based on mutual evaluation of programme structures regarding the level and quality of cooperation between the structures and level of implementation efficiency of an individual structure (based on the opinion of other structures). The data for this analysis was obtained through short questionnaires that were filled out by representatives of each structure and also provide examples of good practice, problems and difficulties of other structures, as well as recommendations for the next programming period. As already stated in Chapter 3.2 (Limitations to the evaluation), the audit authority failed to return the questionnaire, so their experience could not be included in the analysis.

7.1 Managing Authority

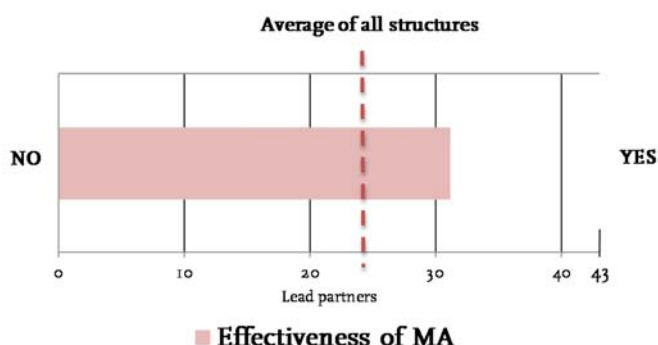
Before the official approval of the OP SI-HU 2007–2013, Slovenian and Hungarian programme partners agreed that the responsibility of the Managing Authority (MA) in the sense of Article 12 (8) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council and Article 59 (1a) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 will be given to: the Slovenian Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy (GOSP), represented by the Department for managing of cross-border programmes Maribor. During the implementation of the programme, GOSP was abolished and in March 2014 its duties and obligations regarding cross-border programmes were transferred to the newly established Slovenian Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy.

The Managing Authority is (besides the responsibilities set down in the Council Regulation) responsible for:

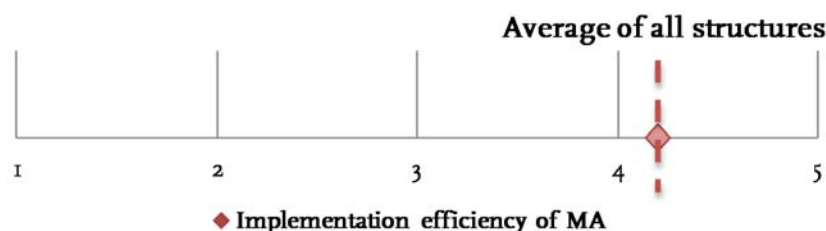
- fixing the tasks and responsibilities of the JTS and info point;
- contracting ERDF funding with Lead Partners with a standard frame contract on the basis of a partnership agreement between project partners and the formal performance of all relevant project changes;
- preparing all relevant standardised forms for project application, evaluation and decision following the decision of the JMC;
- collection of the final reports from Lead Partners and submission of the cost statement to the CA in accordance with all EU regulations.

Beneficiaries were asked to state whether, based on their experience, they saw the Managing Authority as effective or not. Out of 43 Lead Partners, 31 stated that MA was

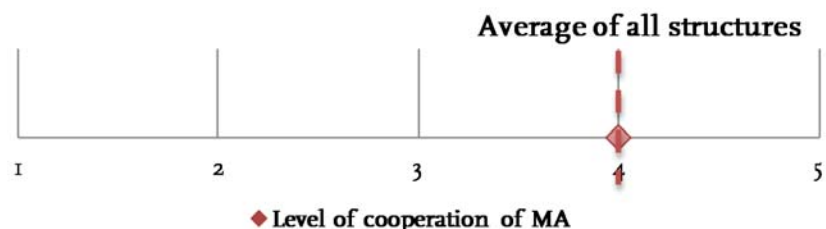
effective, one stated no and 11 did not provide any answer because they assessed their contact with the MA was not sufficient to form a relevant opinion.



Lead Partners that answered the previous question were asked to assess the level of implementation efficiency of the MA in order to see how strongly the structure was involved in the implementation of the project, according to beneficiaries. The MA received an average grade of 4.2 (where 5 is the highest), which is exactly the same as the average for all structures. The MA's involvement in project implementation varied significantly. Some Lead Partners stated that they had regular contact with the MA (in case of one project it was the MA that found a solution for continuing the project when the Lead Partner wished to terminate it because they had encountered a problem), and in other projects the MA was much less involved in the implementation.

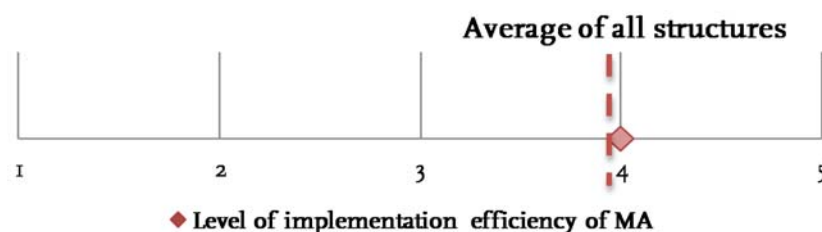


From other programme structures, the MA received a grade of 4 (out of 5) for the level of cooperation with other structures, which is also the average value of all structures.



The average grade of the Managing Authority's implementation efficiency by other programme structures is 4 (out of 5), which is slightly above the average of all structures (3.9). The main reason for this grade, according to other structures, lies in the constant restructuring of the administration, which had a negative effect on the implementation of

the programme. The restructuring of the office brought a decline in the MA's professionalism and quality of work.



Other programme structures highlighted good communication skills of the MA's employees and their willingness to seek for compromises and solutions. Regular meetings of the bilateral working group facilitated communication between the two countries involved. Generally, cooperation between the Slovenian and the Hungarian side was adequate, which is essential for a cross-border programme.

Recommendation: In case a restructuring of the government office serving as the Managing Authority occurs in the next programming period, a smoother transition should be ensured to guarantee that the implementation of the programme is not affected.

7.2 Joint Technical Secretariat

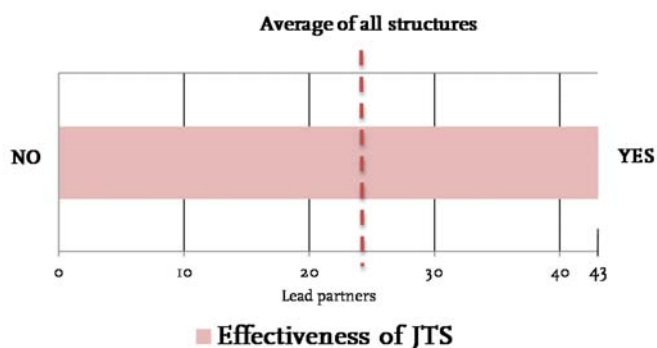
The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) was set up by Managing Authority, according to Article 14 of EC Regulation No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council. The JTS was placed within the MA – Department for managing of cross-border programmes Maribor. The main tasks of the JTS were day-to-day implementation of the programme and acting as a central contact point for public interest in the programme, as well as for potential beneficiaries and selected operations.

The JTS is, together with its Info Point (which is presented independently later on), responsible for the following tasks:

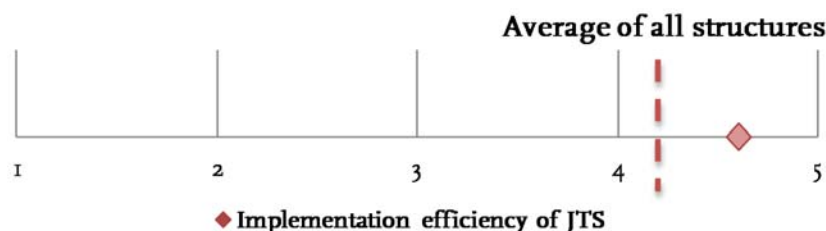
- drafting of standardised forms for project applications and for project assessment, etc.;
- taking relevant measures to stimulate the project generation process;
- giving technical support to project applicants during the project application process;
- receiving project applications and registering them into the Central Monitoring System;
- formal checking of project applications in terms of administrative compliance and eligibility;
- preparation of the quality assessment in cooperation with the MA;
- organising the national assessment of projects;
- delivery of project information and summarised information on submitted projects as well as programme budget information to the JMC;

- preparation of all official bilateral meetings;
- preparation of agreements based on a Memorandum of Understanding;
- safeguarding the coherence between ERDF contracts and contracts for national regional co-financing;
- collection of project progress reports from Lead Partners in terms of content and costs;
- providing assistance and support to beneficiaries in the respective partner state and monitoring the progress made by projects;
- preparing changes of ERDF contracts based on project changes applied from Lead Partners;
- capitalisation of project results in the respective national context.

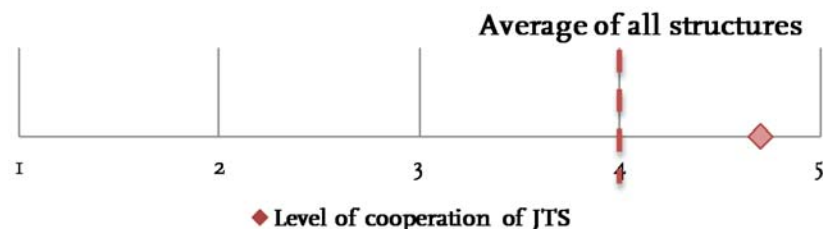
The JTS is the only programme structure for which all Lead Partners stated it was effective. It is also the structure with which they had the most contact, so they were all able to form a relevant opinion.



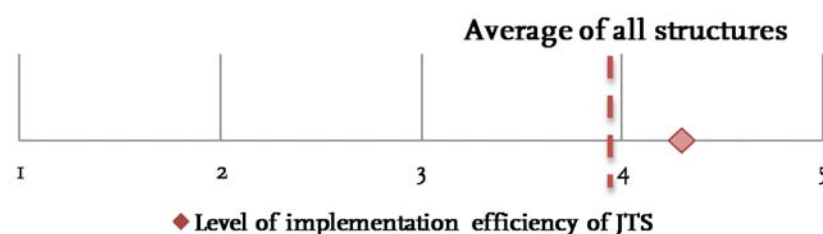
Since all Lead Partners were well acquainted with the work of the JTS and its effectiveness, all of them were able to assess the JTS's level of implementation efficiency. The average grade is 4.6, which is the best grade of all structures.



The JTS also received the highest grades from other programme structures. For the level of cooperation with other structures it received a grade of 4.7 which is 0.7 above the average.



The assessments of other programme structures regarding the implementation efficiency of the JTS is the only area where it did not receive the highest grade among programme structures. The possible reasons for the relatively poorer performance in this respect include the problem of bilingualism, unfamiliarity with this type of work, lack of innovative approaches and duplication of records.



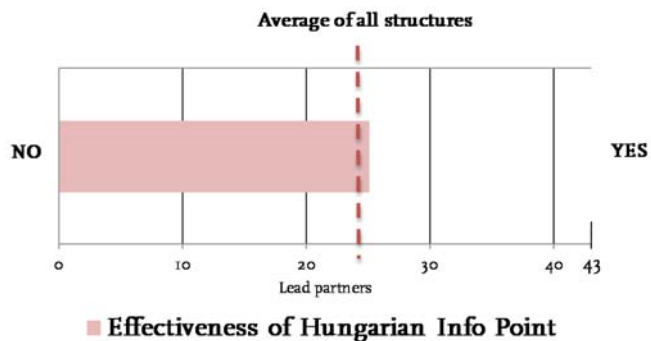
Other structures pointed out that the JTS provided good support to the beneficiaries in the field of providing information, consulting and problem solving, and that cooperation with other programme structures was adequate.

***Recommendation:** The JTS could be more effective in its work and develop innovative approaches and tools to facilitate effective collection, processing and availability of project data among programme structures in order to avoid duplication of work on the level of structures.*

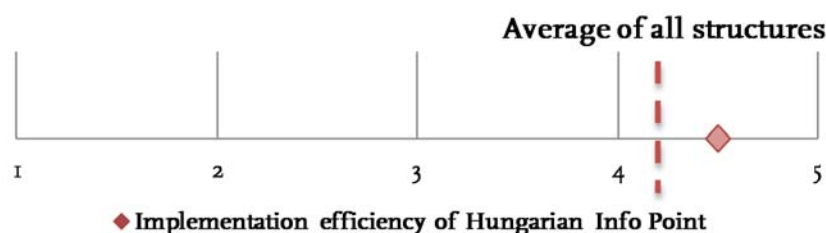
7.3 Hungarian Info Point

The Hungarian Info Point was part of the JTS and was located in VÁTI Zalaegerszeg at the start of the programme, but since 1 July 2014 its functions regarding cross-border programmes have been delegated to the Széchenyi Programme Office, located at the same address. The main responsibilities of the Hungarian Info Point were to assist project applicants/beneficiaries during the project generation, application and implementation phases in Hungary. Its tasks were exactly the same as the tasks of the Joint Technical Secretariat, listed in the previous subsection.

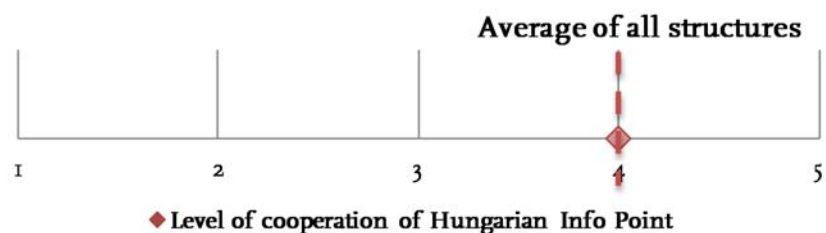
Out of 43 Lead Partners, 25 were in contact with the Hungarian Info Point enough to form a relevant opinion and all of them stated that the Info Point was effective.



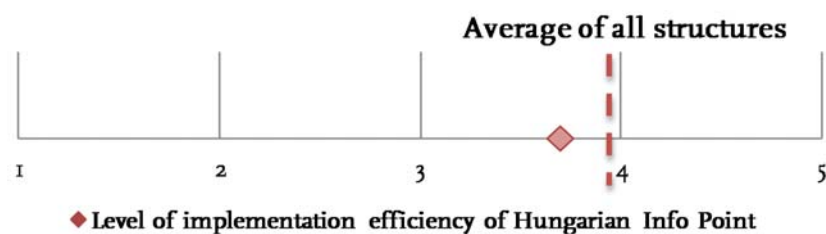
The Lead Partners that provided an answer to the previous question assessed the level of implementation efficiency of Hungarian Info Point. The average grade is 4.5, which is above the average grade of all structures (4.2).



Other programme structures assessed the level of cooperation of the Info Point with other structures with an average grade of 4, which is also the average grade of all structures.



Regarding the level of implementation efficiency, the Hungarian Info Point received an average grade of 3.7, which is below the average of all structures (3.9). However, only three other structures provided their grade in this area, which indicates the degree of cooperation of other structures with the Hungarian Info Point.



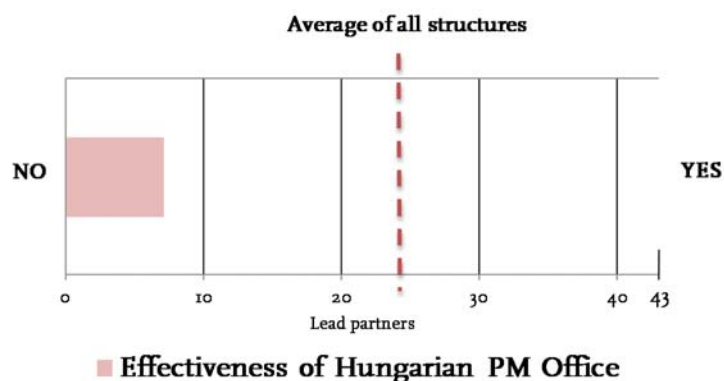
Other structures underlined good cooperation on the level of programme implementation and good coordination activities. Due to restructuring of the institution, there were some difficulties regarding the transfer of duties to the new staff.

Recommendation: In case a restructuring of the institution serving as the Hungarian Info Point occurs in the next programming period, a smoother transition should be ensured to guarantee that the activities regarding the implementation of projects are not affected.

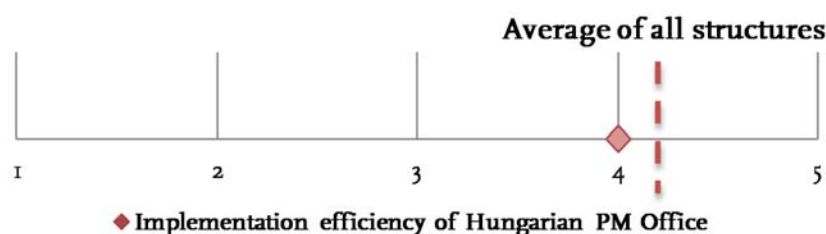
7.4 Hungarian National Authority

Implementation structures have been agreed in partnership between the participating authorities (programme partners) in both member states. For the Hungarian side, at the start of the programme period this was Hungarian National Development Agency. Due to restructuring, the Hungarian National Development Agency ceased to exist during the implementation of the programme (1 January 2014) and its functions and operations were taken over by the Prime Minister's Office (PM Office). The obligation of the participating authority is mainly related to ensuring a smooth implementation of the programme, creating a cooperation environment among all structures and granting them access to all the required information. As the managing body on the Hungarian side, its role was to participate in bilateral meetings and represent the Hungarian standpoint.

Only 8 Lead Partners provided an answer whether, based on their experience, the Hungarian PM Office was effective, and seven of them said yes.



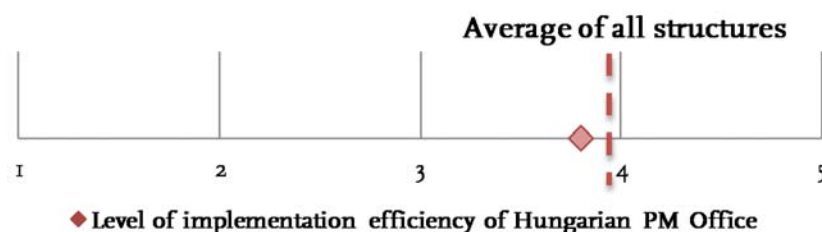
Furthermore, only five Lead Partners provided a grade on a scale from 1 to 5 to assess the level of implementation efficiency of the Hungarian PM Office. The average grade is 4, which is slightly below the average of all structures.



The average grade (of the 4 collected grades) by other programme structures regarding the level of cooperation with the Hungarian PM Office is 3.8, which is slightly below the average of all structures.



In the field of implementation efficiency, assessed from the point of view of other programme structures (only four structures provided the assessment), the Hungarian PM Office's average grade was 3.8, which is almost the average value of all structures (3.9).



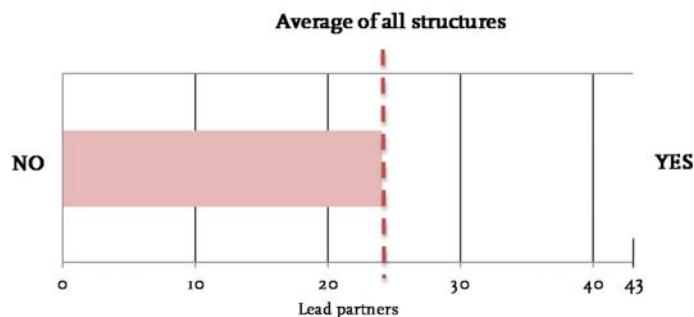
Other programme structures highlighted good cooperation on the implementation of the programme and good communication between the structures, which continued also after the organisations and staff on both sides of the border were restructured. Structures from the Hungarian side also pointed to regular meetings that took place before the bilateral meetings in order to form a unified Hungarian standpoint. Difficulties related to the Hungarian authority resulted from the changes in administration structure, and consequently some delays in reporting occurred.

Recommendation: More effort should be directed to improve cooperation and the implementation of the programme. In case of staff changes or internal restructuring, a smoother transition of duties and obligations should be ensured.

7.5 Slovenian first-level control

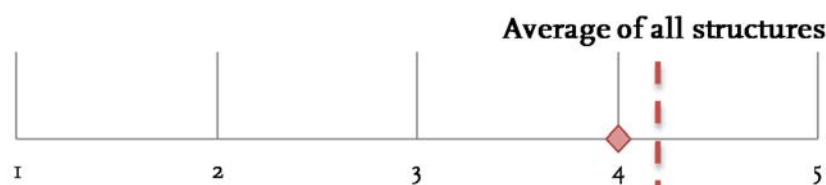
According to Article 13 of the EC Regulation No 1080/2006, the duties of first-level control are strongly connected to the rules on eligibility of expenditure. Before the payment of ERDF and national funds, FLC thus checks if the relevant national and Commission rules are applied by the beneficiaries and that all project expenditure is eligible.

From beneficiaries' point of view, 24 Lead Partners stated that the Slovenian FLC was effective, 3 stated that it was not effective and 16 could not form a relevant opinion.



■ **Effectiveness of Slovenian FLC**

Furthermore, based on 27 assessments of the level of implementation efficiency of the Slovenian first-level control, it received an average grade of 4, which is just below the average of all programme structures. The main reason that the Slovenian FLC was not assessed as more efficient were major delays in the procedures.



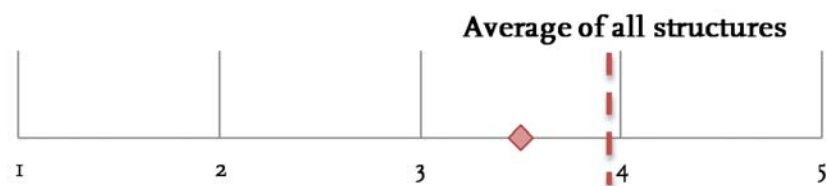
◆ **Implementation efficiency of Slovenian FLC**

Only two programme structures provided grades to assess the level of cooperation of the Slovenian FLC with other structures. Their average grade is 4, which is the same as the average of all programme structures.



◆ **Level of cooperation of Slovenian FLC**

The average implementation efficiency grade of the Slovenian FLC also consist of only two grades and stands at 3.5, which is below the average of all structures.



◆ **Level of implementation efficiency of Slovenian FLC**

Comments from other programme structures are mostly related to delays in the checking of reports. These delays resulted in much later payments of ERDF and national funds

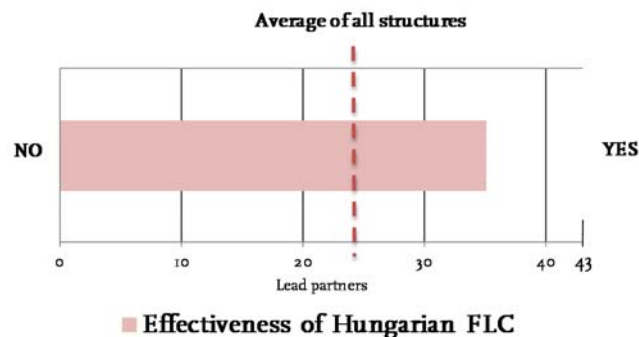
than initially expected. It is, nevertheless, important to say at this point that the reason for these delays was not the adequacy of employees or their lack of professionalism, but rather the lack of human resources. Taking into account the number of resources to cope with the number of reports, their pragmatism assured the implementation of the programme.

Recommendation: First-level control should show more understanding and take into account the specific (real-life) circumstances of projects. In order to ensure quicker and more efficient reviewing of reports, additional controllers with adequate knowledge and experience should be employed.

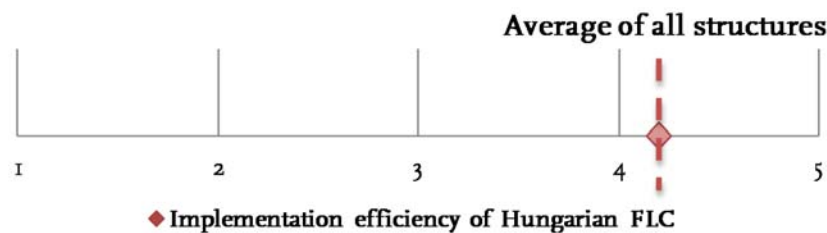
7.6 Hungarian first-level control

The Hungarian first-level control has the same responsibilities as the Slovenian one, presented in the previous subsection. Its geographical scope covers beneficiaries (Lead Partners and project partners) in the Hungarian part of the programme area.

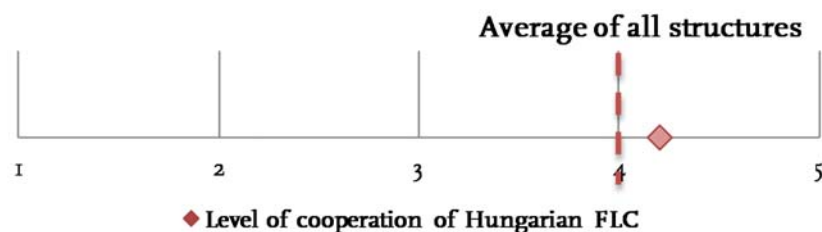
In comparison to the Slovenian FLC, the Hungarian FLC was much more effective at its work, according to the experience of Lead Partners. A total of 35 Lead Partners stated that it was effective, and 8 did not provide an answer. A possible reason for such a result is also that a majority of Slovenian Lead Partners stated that, in the process of reporting, the Hungarian FLC checked the reports and expenses in reasonable time and therefore did not cause delays.



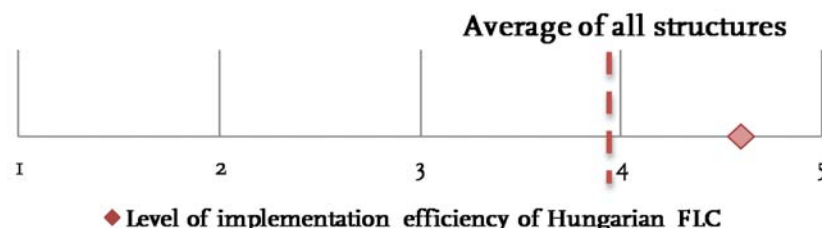
Lead Partners assessed the level of implementation efficiency of the Hungarian FLC with an average grade of 4.2, which is the same as the average grade of all structures and 0.2 grades better than the Slovenian FLC.



The Hungarian FLC's level of cooperation with other programme structures was assessed with an average grade of 4.2, which is above the average of all structures and 0.2 better than the Slovenian FLC.



Average implementation efficiency grade of the Hungarian FLC given by other programme structures is 4.6, which is the highest among all programme structures and 1.3 grades above the average of all structures. The main reason for such a high grade lies in effective work and respect for the time frame in the checking of reports.



The main remarks of other programme structures are related to the effective system of checking reports. On the other hand, many structures and beneficiaries complained regarding the extent of the administrative burden, which could be simplified.

Recommendation: First-level control should show more understanding and take into account the specific (real-life) circumstances of projects.

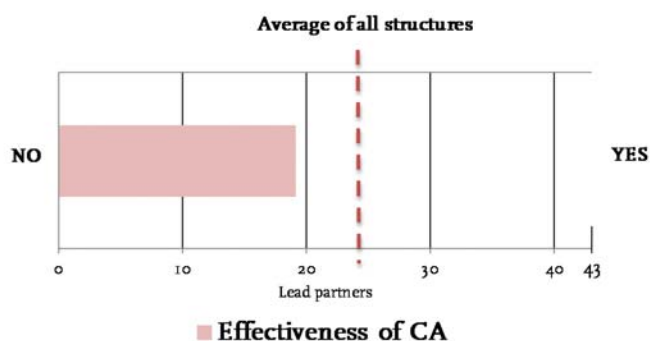
7.7 Certifying Authority

The responsibility of the Certifying Authority (CA) in the sense of Article 59 (1b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 was given to the Slovenian Public Fund for Regional Development. Besides the responsibilities set forth in the Council Regulation, which are mainly related to the certifying that the expenditure are accurate, the Certifying Authority is responsible for:

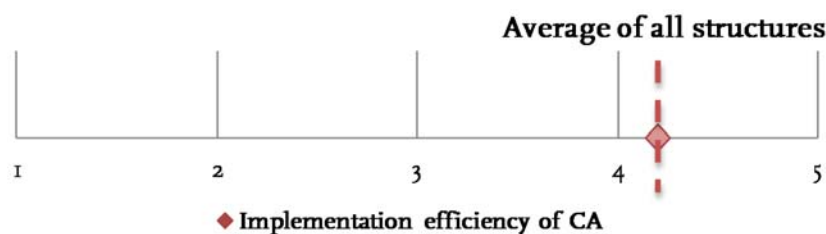
- collection of the cost statements submitted by the MA;
- checking requests and releasing funds;
- receiving the ERDF funds from the EC and transferring the co-financing to the Lead Partner.

A total of 19 Lead Partners stated that the CA was effective, 3 stated that it was not, and a relatively large share of Lead Partners (21) did not provide an answer. This means that the

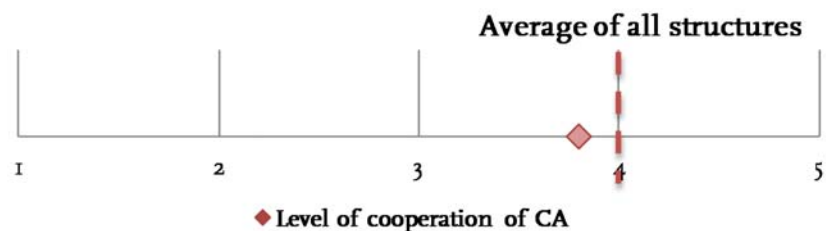
CA was, according to the experience of Lead Partners, less efficient than the average of all structures.



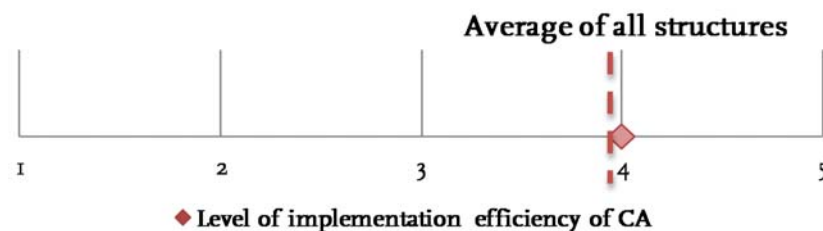
Regarding the level of implementation efficiency, the CA received an average grade of 4.2, which is exactly the same as the average for all structures. This relatively high grade shows that beneficiaries saw that the involvement of the CA mainly had a positive effect on the implementation of their projects.



Other programme structures gave the CA an average grade of 3.8 for the level of cooperation with other structures, which is slightly below the total average (4.0).



On the other hand, the CA received a relatively good grade of 4.0 (higher than the average of all structures) for implementation efficiency. The reasons for this, according to the statements of other structures, are accurate and efficient checking of reports, understanding for problems and searching for joint solutions, and consistency in respecting the “n+2, n+3” rule and avoiding de-commitment.



Problems identified with regard to the work of the CA are related to inflexibility regarding settlements and refunds, and certain system faults on the Hungarian side.

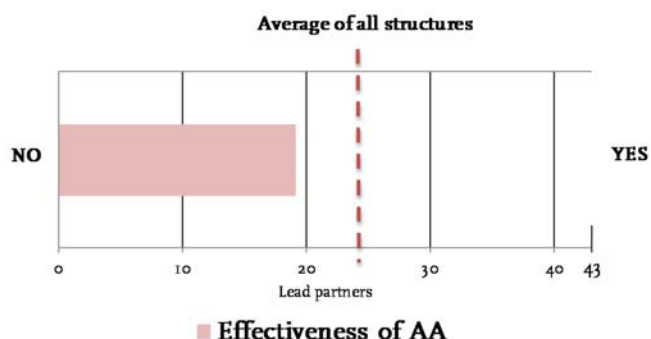
Recommendation: In the next programming period, payments should be executed directly by the CA without the intervention of other institutions (in the case of the 2007–2013 period this was the Slovenian Ministry of Finance).

7.8 Audit Authority

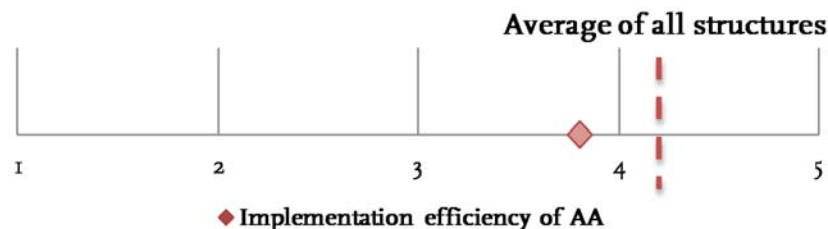
The Audit Authority (AA) is responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system in the sense of Article 59 (1c) and Article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. According to the agreement of the authorities of the member states, the duties of the AA were carried out by the Slovenian Ministry of Finance, represented by the Budget Supervisory Office.

The AA is mainly responsible to ensure that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme, and that the audit work is performed according to internationally accepted audit standards. The Audit Authority is functionally independent from the Managing Authority.

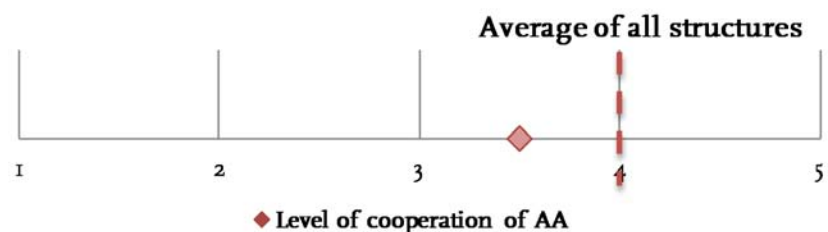
Not all beneficiaries had contact with the Audit Authority. Therefore, only 15 Lead Partners provided an opinion on its work. 11 of them stated that this structure was efficient and 4 that it is not.



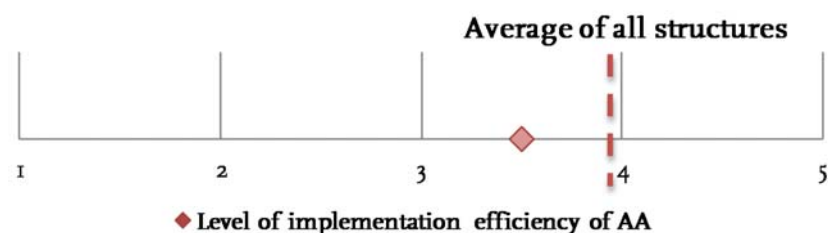
The average grade that the beneficiaries who had contact with the AA gave for its implementation efficiency is 3.8, which is below the average of all structures. The main comments were about its rigid and in some cases unrealistic approach without consideration for specific (project-related) circumstances.



Based on the experience from other programme structures, the level of mutual cooperation and problem solving with the AA was not as developed as with others. Consequently, the AA received an average grade of 3.5, which is the lowest grade among all programme structures.



Similarly, the AA has received an average grade of 3.5 for implementation efficiency, which is also the lowest grade among programme structures. According to the statements by other structures, the main problem is incomprehension of CBC programmes and insisting on their point of view.



***Recommendation:** Before the implementation of the first projects within the new programme period starts, an in-depth analysis of open issues regarding the work of the AA should be performed to assure smoother and more effective work and especially better cooperation between the AA and other programme structures, which is very important to ensure effectiveness and successful implementation of the programme.*

8. MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Operational Programme Cross-Border Cooperation Slovenia-Hungary (OP) was designed on the basis of bilateral cooperation between Hungary and Slovenia. The purpose was to establish an adequate strategic document, based on the real needs of the Programme area. The socio-economic analysis is based on statistical data and on workshops with regional, sectoral and national stakeholders. The Programme area is narrowed from the previous programming period 2004–2006 in a way that it has a high degree of similarity in the socio-economic structure, similar structural problems in the region and has expressed the interest of enhanced cooperation between the two countries. The Programme covers two statistical regions in Slovenia (Podravje and Pomurje) and two counties in Hungary (Vas and Zala). The main focus of the Programme is “to place the cross-border region on the European map as a cultural, health and natural precious area for living and working”.

The OP was approved by the European Commission on 20 December 2007 and revised on 29 March 2010. Two Calls for Proposals were published, the first one in June 2008 and the second one in May 2010, with an additional opening for Member States to submit applications for Strategic Projects to be directly selected and approved by the JMC.

Programme strategy and relevance of the programme results

The programme strategy was assessed by looking at the extent to which the objectives and design of the programme are consistent with the challenges and concerns in the programme area and the needs and priorities of target groups. Each strategic objective was a subject of relevance assessment that included an analysis of whether the objectives and consequently the design of the programme are still appropriate at the time of the evaluation, given that circumstances have significantly changed since the programme was launched.

Based on a socio-economic analysis, the SWOT analysis of the OP SI-HU 2007–2013 defined the needs and opportunities of the cooperation area where the implementation of the programme can generate positive changes. The strategic objective of the programme and the strategy to achieve it were determined in line with the needs of the programme area.

During the implementation of the programme, adverse economic and administrative changes occurred, strengthening the relevance of some strategic objectives, and reducing the relevance of others. Out of 9 strategy objectives which were defined in the OP SI-HU 2007–2013 all except one are still relevant for CBC programme. Strategic objective 6 – create better connection in cross-border traffic and transport is identified as not relevant for CBC programme since this objective is beyond the scope and financial capabilities of cross-border programmes.

The achievement of specific objectives is divided into three levels: very effective, effective and less effective. The levels are based on whether the objective is still relevant, to what extent were the planned activities implemented, to what extent did the implemented activities trigger results and to what extent are the achieved results sustainable.

Based on these categories, the following categorisation has been made:

- very effective objectives
 - to improve the tourist offer in the cooperation area
 - to strengthen the cultural identity and exploit the cultural potential of the cooperation area
 - to contribute to efficient preventative health care and increase cooperation between health institutions
 - to strengthen cross-border cooperation at the local and regional level
- effective objectives
 - to contribute to efficient preservation and management of natural resources
- less effective objectives
 - to improve accessibility and connections in the cooperation area
 - rationalisation of energy consumption including promotion of alternative and renewable energy

Recommendations: the strategic objectives of the next SI-HU CBC programme should reflect the real needs of the cross-border region. Fewer and focus oriented objective should be defined which can be achieved with planned amount of funds. In order to improve the effectiveness of the next SI-HU CBC programme capitalisation projects, (projects which are based on results of previous projects) should be preferred for implementation.

Programme and project indicators

On the level of Priority Axis 1 – Increase the Attractiveness of the Cooperation Area, only one indicator out of 5 is achieved. A majority of the projects (13) were in the field of tourism and cultural cooperation, which is in line with the results of the SWOT analysis, which indicated tourism as an underdeveloped field in the programme area. Considering the number of approved projects, the achieved values of indicators that address traffic and ICT infrastructure were satisfactory.

Under Priority Axis 2, major emphasis was given to the field of regional initiatives or cross-border partnerships (22 projects), followed by projects for joint protection and management of the environment (8 projects), and networks regarding health (7 projects). Only one project dealt with the improvement of traffic connections, thus achieving only the half value of given indicator. The performance in indicators regarding energy projects (4 projects) and reducing isolation through improved access to transport (1 project) was in line with the number of approved projects.

The result in the indicator for Technical Assistance reflects the number of approved projects compared to the target value (28.67%). Consequently, since only 43 of the targeted 150 projects (28.66%) were approved, this had a domino effect on many indicators on the programme level, as well as the level of each priority axis.

The program did not determine any impact indicator which refer to the benefits of the programme both at the level of measures but also more generally in the programme area. They should be linked to the wider objective of the Programme.

Number of project-specific varied significantly from project to project, and the vast majority of the projects had a large number of output and result indicators. Under Priority Axis 1, 21 projects have 393 output and 231 result indicators, with an average of 18.7 output indicators per project and 11 result indicators per project and the realisation was 98.2% for output indicators and 97% for result indicators.

More indicators were set within Priority Axis 2, where 22 projects identified 581 output indicators and 271 result indicators and the realisation was 99.85% for output indicators and 96.79% for result indicators.

In total, the projects set and consequently had to achieve 1,476 indicators. We present this number with a reservation because during the interviews we found out that all indicators have not been set adequately. We assume that the reason for that is in the absence of knowledge of appropriate methodology of setting indicators.

Recommendations: Benefiting from the experience from this programme period regarding the average financial value of projects, an achievable and realistic target value of approved projects could be set. According to the disparity between the values of indicators based solely on the data from application forms and the data obtained from the beneficiaries after the conclusion of their projects, the contracting parties in projects should give a greater emphasis on the programme-level indicators and deviations from initial predictions, so that the values in annual reports would be more accurate. In the events organized by the JTS in the preparation stage of the projects a greater emphasis should be given to the methodology of setting output and result indicators. In the next programme period, activity of monitoring project results should be an essential part of the tender documentation in the phase of project implementation process. That would provide a much needed overview of achievement of project specific results to the MA and the JTS.

Programme communication activities

The Communication Plan of the programme is based on three strategic objectives: to raise public awareness regarding territorial cooperation among, to support Hungarian and Slovenian administrative (management) departments and to promote the establishment of a widely covered communication network among potential beneficiaries,

the implementing bodies (at the European, national, regional and local levels) and the general public.

The realisation of indicators until the end of 2014 is exactly 50.00%. Out of 8 indicators (in the revised version of the Communication Plan) four are achieved. For the implementation of the Communication Plan, an indicative budget of EUR 250,000.00 was planned. Since programme authorities did not monitor the use of funds for communication activities, we cannot evaluate the cost-efficiency of the measures or realisation of the financial plan.

According to the experience of beneficiaries, the most effective communication tools were events, especially workshops and conferences, followed by the programme website and promotional products. Only 20% of the beneficiaries have seen programme posts or other news in mass media. During the interviews, we noticed a poor knowledge of other projects approved within the OP SI-HU among beneficiaries. Institutions that were Lead Partners in projects knew little about other projects, even if some addressed similar activity fields, or knew some of them but thought they were approved within some other cross-border OP. This is a result of weak promotional activities of the programme, especially since these were people who were actively involved in the programme and regularly followed its activities. Consequently, the ability to create synergies on the programme level was weak.

Recommendations: The Communication Plan should include a table representing concrete links between objectives and indicators. During the implementation of the Communication Plan, an effective system should be set up for monitoring the funds spent and the cost-efficiency of the activities carried out. This would also contribute to the quality of external evaluation, which is foreseen in the Communication Plan. There are many possibilities to improve the efficiency of communication measures in the next programme period, such as: leasing media space in local and regional media to promote the activities within approved projects, inclusion of activities of individual projects from the 2007-2013 programme period that focused on promotion, more regular updates of news on the website, establishing direct links on the programme website to the websites of the projects and integration of social media in the promotional activities of the programme.

Programme structures

According to the beneficiaries, JTS was the most effective programme structure, followed by Hungarian FLC and MA. According to the level of implementation efficiency, the highest average grade beneficiaries gave to the JTS, followed by Hungarian Info point, MA, Hungarian FLC and CA. Audit Authority was identified as the less efficient programme structure.

From the perspective of mutual evaluation of programme structure, based on the obtained data, JTS was identified as the structure with the highest level of cooperation with other structures, followed by Hungarian FLC, MA, Slovenian FLC and Info Point. The less cooperative structure was, according to other programme structures, Audit Authority. Hungarian FLC was identified as the structure with the highest implementation efficiency, followed by JTS, MA and CA. The least efficient structures, according to programme structures were Slovenian FLC and Audit Authority.

Recommendations: More effort should be directed in order to improve cooperation among the structures. In case a restructuring of the authorities, a smoother transition should be ensured to guarantee that the implementation of the programme is not affected. The JTS could be more effective in its work and develop innovative approaches and tools to facilitate effective collection, processing and availability of project data among programme structures in order to avoid duplication of work on the level of structures. First-level control should show more understanding and take into account the specific (real-life) circumstances of projects. In the next programming period, payments should be executed directly by the CA without the intervention of other institutions (in the case of the 2007–2013 period this was the Slovenian Ministry of Finance). *Before the implementation of the first* projects within the new programme period starts, an in-depth analysis of open issues regarding the work of the AA should be performed to assure smoother and more effective work and especially better cooperation between the AA and other programme structures, which is very important to ensure effectiveness and successful implementation of the programme.

9. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Interview form for beneficiaries



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
GOVERNMENT OFFICE FOR DEVELOPMENT
AND EUROPEAN COHESION POLICY

DATE:	
ACRONYM OF THE PROJECT:	
NAME AND SURNAME OF THE PERSON:	
FUNCTION WITHIN THE PROJECT:	
NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:	



1.1 Which outputs and results your projects provides?

Name of indicator	Unit	Target value	Achieved value
<i>Indicators of cross-border cooperation</i>			
<i>Output indicators</i>			
<i>Result indicators</i>			

1.2 Indicators of horizontal EU politics

* Equal opportunities:

☐ YES

☐ NO

*** Environment:**

☐ YES ☐ NO

*** Sustainable development:**

☐ YES ☐ NO

*** Human resources development:**

☐ YES ☐ NO

*** Information society:**

☐ YES ☐ NO

1.3 Can you state that your project provides tangible direct effects (outputs) and results?

☐ YES ☐ NO

1.4 Identify the most visible results and impacts of your project

1.5 In the case of non achievement or partial achievement of results, state possible issues that hindered their achievement

1.6 If the results were not achieved yet, when do you asses that they will be?

1.7 Please describe the effect of the project on the target groups which your project addressed:

1.8 Will or has project generated additional results that were not predicted in the evaluation form? (If yes, which?)

FINANCES

2.1 Were there any changes of the primary financial plan during the implementation of the project?

☐ YES

☐ NO

2.2 Please identify courses of changes between required/allocated fund and actual use of funds

2.3 How many requests for change of financial plan have you submitted to MA/JTS?

2.4 Was the project implemented in accordance with the timeline and funds, predicted in the contract?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If not, why?

2.5 Were there any delays in the implementation of the project?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, why?

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

2.6 Did you face any problems during the project?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, in which phase?

- ☐ Writing of project proposal
- ☐ Searching of partners
- ☐ Implementation
- ☐ Reporting
- ☐ Other

Did you write the application form on your own?

2.7 Did you need an external help?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, in which phase?

- ☐ Writing of project proposal
- ☐ Searching of partners
- ☐ Implementation
- ☐ Reporting
- ☐ Other

2.8 Who provided you external help?

- ☐ JTS
- ☐ MA
- ☐ Regional structures
- ☐ National structures
- ☐ Info point
- ☐ External experts
- ☐ Other

2.9 Have you experienced any problems or other difficulties with the application form? Would you suggest that it is used also in the next programme period?

2.10 Do you think that the selected projects within the programme are suitable for the area and in accordance with the programme strategy?

PARTNERSHIP

2.11 Composition of partnership

Eligible beneficiaries according to OP and each call	Beneficiaries in specific project
Regional and local public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public bodies established by the state or municipality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-governmental organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chambers of commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, clusters registered as non-profit legal persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal entities established by private law (societies) with non-profit status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public institutions for economic development, public companies, as well as other legal entities with predominant impact of the state or municipalities on management.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.12 Asses the quality of cooperation among partners

☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5

2.13 Do you plan to continue cooperation with partners also in the future? If yes, in which way?

ADDED VALUE

2.14 What is the added value of your project?

SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS AND ITS IMPACT

2.15 Is your project sustainable? Which impact will continue also after the conclusion of the project?

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

3.1. Do you think that the programme communication tools were effective?

TOOL	WAS IT EFFECTIVE?	
Website	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Advertising in mass media	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Event - workshop	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Event - conferences	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Event - round tables	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Event - forums	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Other Events	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Promotional products	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

Any additional comments:

3.2 Which communication channels or tools should by your opinion be also included in communication activities by the MA/JTS?

3.3 What do you think about including social media in communication activities and would it be possible to involve them in the future? Which and how?

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EC

3.4 Which promotional measures on the programme level have contributed to the better promotion of the Programme and EU?

- ☐ Visual image
- ☐ Slogan
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Advertising in mass media
- ☐ Events (workshops, conferences, roundtables, forums, etc.)
- ☐ Promotional products

3.5 Has participation in this programme expanded your knowledge about the functioning and structure of the EU?

☐ YES ☐ NO

3.6 Have you read the Operational Programme of cross-border cooperation Slovenia-Hungary 2007-2013?

- ☐ Yes, before the project submission
- ☐ Yes, after the project submission
- ☐ No, never

3.7 Do you know any other programme, financed by the EC?

PROGRAMME STRUCTURES

4.1 Were the programme structures effective?

STRUCTURE	WERE THEY EFFECTIVE?	
Managing Authority	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Joint Technical Secretariat	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Hungarian Info point	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Prime Minister's Office Budapest	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Slovenian First level control	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Hungarian First level control	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Certifying Authority	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Audit Authority	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

Any additional comments:

4.2 Were the support tools effective? (From the managing aspect of target group point of view)?

TOOL	WERE THEY EFFECTIVE?	
Reporting system	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Programme web page	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

Any additional comments:

4.3 How do you assess administrative procedures connected to the rules of Community and national rules for project implementation?

4.4 Which administrative procedures could be shortened?

4.5 Which field was administratively less covered?

4.6 Assess the level of implementation efficiency of each programme structure:

STRUCTURE	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION EFFICIENCY				
Managing Authority	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Joint Technical Secretariat	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Hungarian Info point	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Prime Minister's Office Budapest	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Slovenian First level control	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Hungarian First level control	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Certifying Authority	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Audit Authority	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

4.7 Based to your experience, which factors had the most influence on successful implementation of your project?

ASPECT	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE				
JTS support	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
MA support	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Programme manuals	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Programme web page	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Workshop for beneficiaries	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Meetings with project partners for conflict solving	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Reporting method	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Indirect contact with info point	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
On time approval of the expenses from FLC (as prescribed in the regulation)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
On time ERDS payouts from the MA	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Please state "other":

PROJECT SHEET**5.1 Do you have two photos, related to the implementation of the project?**

☐ YES
 ☐ NO

5.2 Please indicate three key words that describe your project:

5.3 Provide one statement (sentence) about the project:

--

* who is the author of the statement?

Name:	
Surname:	
Institution:	
Place/town:	

5.4 Please provide a punctual summary of the project (max. 10 words):

--

5.5 Please provide a descriptive summary of the project (one paragraph):

--

5.6 Please indicate municipalities where the project was implemented (where the direct impact of the project was):

Slovenia - Podravje region	
Municipality 1:	
...	

Slovenia - Pomurje region	
Municipality 1:	
...	

Hungary - Vas country	
------------------------------	--

Municipality 1:	
...	

Hungary - Zala country	
Municipality 1:	
...	

5.7 Checklist of project's ID:

Project's name and acronym:	
Project web site:	
Duration of the project:	
Spent funds:	
Project partners:	

GOOD PRACTICE: in-depth conversation regarding the following fields/topics;

*** innovation:**

***cooperation with partners:**

*** impact of the project:**

***sustainability of the project:**

*** possible risks that can influence good implementation and its results:**

*** please describe long-term synergy effects of your project:**

*** other comments:**

Annex 2: List of conducted interviews

Number	Project	Name and Surname	Date
0	Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat	Jasmina Litrop	7.7.2015
		Aleš Mrkela	7.7.2015
1	ECO-HUB	Damjan Krajnc	7.7.2015
2	LQ-celiac	Jasmina Dolinšek	7.7.2015
3	Tourism and Media	Helena Zver	10.7.2015
4	Water is environmental pearl WEP	Branka Bensa	10.7.2015
5	Zdrava hrana za zdravo življenje	Marjetka Jakob	10.7.2015
		Anita Gjerek	10.7.2015
		Marko Močnik	10.7.2015
6	Doživetje panonske gastronomije	Renata Stanko	13.7.2015
7	3 Parki	Nada Cvetko Török	13.7.2015
		Mojca Breščak	13.7.2015
		Andreja Tivadar	13.7.2015
8	Lamaprom	András Nagy	14.7.2015
		Károly Szabó	14.7.2015
9	Heathy	Adrienn Gyarmati	14.7.2015
		Nikolett Kovács - Darabos	14.7.2015
10	Att	Máté Molnár	14.7.2015
11	Határtalan Borkultúra	Anikó Mrs. Németh	14.7.2015
12	Jó Borszomszédság	Anikó Mrs. Németh	14.7.2015
13	Via Savaria	Daniel Ulčar	15.7.2015
14	Rešujmo skupaj	Stanislav Wolf	15.7.2015
15	Doživetje prostora (Sense of Place)	Matej Huber	15.7.2015
		Marija Kozar - Mukič	15.7.2015
		Sándor Horváth	15.7.2015
		Metka Fujs	15.7.2015
		Tamara Andrejek	15.7.2015
16	Iron Will	Szabolcs Hollósi	16.7.2015
17	Futur	Dániel Holdosi	16.7.2015
18	REG-NET	Dániel Holdosi	16.7.2015
19	Élő Örökségünk	Dániel Holdosi	16.7.2015
20	Healthy Youth	Attila Sohár	16.7.2015
		Beáta C. Sturn	16.7.2015
		Emese Tóthné Nagy	16.7.2015
21	Women and Youth	Katja Karba	17.7.2015
22	T - JAM	Stanislav Sraka	17.7.2015
23	Bio Experience	Nataša Sever	17.7.2015
		Stanislav Sraka	17.7.2015
24	Bio Future	Jasmin Kukec	17.7.2015
25	Roma Caravan	Anton Törnár	17.7.2015

Number	Project	Name and Surname	Date
		Agata Sardelič	17.7.2015
26	Rédics-Göntérháza	Mira Ibrajter	17.7.2015
27	Mental Health	Goran Pintarič	17.7.2015
28	Oral History	Márta Molnár	21.7.2015
29	5 Postakocsi	Béla Laskai	21.7.2015
		Nándor Litter	21.7.2015
30	OCR	Lilla Kelemen	21.7.2015
		Ibolya Tóthné Őri	21.7.2015
		Vlasta Krmelj	4.8.2015
		Dejan Kosi	4.8.2015
		Bojan Grus	4.8.2015
		Simona Borko	4.8.2015
31	FOLK	János Varga	14.7.2015
		Adél Molnár	14.7.2015
32	Harmóniában a Tájjal	Miklós Bodowczi	21.7.2015
		István Szentirmai	21.7.2015
33	Right Profession	Robert Grah	22.7.2015
34	Energo Optimum	Bojan Vogrinčič	22.7.2015
35	Doživetja Tradicije	Stanka Klemenčič Kosi	4.8.2015
36	Szomszéd a szomszédhoz	Andrea Kovács	11.8.2015
37	AC1	Bojan Ferenc	13.8.2015
		Slavko Petovar	13.8.2015
		Mateja Žalik Rus	13.8.2015
		Ivan Kuhar	13.8.2015
38	AC2	Bojan Ferenc	13.8.2015
		Slavko Petovar	13.8.2015
		Mateja Žalik Rus	13.8.2015
		Ivan Kuhar	13.8.2015
39	! Naprej - ! Előre	Jasna Vešligaj - Damiš	13.8.2015
		Vesna Sotlar	13.8.2015
40	Mura Raba TV	Romeo Varga	20.8.2015
41	UPKAČ	Romeo Varga	20.8.2015
42	Pannon Pleasure	Romeo Varga	20.8.2015
43	Mura Raba TV 2	Simon Balažic	20.8.2015

Annex 3: Questionnaire for structures

First part:

INSTITUTION	CATEGORY				
	Level of cooperation quality among programme partners (1-5)	Level of implementation efficiency of each programme partner (1-5)	Best practice during the implementation of the programme	Problems during the implementation of the programme	Recommendations for the next programme period
Managing Authority (MA)					
Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS)					
First Level control – SI					
First Level control – HU					
Prime Minister's Office Budapest					
Széchenyi Programme Office					
Certifying Authority (CA)					
Audit Authority (AA)					

How would you assess (1-5) efficiency of Central Monitoring System (ISARR)?

Any additional comments?

Second part:

PROJECT		EVALUATION ASPECT						
		INOVATION	ABILITY TO CREAT SYNERGIES	EFFECTIVENES (implementation)	EFFICIENCY (objectives)	ADDED VALUE	CROSSBORDER EFFECT	SUSTAINABILITY
Priority Axis 1	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
Priority Axis 2	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
	<div><div></div></div>							
Any additional comments:								