



Interreg



SLOVENIA – HUNGARY

European Union | European Regional Development Fund



IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL FOR BENEFICIARIES

PART 1 – ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary
for the programme period 2014-2020

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PART 1: ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries of the Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary for the period 2014-2020, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Prepared and published by the Programme's Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat in cooperation with the representatives of Slovenia and Hungary (National Authority). The Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat is hosted within the official structure of the Government office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy.

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ABBRAVIATIONS

AA	Audit Authority
AB	Audit Body
BPG	Bilateral programme group
CA	Certifying Authority
CB	Cross-border
CF	Cohesion Fund
CP	Cooperation Programme
CBC Programme	Cross-border Cooperation Programme
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
EC	European Commission
ECP	European Cohesion Policy
EGTC	European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
FLC	First Level Control
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GODC	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Investment Priority
JS	Joint Secretariat
LP	Lead Partner
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
NA	National Authority
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
PA	Partnership Agreement
PP	Project Partner
RTD	Research, Technology and Development
RTDI	Research, Technology, Development and Innovation
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SO	Specific Objective
SWOT	Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats analysis
TA	Technical Assistance
TO	Thematic Objective

Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Manual is to assist potential applicants in project development and preparation of the application to participate in the Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary (Interreg SI-HU) cooperation programme (CP). It provides also the information on selection, implementation and closure of the projects.

The Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries¹ is a part of the application pack and consists of different thematically parts. Overall, the Manual provides relevant and useful information on project implementation. The information on project development, partnership requirements and submission of the application is provided in Part 2 of this Manual. Part 3 provides information on eligibility of expenditure, information and publicity is covered in Part 4, in Part 5 the procedures and requirements for reporting are described etc. **Applicants should therefore read the entire Manual carefully before submitting the application to the programme authorities.** The information in this Manual is notable for the preparation of a good project application, as well as for the implementation of already approved projects.

The information provided in this Manual will be, if necessary, further developed and updated during the programme implementation. The programme will also provide beneficiaries with training and exchange opportunities in the form of workshops.

Additional information and documents related to the Open Call for Proposals are available for download on the programme website www.si-hu.eu.

¹ The CP Interreg V-A SI-HU uses the term Lead Partner for determining Lead Applicant in the phase of the preparation of the project and Lead Beneficiary after the Subsidy Contract is signed.

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1. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The cross-border cooperation programme Interreg SI-HU is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective, which supports cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Hungary during the period 2014-2020.

The overall objective of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) is to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole. Cross-border cooperation programmes (CBC programmes) aim to tackle common challenges identified. For the participating regions of the present programme deep analysis showed specific needs in the fields of tourism, culture, environment and public administration.

The conceptual orientation of the CP Interreg SI-HU therefore follows also the ambition of the Europe 2020 strategy, with its aims at "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". Common challenges and intervention needs shared by regions involved in the programme area are taken into account in order to contribute better to social, economic and territorial cohesion.

1.1 Programme area

The territory of the Slovenia-Hungary border region covers 10,658 km², which is home for around 980.500 inhabitants. The programme area includes the following eligible NUTS3 regions (Commission Implementing Decision 2014/388/EU):



Pomurje and Podravje region



Vas and Zala county

New: Compared to the 2007-2013 period, all NUTS 3 regions are part of the core programme area.



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1.2 Investment Priorities and specific objectives

The **mission** of the Programme is to transform the Region into a socially and environmentally sustainable joint “green tourism” region providing a high quality living perspective for its inhabitants not only in the magnets and their agglomerations, but also in remote, rural areas, which are less developed in terms of tourism.

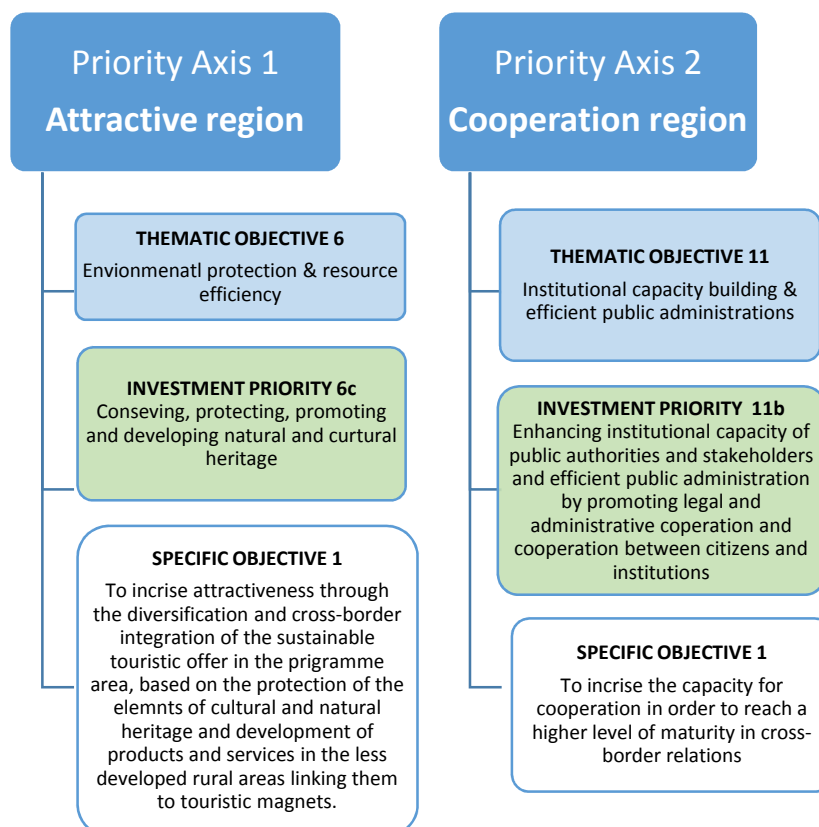
In order to fulfil its mission and especially in direct response to the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth the programme has formulated its overall programme objective as:

“Becoming an attractive area for living, working, investing, undertaking trough better capitalizing on existing natural and cultural assets in tourism.”

Based on the regulatory framework, which foresees thematic concentration of expenditure on a limited number of objectives and investment priorities, the CP Interreg SI-HU selected two thematic objectives (TO 6 and 11) with two investment priorities and the priority for technical assistance (TA).

Priority Axes other than technical assistance are described in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Priority Axes, thematic objectives, Investment Priorities and specific objectives other than for Technical assistance.



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For detailed information on the description of the Priority Axes, their objectives and main activities under each priority refer to section 2 of the Cooperation Programme. In order to make your project compliant with the programme it is compulsory to read and take into account the description under each Priority Axis provided in the Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary².

By every type of operation, also the horizontal principles of the programme such as sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and promotion of equality between men and women have to be considered. They will be specifically observed in the selection of operations, regardless of the Priority Axis they are proposed to. For more information on horizontal principles (see section 8 of the respective Cooperation programme and chapter 3.5 of this Manual).

1.3 Result and output indicators

The Interreg SI-HU cooperation programme indicators will be monitored on the programme and project level.

The **results** are direct effects resulting from the project and from the production of the outputs. They represent what is intended to be changed by the project. The production of outputs such as organisation of events, the identification and dissemination of good practices, the production of policy recommendations are only means to achieve the results of the project. Compared to the outputs, they imply a qualitative value, an improvement compared with an initial situation. They have to be measured in physical units such as the number of policy instrument influenced.

The **outputs** are the tangible deliverables of the project which contribute to the results. They are directly deriving from the activities carried out in the project. They do not lead to a qualitative judgment on the project's results. In other words, it is not because the project organises a high number of workshops (output) that it will necessarily be successful. Outputs are typically measured in physical units such as the number of seminars, site visits, conferences, participants, publications, good practices identified, or policies addressed.

Table 1: Programme specific result indicators

	Priority axis	Investment priority	Specific result indicator
1	Attractive region	6(c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	Number of overnight stays in the programme area
2	Cooperative region	11(b) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions	The level of cross-border cooperation at institutional level in the programme area.

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators by Priority Axis/investment Priority

² The CP Interreg V-A SI-HU is available on the programme website www.si-hu.eu.

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Priority Axis		Investment Priority	Common and programme specific output indicators
1	Attractive region	6(c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions (EU)
			Number of people participating in interpretation and educational events related to the cultural and natural heritage (P)
			Number of joint cross-border touristic products / services newly developed (P)
			Length of cycle tracks and footpaths (EU)
2	Cooperative region	11(b) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions	Number of institutions/organisations involved in cross-border initiatives
			Number of joint professional agreements and protocols

1.4 Types of activities, main target groups and types of beneficiaries supported by the programme

1.4.1 Investment priority 6(c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage

Priority Axis	Investment Priority	Specific objective
Attractive region	6(c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	To increase attractiveness through the diversification and cross-border integration of the sustainable touristic offer in the programme area, based on the protection of the elements of cultural and natural heritage and development of products and services in the less developed rural areas linking them to touristic magnets.

Type and examples of actions to be supported under specific objective 1

- ✓ Jointly developed plans and strategies for the sustainable utilization of cultural and natural heritage for better use of the touristic potential of the rural parts of the programme area through improved know-how and for an enhanced exploration / exploitation of the cross-border opportunities in the field by using the expertise and/or the potential of the touristic magnets located in the area.
- ✓ Small scale investments regarding sustainable utilization of cultural and natural heritage by promoting environmental friendly technologies and/or by implementation of small scale renovation / revitalization and conservation of cultural and natural heritage especially in the rural parts of the programme area, as part of jointly developed touristic products in order to ensure their preservation, as a pre-requisite for their touristic utilization (e.g. façade renovation, exterior and interior restoration, refurbishing, presentation tools and

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facilities, etc.).

- ✓ Improving accessibility to cultural and natural heritage sites as part of joint tourism measures in justified cases (road investments may only be complementary elements of the developments aiming at providing proper physical linkage and visitor-friendly accessibility among the cultural and nature heritage sites to be promoted, renewed, developed).
- ✓ Awareness raising actions and/or campaigns related to improve the level of knowledge and education about the elements of cultural and natural heritage existing in the programme area. This includes raising local awareness about the importance of the protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage on both sides of the border, in order to diversify the sustainable touristic supply (especially existing in the touristic magnets) of the Region and to increase its touristic potential.
- ✓ Regional cross-border cooperation in tourism destination management, development of regional trademark and quality management system, common branding and promotion, joint organisation and participation in fairs and exhibitions, transfer of know-how, etc. for increasing the visibility, marketability and competitiveness of the touristic offer in the programme area and for improving the management of the touristic services.
- ✓ Supporting diversification of quality cross-border tourism services offered in the area – bike tourism and related services (e.g. development and posting of cross-border thematic biking routes, biking tourism related services – as bike rentals etc.), hiking, equestrian and water tourism (e.g. designation and promotion of cross-border thematic routes, service development), and complementary services to wine, gastronomy, cultural and health tourism
- ✓ Joint development of new, innovative tourism products and services for the rural, less developed areas in terms of tourism based on joint quality standards.
- ✓ Trainings and capacity building for the local entrepreneurs and/or employees in developing relevant skills related to tourism (language courses, specialized professional trainings, conferences, etc.) in order to increase the quality and competitiveness of the tourism services and to indirectly contribute to local job creation.
- ✓ Improvement of the usage of modern (communication) tools and promotion activities in order to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the tourism offer in the programme area.
- ✓ Establishment of organizations and/or partnership networks with cross-border relevance (e.g. tourism management organizations, associations, clusters with legal entities or other non-profit organizations) facilitating the creation and development of sustainable tourism products and services, boosting joint activities and creating enabling environment for local SMEs active in tourism.

Types of beneficiaries to be supported under the Priority Axis 1 / Investment Priority 6(c)

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- ✓ Local, regional public and state public administrations/institutions, and their organizations, such as national/natural park administrations, forest authorities, cultural institutions, museums, local action groups, organizations competent in the field of transport, etc.
- ✓ State owned companies
- ✓ NGOs, non-profit organizations (including legal entities established by private law with non-profit status and purpose of operation), tourism associations, tourism destination management organizations
- ✓ In Hungary, church institutions/organizations
- ✓ Chambers and professional associations
- ✓ EGTCs.

Main Target Groups to be supported under the Priority Axis 1 / Investment Priority 6(c)

- ✓ SMEs and individual service providers active in the sector of tourism or related services
- ✓ Local communities
- ✓ Tourists and visitors from the main touristic centers/magnets and from outside the programme area

1.4.2 Investment Priority 11(b) increase the capacity for cooperation in order to reach a higher level of maturity in cross-border

Priority Axis	Investment Priority	Specific objective
Cooperative region	11(b): Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions	To increase the capacity for cooperation in order to reach a higher level of maturity in cross-border relations

Type and examples of actions to be supported under specific objective

- ✓ Environmental protection, energy efficiency, renewable energy.
- ✓ Social services (social innovation), healthcare by addressing the increasing problems the area is facing in the field of societal challenges, as ageing, depopulation, etc.
- ✓ Employment through developing organizational processes, joint measures and initiatives meant to increase the quality of the public services in the sector.
- ✓ Spatial planning, regional development, through better coordinating and developing more efficient and effective policies in the field.
- ✓ Accessibility, especially harmonization of cross-border public transport.
- ✓ Civil protection and common risk prevention and management, by increasing the capacity to prevent and to intervene in case of manmade or natural emergency situations.
- ✓ Cultural cooperation, through increasing the institutional capacity of the stakeholders for the preservation of the multi-ethnic cultural environment of the programme area.

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Types of *beneficiaries* to be supported under the investment priority 11(b)

- ✓ Local, regional and state level public administrations/institutions and their organizations
- ✓ NGOs
- ✓ Educational institutions, including rehabilitation centers
- ✓ Healthcare institutions, providers of social services
- ✓ Labor force offices, different forms of professional chambers
- ✓ Cultural institutions and organizations
- ✓ Stakeholders in the field of risk prevention and emergency management
- ✓ EGTCs.

Main Target Groups to be supported under the investment priority 11(b)

- ✓ local, regional and state level public administrations/institutions active in the sectors targeted by the indicative types of actions
- ✓ local communities of the programme area
- ✓ general public benefiting from the improve capacities of the organizations/institutions involved in cooperation

1.5 Financial framework

The total value of the Programme amounts to 18.641.194,13 EUR, of which the ERDF contribution amounts to 14.795.015,00 EUR. 3,000,000,00 EUR will be allocated to the Priority Axis for the Technical Assistance.

The total value of the Programme available for funding of projects under Priority Axes 1 and 2 is 15,6 mio Euro, of which 85% is financed by the European Regional Development Fund, while 15% shall be contributed by other funding.

In the Table 3 the division of funds available for projects by priorities is presented.

Table 3: Division of funds available for projects by priorities

Priority Axis	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding	Co-financing rate
Priority Axis 1	10.000.000,00	1.764.705,89	11.764.705,89	85 %
Priority Axis 2	3.295.015,00	581.473,24	3.876.488,24	85 %
Total	13.295.015,00	2.346.179,13	15.641.194,13	85 %

1.6 Programme language

The official languages of the Interreg SI-HU programme are Slovene, Hungarian and English. The official written communication with the JS or MA in principle is to be carried out

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bilingual in Slovene and Hungarian. JS members speak Slovene or Hungarian, therefore the communication with Project Partners in both languages is ensured.

The working language of the Programme structures is English.

1.7 Management structure

The CP Interreg V-A is a joint programme of the two Member States, Slovenia and Hungary.

The joint implementation structure of the programme includes the following programme authorities: Managing Authority assisted by the Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority. In the efficient and smooth implementation of the Cooperation programme also National authorities and National Controllers are involved.

Managing Authority

The Managing Authority is responsible for the management and the implementation of the programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and in line with EU regulations ruling the ERDF funds.

Joint Secretariat

The Joint Secretariat assists the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions and undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the programme. It also provides information and guidance to project applicants and partners.

Certifying Authority

The Certifying Authority certifies the Claims for Reimbursement and Applications for Payment before they are sent to the Commission. The Certifying Authority shall make payments to the Lead Partners or Project Partners *in exceptional cases*.

Audit Authority (Second Level Control)

The Audit Authority is assisted by the Group of auditors comprising of a representative of both Member States participating in the Cooperation programme. The Audit Authority is responsible for verifying the sound operation of the management and control system of the Cooperation programme. Audits on projects will be spread during the entire programme lifetime.

Representatives of the Member States

The representatives of the Member States (National authorities) are providing information to applicants concerning specific project content related topics, including information on State aid and project partner search.

National controllers (First Level Control)

The National Controllers verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared and the compliance of such expenditure with EU rules, programme rules and national rules. For this purpose, each Member State has designated controllers that are responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each Lead and project partner participating in a project located on its territory.

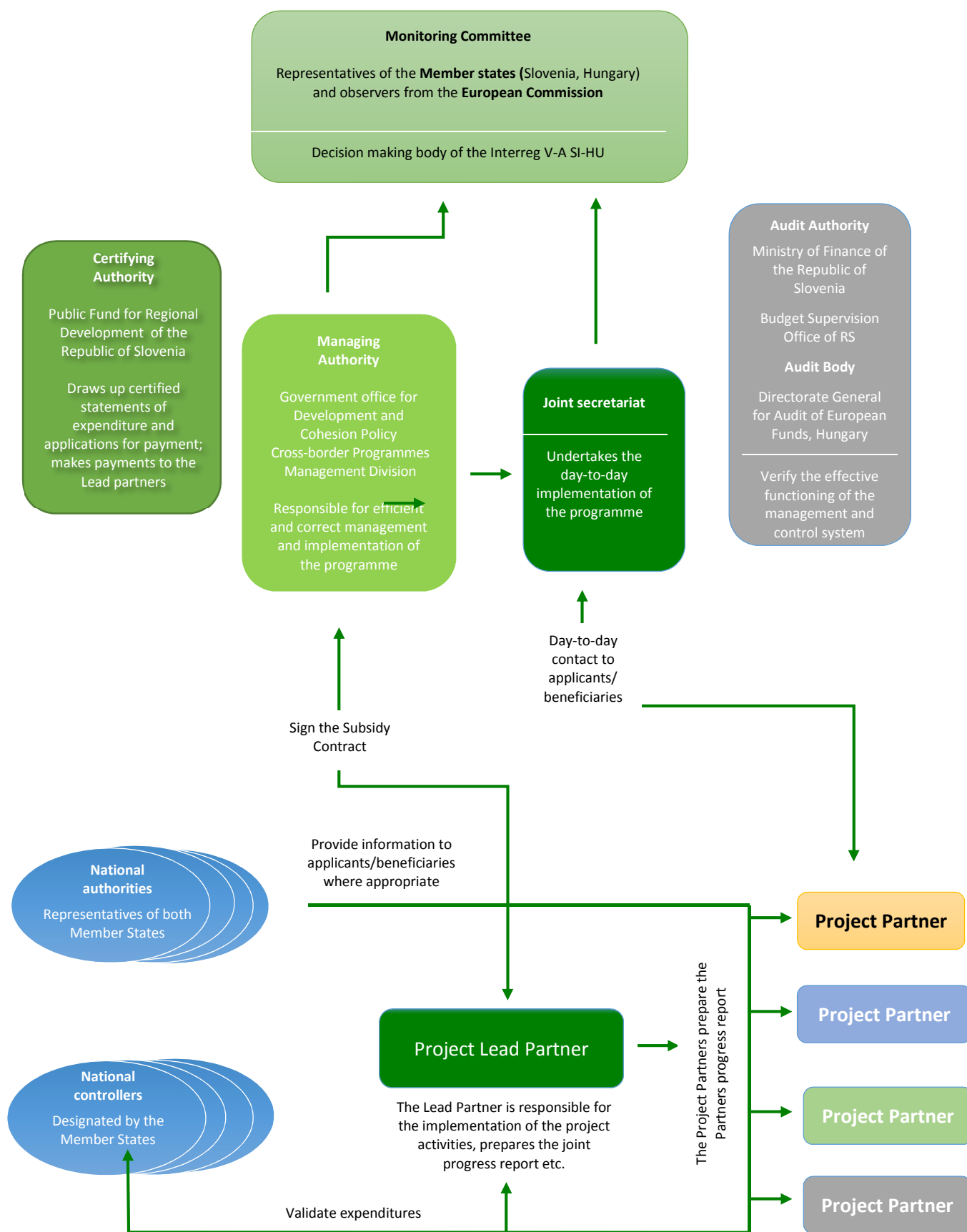
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Monitoring committee

The Monitoring Committee steers the programme, supervises the quality and effectiveness of its implementation and decides on the approval or rejection of the projects for funding. It is composed of representatives of both Member States, Slovenia and Hungary. The list of the Monitoring Committee members is available on the programme website.

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Figure 2: Programme management structure



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1.8 Electronic Monitoring System (eMS)

For the monitoring of the implementation, including the application process and reporting, the Cooperation Programme Interreg SI-HU will use the eMS information system. The eMS is a monitoring system with communication portal to support submission, approval, management and administration of projects. The system supports collection of all information on submitted and approved projects, their assessment, implementation and achievements as well as modifications and closure.

In comparison to 2007-2013 period, instead of the ISARR Monitoring System, the eMS will be used for submission of the applications and reporting of expenditure.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAMME RELATED DOCUMENTS

Projects implemented under the programme must comply with EU rules governing the Structural Funds, the national legislation, and must show coherence and complementarities with regional, national and sectoral development strategies/programmes. The documents or web links to the relevant documents listed below are provided (not executive list) on the programme website www.si-hu.eu.

Relevant programme documents

- ✓ Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary (adopted by the European Commission, No C(2015)6551 on 18 September 2015)

Key regulations for the European Structural and Investment funds (basic EU Regulations for the period 2014-2020)

- ✓ Common provisions regulation (CPR)

Regulation (EU) **No 1303/2013** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

- ✓ ETC Regulation

Commission Regulation (EU) **No 1299/2013** of the European Parliament and of the council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial Cooperation goal

- ✓ ERDF Regulation

Commission Regulation (EU) **No 1301/2013** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Regional Development fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing regulation No 1080/2006

- ✓ EGTC Regulation

Regulation (EU) **No 1302/2013** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EU) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of

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territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment of such groupings

Strategic framework

- ✓ Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Communication from the Commission, COM(2010)2020 final
- ✓ Danube Strategy: European Union strategy for the Danube region, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and social Committee and the Regions, COM(2010) 715 final
- ✓ The European Union strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP, 2015)

National basic rules

Besides EU rules and rules of the Cooperation Programme, also the national rules have to be respected. We would like to highlight some examples:

- ✓ **Procurement of goods and services:** - all project partners receiving programme funding in Slovenia have to comply with the national Act on public procurement. All organisations in Hungary will have to comply with the provisions of the public procurement law in Hungary.
- ✓ **State aid:** if the project or its activities are subject to State aid rules, the ceilings of public funding or aid intensity will have to be respected.
- ✓ Valid national legislation ruling **specific fields addressed by the project**, e.g. environmental interventions, natural and cultural heritage, construction, etc., has to be respected in preparing and implementing the projects.

3. INTERREG V-A SI-HU KEY PRINCIPLES

3.1 Result orientation

The strong focus in this programme period will be given to the result orientation of a project with the demand for visible outputs and concrete results. The result-oriented approach is reflected in the new programme and project intervention logic.

Programme intervention logic

In the 2014-2020 funding period The European Union requires programmes to set in place a **result-oriented** intervention logic demonstrating their clear contribution to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and to the achievements of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Programmes are to fund projects which demonstrate the translation of outputs arising from “soft” actions (surveys, studies, etc.) into concrete, visible and sustainable results. Those have to lead to a change (improvement) of the initial situation.

The intervention logic of the programme Interreg SI-HU consist of three Priority Axes (including the axis for the Technical assistance) and related specific objective. For each specific objective expected results (see chapter 1.3 in Part 1) are defined which reflect changes that the programme seeks to achieve for the entire programme area through the implementation of projects. Results and related changes are measured through result indicators linked to each programme specific objective.

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Project intervention logic

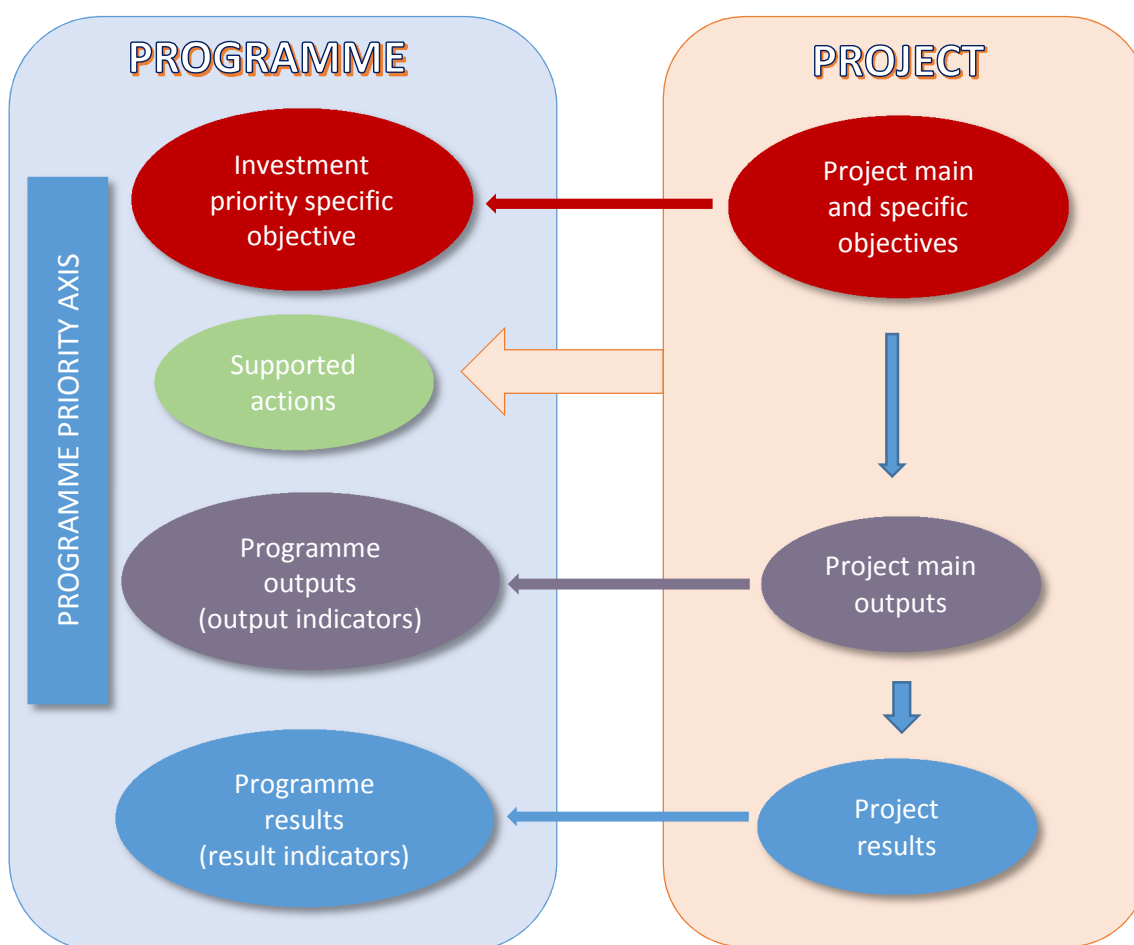
Projects have to strictly apply a result-oriented approach, clearly defining the results the project is striving for and linking them with the territorial challenges and needs (see also Part 2, chapter 2.2 on developing the project intervention logic).

The coherence of the project intervention logic (i.e. the project specific objectives, activities, outputs and expected results) **with the targeted specific objective of the programme is a pre-condition for a project to be funded.** Projects not showing a clear link to a programme specific objective and/or not contributing to the respective expected programme result will not be supported by the CP Interreg V-A SI-HU.

A clear result-oriented approach contributing the attainment of a specific objective of the CP Interreg V-A SI-HU

- ✓ Project objectives have to clearly target one single programme specific objective within the chosen Priority Axis.
- ✓ The contribution of the project to the respective programme result (and the related indicator) has to be clearly demonstrated.
- ✓ Project activities and outputs have to be logically linked to the targeted specific objective.

Figure 3: Links between the programme and project intervention logic



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Territorial relevance is one of the key quality requirements for a project to be funded. The cross-border relevance needs to be clearly demonstrated throughout the entire project, meaning that the problems identified cannot be solved efficiently by individual Member States:

- ✓ solutions are jointly developed by organizations in different counties/regions working together in a project, thereby showing a clear cross-border added value going beyond the mere results independently achievable in the involved countries/regions;
- ✓ project outputs should be embedded in a cross-border working approach;
- ✓ projects have to demonstrate an integrated approach to regional development by combining thematic and territorial approach.

3.3 Partnership relevance

In order to achieve tangible project results it is essential to involve partners who are most relevant and competent for the development, implementation, communication as well as capitalization of the planned project outputs and results. In this respect, for designing a relevant partnership the thematic competence and expertise, geographical and institutional relevance have to be considered.

The partnership should reflect the integrated territorial approach to regional development to be set in place by the project. All partners have to be involved in a way that demonstrates the joint implementation and the cross-border added value of the project.

3.4 Sustainability

The sustainability of project outputs and results is crucial for ensuring territorial impact and long-term benefits which continue after the project end in order to reach the project's overall objectives.

Therefore, projects have to ensure that outputs obtained and results achieved are durable and suitable to be continued after project closure.

In order to achieve sustainability, projects need to adopt from the beginning a longer-term, strategic perspective that leads to desired results for the target groups over an extended time frame. In order to achieve such long-term benefits, it is essential to consider needs of key stakeholders as well as the institutional context already when planning the project. In particular, key stakeholders should be actively involved from the early stages of the project development.

A distinction between the following dimensions of sustainability should be made: financial sustainability (financing of follow-up activities and investments, resources for covering future operating and maintenance costs, etc.), institutional sustainability ("ownership" of project outputs - which structures will allow the results of the project to continue to be in place after the project end).

3.5 Horizontal principles

A horizontal principle is a principle that must be integrated throughout the programme and in all projects. Therefore, every project approved by the CP Interreg V-A SI-HU programme is required to contribute to the following horizontal principles.

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3.5.1 Sustainable development

Sustainable development is integrated as horizontal principle in the Cooperation programme. Therefore, all projects supported by the programme will have to respect the relevant policies and rules. Applicants have to describe the contribution to sustainable development, explaining how the sustainability principle is anchored within the project design and planned activities.

3.5.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equal opportunities and do not generate discrimination of any kind (sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation).

Applicants have to describe the contribution to equal opportunities and non-discrimination, explaining how the equal opportunity principle is anchored within the project design and planned activities.

Besides actions of projects which explicitly address the reduction of disparities, all projects submitted under any Priority Axis are encouraged to incorporate measures for promoting equal opportunities and preventing any discrimination, for example by actively tackling concerns of demographic change and inequality. All projects will be encouraged to integrate measures, which actively seek to diminish the specific challenges identified in the programme area (e.g. better social inclusion of disadvantaged groups). Projects are also encouraged to integrate the principle of barrier-free accessibility at all levels.

3.5.3 Equality between men and women

Projects have to ensure that the activities implemented are in line with the principle of equality between men and women and do not generate discrimination of any kind.

Applicants have to describe the contribution to this principle, explaining how the equality principle is anchored in the project design and planned activities.

Projects submitted under any Priority Axis are encouraged to incorporate measures for integrating the gender perspective, for example by integrating equal participation of women and men and/or actively promoting gender mainstreaming.

Projects submitted under any Priority Axis are strongly encouraged to incorporate activities for tackling environmental concerns and **reducing their environmental impact**, for example by:

- ✓ Contribution to reduced transport and mobility related air pollution (in particular for short travel distances)
- ✓ Contribution to more employment opportunities, training and education possibilities as well as support services regarding environmental protection and sustainable development.
- ✓ Application of green public procurement in a methodological way.
- ✓ Considering online meetings instead of face-to-face meetings where possible
- ✓ Organising conferences and events in a sustainable way (e.g. by combining different meetings in one place, reducing printing and using recyclable materials, using video conference facilities, etc.)