



Interreg



SLOVENIA - HUNGARY

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ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2018

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

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1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB053
Title	Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary
Version	1.3
Reporting year	2018
Date of approval of the report by the Monitoring Committee	20 June 2019 15 July 2019 (corrected AIR)

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

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

This is the fourth Annual Implementation Report for the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary 2014-2020. It provides information on the progress achieved under the CP in implementing the programme during the calendar year 2018. The report complies with Article 50(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 which requires the Managing Authority to submit an Annual Implementation Report for year 2018 till 30 of June. The report was prepared by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy acting as the Managing Authority of the programme in cooperation with its programme partners. The Monitoring Committee (MC) approved the Annual Implementation Report 2018 on 20 June **2019 in the frame of the 11th written procedure Interreg V-A SI-HU and the corrected Annual Implementation Report 2018 on 15 July 2019 in the frame of the 12th written procedure Interreg V-A SI-HU.**

Selection of projects

Final decision on the projects submitted in the frame of the fourth deadline was reached at the 6th MC meeting on 23 March 2018 where the members of the MC approved four projects (two under Priority Axis (PA) 1 and two under the PA 2). The fifth submission deadline was 29 June 2018; twelve applications were received by that date. After the assessment of applications, three projects were approved to be co-financed (one under PA1 and two under PA2). Due to lack of funds under PA1, the members of the MC approved only one out of two applications under this PA that reached 75 points or more.

Programme meetings and preparation of the manuals

MC members met twice in 2018, i.e. on 23 March at the 6th MC meeting and on 12 November at the 7th MC meeting. Besides project selection, MC members were informed of the closure of the 2007-2013 programme and of the state of programme implementation in the period 2014-2020, they approved the Annual Implementation Report 2017 and Annual Communication Plan 2018, and were updated on the activities in the field of fight against fraud, conflict of interests, irregularities and audits. MC members also learned about the activities carried out for promotion of programme and projects. In addition, the representative of the European Commission informed them of recent developments and the state of play

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of discussion on Interreg post-2020.

A workshop on reporting targeting potential applicants and beneficiaries was organised on 8 May 2018 in Gosztola, Hungary under the 5th submission deadline. Some 60 workshop participants received useful information from the MA and the JS staff, including on the state of play of Cooperation Programme, practical use of the electronic monitoring system (eMS) in connection with the eligibility rules and requirements concerning information and communication. The participants also learned how to prepare a quality project by developing and using good intervention logic. This part mostly focused on PA2 which experienced lack of good project applications submitted under previous deadlines. In addition, two successful projects from this PA presented their experience. A round table focusing on PA2 was held in the second part of the workshop. The round table focused on cooperation, institutional capacity and quality of projects under the Interreg V-A SI-HU Cooperation Programme. In general, participants liked the workshop, particularly because it was more focused. In order to assist in project development, the JS/IPs carried out individual consultations with potential beneficiaries: 14 consultations on a face-to face basis and many more over the phone.

Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries, Part 3 were adopted and new versions of Arachne Manual_V2 and V3 and Manual on Verification and Validation of Expenditure_V2) were prepared and published during the reporting year.

The MA and JS organised a meeting to present the new version of the electronic Monitoring System to the representatives of the Group of Auditors on 7 November 2018 in order to ensure smooth implementation of the programme on all levels. Additionally, representatives of national control units from Hungary, Croatia, Austria and Slovenia participated in international training for the use of the Arachne Risk Assessment Tool which was organised by the MA/JS on 4 July 2018.

System audit and audit of the projects

In 2018, a system audit which found that the system works well but that some improvements are still needed was carried out. The programme partners followed on all findings and corrective actions were taken in cases where needed. Nevertheless, the MA and the AA still have somewhat different understanding of the functioning of the system.

In 2018, the Group of Auditors (GoA) performed audits of two projects (Green Exercise and TA1-JS/MA). No major irregularities were found. The identified irregularities were several isolated cases not of systemic nature and for which the relevant financial corrections were made.

The programme uses the e-monitoring system (eMS). The eMS system and its functionalities fully comply with the e-Cohesion regulatory requirements (according to the final audit opinion). The development of the information system is work in progress with the system being constantly updated with new and improved features. The activities were carried out throughout 2018.

Publicity and communication measures

The MA is responsible for coordinating the tasks linked to the requirements on information, publicity and transparency as well as for the information and communication activities regarding CP as set out in Articles 115 and 116 of CPR. In line with the Communication Strategy apart from workshops for potential applicants and signing of subsidy contracts with beneficiaries, the programme also organised one major event for the general public in the context of the EC DAY initiative, called "Cycling event in Porabje". A one-day-tour gathered a group of 150 participants from Slovenia and Hungary in Monostor, Hungary where they learned about the Green Exercise project, and then headed on a cycling trip in the area between the Slovenian and Hungarian border. Cyclists could choose between shorter 35-kilometre tour and longer 90-kilometre tour. The event was a nice opportunity for the general public and representatives

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of various institutions to exchange experiences, opinions and socialize. The event had media coverage (TV AS).

Projects e-documenta Pannonica, Back in the day and ESCAPE were among the inspiring examples of Interreg cultural heritage projects featured in the e-book "Connecting Cultures, Connected Citizens", prepared by European Commission and Interact Programme. The e-book was released in the framework of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). It presents examples of successful cultural cooperation projects. All of them received the EYCH label and represent useful source of inspiration for future cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation projects all over Europe.

At public events participants received promotional items (notepads, pens etc.). The Programme dedicated website in all three language versions was continuously updated, 38 news articles were published (news concerning the activities and novelties of the programme itself and news articles shedding light on projects' activities); 212 people subscribed to the Programme Newsletter, and received a total of 38 e-newsletters. In 2018, as many as 2,983 visitors got to the website making a total of 9,754 visits. The Programme is building a social media presence via its Facebook page with the activities of the programme and projects regularly posted. During its one-year operation, 139 people signed up and liked the page, 37 posts were published and the highest number of people reached by a single post stood at 950. The agreed uniform visual identity was used for all programme documents (e.g. invitations, handouts, presentations), on the programme website, on promotional materials, and to label the events and other activities.

Contribution to the output indicators

Expected contribution of the projects approved under PA1 to the programme output indicators:

- projects will contribute to the increase in the number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions with 44.325 visitors, representing 440% of the target value of indicator C0009; **12.653 achieved by the end of 2018.**

- the contribution to the indicator 6c.2 (people participating in interpretation and educational events related to cultural and natural heritage) has already been overreached surpassed standing at 310% of the target value, meaning that 6.261 people will be involved in interpretation and educational events; **1.020 achieved by the end of 2018.**

- with 96 new CB-tourism-related products/services account for the 760% of the target value of indicator 6c.3 is to be achieved; **27 achieved by the end of 2018.**

- approved projects will also contribute to the indicator 6c.4 (cycle tracks and footpaths) with 28.14 km of newly built or reconstructed roads/cycle tracks and footpaths. Also this indicator target value was surpassed overreached the target value (350%); **1,84 km achieved by the end of 2018.**

Expected contribution of projects approved under PA2 to the programme output indicators:

- 291 institutions will participate in CB structures, **achieved so far there are already 337 institutions**, which makes contributes to 337% of the target value of indicator 11.1 - Increase the number of institutions/organisations involved in cross-border initiatives;

- approved projects will also contribute to the indicator 11.2 - Number of joint professional agreements and protocols with **four signed agreements till by the end of year 2018**, which is 20% of the set final target value but 133% of the set milestone at the end of year 2018;

Financial data

Four payment claims were sent to the Commission in 2018 amounting to EUR 1,985,219.93 of ERDF funding (EUR 2,432,234.90 of total eligible costs). The programme operates with **941.791,01** EUR ERDF funds consists mostly from initial payments and pre-financing. The Commission made regular payments following the receipt of **claims** within a onemonth deadline or even earlier. Altogether EUR 11,462,874.70EUR in ERDF funding was allocated to the seventeen approved and contracted projects (without Technical Assistance), which represented 97% of the ERDF funding allocated to PA 1, 46.6% of the ERDF amount allocated to PA 2 and 86% of the funds intended for the implementation of projects under

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PA 1 and PA 2 by the end of 2018. Seven Technical Assistance (TA) projects were approved to reach 100% of the ERDF allocation. At the programme level, the share of all contracted EU funds stood at 88%. All approved projects and TA projects are being implemented, with the pre-financing of activities coming from the participating institutions' own budget. No project was fully implemented by the end of 2018.

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

3.1. Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	ATTRACTIVE REGION	<p><i>The final decision on the projects assessed in the scope of the 4th deadline was made in 2018. Out of 10 applications that were checked for quality only two projects under the 1st PA received enough scores to be approved. At the 6th MC meeting held on 23 March 2018, MC members approved two projects (ETHOS LAND and Szőlőhegyi Piknik). The 5th deadline for submission of projects proposals under PA1 with the deadline set for 29 June 2018 took place and only three project applications were received by the deadline requesting EUR 1.1 million in ERDF funding. All three proposals passed the administrative and eligibility check. On 12 November 2018, the MC members decided to approve only one (HOUSES) out of two project applications that reached the threshold of 75 points or more with the recommendations due to lack of funds under PA1. The MC members asked the JS to inform project partners of different options regarding filling the funding gap of EUR 40,166.03 in ERDF funding on a face-to-face meeting before signing the Subsidy Contract.</i></p> <p><i>The Subsidy Contracts were signed with Lead Partners (LPs) of two projects (ETHOS LAND, Wine picnic) from the 4th deadline in 2018, and the contract for the approved project under the 5th deadline (HOUSES) was signed in 2019. The committed ERDF amount for all approved projects equalled EUR 12,287,195.86.</i></p> <p><i>At this stage of implementation, no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of PA1.</i></p>
2	COOPERATIVE REGION	<p><i>The final decision on the projects assessed in the scope of the 4th deadline was made in 2018. At the 6th MC meeting held on 23 March 2018, MC members approved two projects under PA2 (Folk Music Heritage and Green Line).² The 5th deadline for submission of projects proposals under PA2 with the deadline set for 29 June 2018 took place. Nine project applications were received by the deadline requesting EUR 2.7 million in ERDF funding. Eight project proposals out of nine passed the administrative and eligibility check. On 12 November 2018 the MC members decided to approve only two projects (Sens network and Dual Transfer) out of eight applications that were checked for quality as they</i></p>

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		<p>scored high enough to be approved.</p> <p>The Subsidy Contracts were signed with LPs of two projects from the 4th deadline (Folk Music Heritage and Green line). The contracts for two projects (DUAL TRANSFER and SENS NETWORK) were signed in 2019. The committed ERDF amount for all approved projects under this PA stood at EUR 1,759,633.77.</p> <p>Low quality of projects under this PA remains an open issue. Nevertheless, some of the measures taken to remedy the situation, e.g. focused workshops and individual consultations resulted in improvement as the projects received in 2018 were much better than the projects received in the previous years. The main reason for unusually low number of good projects still lies in their lack of focus; while the general idea was interesting, project partners made projects somewhat too big or complex (in terms of finance and content) and lost the basic concept of the planned project. Also, many project ideas could have been implemented without the cross-border cooperation dimension.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</p>	<p>The Technical Assistance (TA) activities are to finance the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Interreg SI-HU Programme, together with activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the funds. The TA budget for period 2014-2020 amounts to EUR 1,500,000.00 coming from the ERDF.</p> <p>The following major activities were implemented under TA in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities in connection with implementation and monitoring of the Programme; • Two sessions of the Monitoring Committee (6th meeting on 23 March 2018 and 7th meeting on 12 November 2018) for approval of projects, update on the current stage of programme implementation, information on the Annual Implementation Report 2017, update on the activities in the field of fight against fraud, conflict of interests, irregularities and audits and update on information and publicity activities - ETC Day 2018, approval of the Annual Communication Plan 2018/2019 and briefing on the future of Interreg post-2020 ; • Information and publicity measures; Organisation of the event "Cycling in Porabje", in the context of the EC DAY initiative (15 September 2018); • Preparation of documentation and activities in connection with open call for projects (4th and 5th deadline) • Consultancy/support to potential applicants, to partners of already submitted projects and face-to-face meetings with LP/PP of approved projects; • JS members carried out assessment procedures of projects submitted in the frame of the 4th and 5th deadline for submission of applications; • Preparation of the three written procedures; • Preparation of programme documents (Guidelines for Archiving and Closure) • Site visits for the approved projects carried out according to the Site visit plan for 2018;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Four contracts had been prepared and signed;</i> • <i>Update of programme documents;</i> • <i>Organisation of training for the use of the eMs;</i> • <i>Organisation of a workshop on reporting for potential applicants;</i> • <i>Four Subsidy contracts signed;</i> • <i>Kick start of the preparation of procurement procedure to hire external evaluator to prepare the impact evaluation of the CP Interreg V-a Slovenia-Hungary;</i> • <i>Internal evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.</i> <p><i>No significant problems were identified in the implementation of PA3 (Technical Assistance) at this stage of implementation.</i></p>
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3.2. Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

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

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

Automatic from SFC																ANNUAL VALUE	Observations (if necessary)
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
1.1	Number of overnight stays in the programme area	Number	5,269,268	2014	5% increase 5,532,728					6,601,261							Data provided by States official statistics.
2.1	The level of cross-border cooperation at institutional level in the programme area	scale	3.05	2015	20% increase 3.66					3.58							

TABLE 2: Common and programme specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority); applies also to technical assistance priority axes).

S – Selected operations F – Fully implemented operations*	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value ¹ (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
S	CO09	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions (EU)	Visits/Year	10.000	0	0	3.000	28.225	44.325						
F					0	0	0	0	0						
S	6c.2	Number of people participating in interpretation and educational events related to the cultural and natural heritage (P)	Number	2000	0	0	0	3.991	4.261						
F					0	0	0	0	0						
S	6c.3	Number of joint cross-border touristic products /	Number	12	0	0	8	75	95						
F					0	0	0	0	0						

¹ Targets are optional for technical assistance priority axes.

		<i>services newly developed (P)</i>														
S	6c.4	<i>Length of cycle tracks and footpaths</i>	<i>km</i>	8	0	0	0	28,14	28,14							
F					0	0	0	0	0							
S	11.1	<i>Number of institutions/org anizations involved in cross-border initiatives</i>	<i>Number</i>	100	0	0	0	277	291							
F					0	0	0	0	0							
S	11.2	<i>Number of joint professional agreements and protocols</i>	<i>Number</i>	20	0	0	0	13	16							
F					0	0	0	0	0							
S	3.1	<i>Number of successfully implemented projects</i>	<i>Number</i>	36	0	7	8	19	27							Subsidy contract was not signed by the end of 2018 for three out of 27 approved projects.
F					0	0	0	0	0							
S	3.2	<i>Number of programme events</i>	<i>Number</i>	14	0	1	5	9	14							
F					0	1	5	9	14							
S	3.3	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Number</i>	9	0	9	9	9	9							

F	<i>equivalent positions financed by the Technical Assistance for the implementation of the Cooperation Programme</i>			0	3,5	9,14	9,14	9,75						The number of FTEs already employed and co-financed by the Technical Assistance.
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* S - Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]

F - Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]

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

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

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

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1	<i>Output indicator</i>	CO09	<i>Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions</i>	<i>Visits/ Year</i>	800	20,000	0	0	0	0	12,653		<p>The number of visits made by the end of 2018 and reported stands at 498. The total number of visits made but not reported in 2018 is 12,155. The number was reported and confirmed by April 2019. Total number of visits made by the end of 2018 is 12,653.</p>
2	<i>Financial indicator</i>	P2.1	<i>Amount of certified expenditure for Priority Axis 2</i>	<i>Euro</i>	465,755.10	3,876,488.24	0	0	0	82,474	502,279.34		<p>The amount that was reported and certified by the end of 2018 stood at EUR 394,773.23. The amount that was reported but not certified by the end of 2018 equals EUR 107,506.12. This amount was certified in 2019. The final amount of reached by the end of 2018 was EUR 502,279.34 Two Applications for</p>

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

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

Priority Axis	Fund	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	Total	11,764,706.00	85.00%	11,397,577.68	96,88%	11,129,210.54	2,154,240.35	18.31%	11
2	ERDF	Total	3,876,489.00	85.00%	2,070,157.43	53,40%	1,988,377.72	394,773.23	10.18%	6
3	ERDF	Total	3,000,000.00	50.00%	3,000,000.00	100,00%	3,000,000.00	562,386.35	18.75%	7
Total	ERDF		18,641,195.00	79.37%	16,467,735.12	88,34%	16,117,588.27	3,111,399.93	16.69%	24
Grand total			18,641,195.00	79.37%	16,467,735.12	88,34%	16,117,588.27	3,111,399.93	16.69%	24

² OJ L 286, 30.9.2014, p. 1.

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

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

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

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

Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount selected for support(EUR)	Expenditure declared by Beneficiary to MA
1	032 Local access roads (new build)	500,000	20,959.16
1	034 Other reconstructed or improved road (motorway, national, regional or local)	500,000	62,877.50
1	090 Cycle tracks and foot paths	1,500,000	221,534.99
1	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	1,500,000	701,793.40
1	093 Development and promotion of public tourism services	1,500,000	294,985.53
1	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	2,500,000	612,144.94
1	095 Development and promoting of public cultural and heritage services	2,000,000	239,945.06

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2	119. Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance	1,000,000.00	237,990.06
2	120. Capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilize for reform at national, regional and local level	2,295,015.00	156,783.17
3	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	1,300,000.00	435,139.30
3	122 Evaluation and studies	100,000.00	63,144.31
3	123 Information and communication	100,000.00	64,102.74

Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount selected for support(EUR)	Expenditure declared by beneficiary to MA
1	01 non-repayable grant	10,000,000	2,154,240.35
2	01 non-repayable grant	3,295,015.00	394,773.23
3	01 non-repayable grant	1,500,000.00	562,386.35

Dimension 3 Territory Type

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

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

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

		allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)		allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area ⁴				

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

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

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

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

The first evaluation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary was performed by an external evaluator in July 2017. The purpose of the evaluation was to evaluate the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the results and effects of the projects financed by the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary for the period 2014–2020 as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme implementation with a focus on processing the 1st and 2nd deadline of the open call for proposals. The evaluation includes the following: evaluation of the performance of programme structures and processes, analyses of reporting procedures, reimbursement of costs, roles of partners and effectiveness and efficiency in management of the projects.

The second evaluation is in progress and done by the JS itself. The main goal of the evaluation is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme structures and programme procedures, the achievement of the foreseen simplification and harmonization, the progress of the programme towards achieving the targets of the specific objectives and the progress in implementing the communication strategy and the set objectives.

The evaluation is mainly based on monitoring data provided by the JS, data from the application forms (in the electronic Monitoring System, EMS) and data available on the programme website. In addition, data was collected through a survey and through interviews.

By the deadline of submission of the AIR 2018, the final evaluation report regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme was not prepared yet, therefore only some preliminary findings are available and are included in this AIR.

According to the preliminary findings of the implementing evaluation II the implementation of majority of projects is underway, so that the actual progress cannot be assessed just yet. Overall, the programme is progressing well in all priority axes. The expected contributions show that some of the targets are likely to be exceeded considerably and may well have been underestimated during programming.

In the autumn of 2018, the preparation of the tender and public procurement for selection of the external experts for the preparation of the impact evaluation of the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary kicked off. The evaluators were selected in March 2019.

The main findings of the evaluation so far:

Programme structures and procedures

It has been established that the programme structures could intensify mutual cooperation, yet, they operate effectively within the framework established for the programme implementation. The number of staff of programme structures (JS, NA, FLC) is sufficient at the moment, yet a problem nevertheless can arise when there is a long-term absence of a particular staff member.

The number and nature of the tasks, especially of those assigned to JS can be overwhelming, as the JS staff also act as contract managers, assessors, they are responsible for an effective implementation of communication strategy, and are in constant contact with the beneficiaries.

The quality of cooperation between programme partners is perceived as good. There are regular face-to-face meetings or phone/skype/email communication, all problems are solved quickly and in a constructive manner. According to the survey comparing Slovenian and Hungarian side, the Hungarian partners agree better on approaches and views to cooperation and expectations (statements about very good communication between LP in PPS, communication among PPs only, clear task allocation among PPs,

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respect of the timeplan, willingness of PPs to collaborate, and compliance with the programme communication rules and guidelines).

During the application preparation and submission process, the applicants were offered support via telephone or in the form of workshops and individual face-to-face consultations mostly with JS and Info points. In general, all were assessed well by the applicants. The workshops and consultations were especially useful for applicants who already had their ideas developed and had their questions prepared beforehand.

Another tool used during the application preparation phase (and implementation) was Implementation manual for beneficiaries. Taking into consideration the opinion of survey respondents, the vast majority of applicants (successful and unsuccessful) used it and majority found it very useful (57%) or useful (35%). Among successful surveyed applicants all (100 %) PPs used the manual. The manual is well structured into key contents/phases and offers sound guidance to applicants and beneficiaries which was also reflected in the online survey. Nevertheless, 36% of surveyed applicants still needed additional information.

There are no bigger difficulties with the programme procedures, processes and forms. According to the survey, there were some difficulties at the application stage, the applicants had most problems applying in two languages, they would prefer just one. Writing the application in both languages was also difficult for them at the AB check due to poor translations/mistakes in translations the applicants did not pass the AB check. This was registered by programme structures that responded and changed the application procedure from the 5th deadline forward giving five working days to correct the identified mistakes.

According to the survey, applicants stated that, besides language difficulties, they found it most difficult to prepare and fill in the Work plan and Project budget application work packages in the eMS system.

Face-to-face meetings were organised with the beneficiaries of approved projects and JS after sending out the decision letters. The purpose of these meetings was to clarify any open issues considering possible conditions or other, a lot of attention was put to discussing and explaining the indicators, eligibility of expenses and reporting. LP and other PPs were invited to face-to-face meetings. Unsuccessful applicants also got the chance to come to consultations to get a clarification on the project weaknesses.

Beneficiaries were in general satisfied with the meetings, nevertheless, according to JS, beneficiaries often sought explanations for the information that was already published on the website.

In comparison to the 2007-2013 programming period, the average time needed for the processing of applications (from submission of application to signing of subsidy contract) has shortened significantly from 11.3 months to 8.25 months.

All programme structure bodies are involved in the reporting process at different steps. The first body in the process is FLC. If there are delays, all other steps are slowed down. Due to work overload (checks on different programmes at the same time, many submissions at the end of a month) and mistakes of beneficiaries which cause amendments, the first step can sometimes represent at bottleneck in the process.

To avoid mistakes and explain the rules for reporting, several workshops on reporting were organised for beneficiaries by JS and FLC. In addition, there is a manual and instructions for reporting eligible expenditures for Slovenian and Hungarian beneficiaries within Guidelines for beneficiaries (Eligibility of Expenditure and Reporting on the Progress, parts 4 and 5, respectively).

Several novelties were introduced to reduce the administrative burden – eMS, Open call with deadlines, the option to correct mistake (fifth deadline).

Despite encountering some difficulties with the eMS, the beneficiaries and programme bodies believe the eMS helps simplify the administrative procedures. The programme introduced simplified cost options to reduce administrative burden on beneficiaries. 95.10% beneficiaries used Office and administrative costs option, the costs being calculated on a 15% flat rate basis. 10/20% flat rate option for staff costs was used by approximately 10% of beneficiaries. Considering the relatively high share of staff costs in the overall

project budgets, the actual possibility for the use of flat rates for staff costs is moderate. Lump sum preparatory costs were used by all but three projects (85%).

The main problems the beneficiaries had using the eMS were the following: slowness of the system, obligatory attachment size limit too small, a constant risk of losing the entered text. The beneficiaries found working in eMS a bit time-consuming and believe the system should be optimized.

In general, eMS helped simplify work of programme bodies on the one hand simplified the work as everything is electronic, on the other hand, the system needs more functionalities. While satisfaction with the eMS is reported, there is still room for improvement.

In terms of administrative procedures issues, the beneficiaries most often mentioned funding (reimbursement of ERDF contribution), which they believe to be slow. Nevertheless, funding is related to reporting and confirmation of the reports (financial and content-wise), which can also be delayed due to errors of the beneficiaries.

During the project implementation, the beneficiaries can contact their Contract Manager for explanations and clarifications. Beneficiaries are very satisfied with the communication with their Contract Managers, and find them helpful.

According to beneficiaries, partnerships were not very difficult to form and majority of project partners or project leaders knew at least some of the other partners beforehand. For beneficiaries the most difficult issue was to find a suitable match, a partner in a particular field of expertise, to find an institution with similar needs in developing a project idea and to find a qualified institution in terms of project management, personnel and financial capacity. 16% of survey participants stated having problems establishing a new cross-border partnership. Successful communication was also hindered by the language barrier as the JS noted and partners on the ground confirmed. Trust, previous experience and time play an important role in forming partnerships and developing quality projects.

In terms of legal status, majority of the lead partners (as well as project partners) are regional or local public authorities (8 out of 20), followed by non-profit organisation, NGOs (7) and other. There are three SMEs participating in the programme.

The distribution of Hungarian beneficiaries is more equal across counties Vas and Zala with 19 and 21 partners, respectively in comparison to the distribution of beneficiaries in Slovenia, where 27 beneficiaries are located in the Pomurska region and only 8 in the Podravska region.

Half of the running projects have lead partner located in Slovenia and other half in Hungary. One Slovenian beneficiary acts as lead partner in two projects.

Communication activities

The Evaluation of Communication Strategy done in July 2017 found that the process of reaching the set targets was progressing well and identified some additional needs which called for strengthening action. Such topics were (i) addressing potential PA2 applicants differently, and (ii) addressing the general public more extensively. The proposed topics were taken into account in the communication and promotion activities of 2018. In terms of better involvement of potential PA2 applicants, the JS dedicated several sections of the workshop for applicants organised and implemented before the 5th submission deadline to focus on the issue: (i) the presentation on the intervention logic of PA2 projects highlighted the most common mistakes of previously submitted PA2 applications, showed good examples of how the elements of the intervention logic should be elaborated, (ii) there were successful PA2 project applications presented by their respective Lead Partners having practical issues and advices in their focus, and (iii) special roundtable served to identify cooperation potentials and forming of partnerships. Another measure, elaborated in 2018, is the call for Best SI-HU Projects (announced in 2019). In terms of better addressing the general public, the JS identified measures that might have influence on the issue and then selected the option of announcing a photo competition, dedicating the EC Day event to the general public by organising a bicycle tour. As the first step, the JS elaborated a questionnaire for the general public in the first half of 2018 with the questions focusing on the visibility of the CP. The trilingual questionnaire

consisted of seven easy-to-answer questions, with the rating of the online tools of the CP also requested. In addition, a post was created on the Programme Facebook page which contained hyperlinks to each language version of the questionnaire. Additionally, the questionnaire was promoted and distributed among the subscribers to the e-newsletter of the Programme. There was a 10% filling in rate which is acceptable compared to the current trends. The visibility of the Programme might be supported by involving future approved projects whose activities tackle the general public (e.g. project events <e.g. family sports day>, TV shows etc.). The evaluation of the questionnaire ("Evaluation of the questionnaire about the CP Interreg V-A SI-HU) was made in April 2018.

The achievement of objectives of the Communication strategy is progressing well. The majority of indicators have been already achieved or highly surpassed (e.g. number of visits to the website (337% over-performance); Number of participants at workshops (100%, achieved indicator value). The communication activities are implemented in line with the communication plan, the communication of funding opportunities will most probably be finished in 2019, and promotion of programme/project results will progress.

The programme website is well structured, beneficiaries assess it as good in terms of usefulness of information, transparency and general impression.

The programme is very well received by the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries participating in the programme are satisfied with the programme despite some minor difficulties and mainly plan to participate in the programme in the next programming period.

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

a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

There were no major issues affecting the performance of the programme in 2018, however the programme did face some issues which needed more focused attention. The issue of understanding the programme's Priority Axis 2 (Cooperative Region) corresponding to the Thematic Objective 11 is still open. Although this problem drew our attention already in the previous years and at that time some steps were made to solve the issue, it still has not been solved. Thanks to some of the measures taken (focused workshops and individual consultation) the projects received in 2018 were much better, though. Both in 2017 and in 2018 we prepared a focused workshop on TO 11 (PA 2). In the frame of this workshop, the participants learned how to prepare a quality project especially under PA2. They also got to see how to develop proper intervention logic, and learned about experience of their counterparts implementing best practice projects under PA2. In addition, an interesting open discussion was carried out in the frame of a round table on different themes: cooperation, institutional capacity, target orientation, project quality from the perspective of the Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary. At the same time, potential applicants under PA2 were invited to individual consultations throughout the whole year 2018.

The programme has achieved all set milestones (2018) of the performance framework. The table above shows that some indicators, output and financial, were reached by the end of 2018 but not all were reported. This changed at the beginning of 2019 when the rest of the indicators achieved were reported and approved/certified.

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

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

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

The citizen's summary is attached as a separate document.

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

Where the managing authority decided to use financial instruments it must send to the Commission a specific report covering the financial instruments operations as an annex to the annual implementation report.

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

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

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

8.1. Major projects

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

TABLE 7: Major projects

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

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



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										eligible cost)	5. design			
												<pre><type='S' maxlength=87 5 input='M'></pre>	<pre><type='D' input='M' '></pre>	<pre><type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'></pre>

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

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



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8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

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

TABLE 8: Joint action plans

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

Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them



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

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

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

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

Overall, the programme is progressing relatively well in all priority axes. Under the Open call for proposals (which is constantly open so that project applicants can submit applications any time between deadlines on a 24/7 basis), five deadlines were published (deadlines are specified under the single Open call) and a total of 145 applications were processed by the end of 2018. After all of five selection rounds performed by the end of 2018 under PA1, MC members approved 12 project applications and under PA2 eight project applications.

In 2018, the selected projects accounted for 100% of the ERDF amount allocated to PA1 and 70% of all funds intended for implementation of projects under PA 1 and PA2.

Seven Technical Assistance (TA) projects were approved directly by the MC to reach 100% of the ERDF allocation. At the programme level, the share of all contracted Union funds stood at 91%.

102 (81 different) partners from all approved project at the end of 2018 came from the Pomurska region (38), Vas county (22), the Podravska region (11) and Zala county (25). The beneficiaries submitted 63 progress reports by the evaluation cut-off date end of April 2019. The progress in achievement of the programme objectives was assessed on the basis of planned outcomes of projects approved until 31 December 2018, and their expected contributions to the programme output indicators, specific objectives and the calculation of result indicators for priority axes.

The geographical distribution of approved projects under PA1 and PA2 by location of project partners shows that altogether 96 partners come from all eligible regions and six come from outside of the eligible area. The majority of project partners are from the Pomurska region - 38 (EUR 4,506,102.83 in ERDF funding approved), followed by the Zala County project partners - 25 (EUR 2,618,710.40 in ERDF funding approved), Vas county project partners - 22 (EUR 2,082,059.54 in ERDF funding approved), while 11 project partners come from the Podravska region (EUR 1,046,284.39 in ERDF funding approved). Six project partners come from outside the eligible area (EUR 2,060,705.96 in ERDF funding approved).



The progress in the achievement of the programme objectives is assessed on the basis of reported outcomes of the approved projects and their expected contributions to the programme output indicators. The result indicator has been measured according to the set methodology at the programming phase.

PA1: Attractive region

This PA recorded the highest interest of potential beneficiaries measured in the number of received applications under all deadlines. Twelve approved projects are expected to contribute to the programme specific objective. The expected result is developed sustainable tourism offer of the programme area based on the protection of natural and cultural resources and activation of local resources that would lead to increase in overnight stays and indirectly to increase in the number of local service providers, enterprises and local jobs.

Under the first two deadlines, 70% and 65% of all received applications targeted this intervention area. During the next three deadlines this percentage dropped by the deadline - 3rd deadline (54%), 4th deadline (39%) and 5th deadline (25%). The decline may be attributed to the fact that the funding available for the PA was getting scarcer as well.

The approved projects (GREEN EXERCISE, GO IN NATURE, ESCAPE, Guide2Visit, Iron Curtain cycling, Mura Raba tour, TELE-KA-LAND/TELE-KA-LAND, HORSE BASED TOURISM – HBT, GardEN, ETHOS LAND, Wine picnic and HOUSES) contribute, by linking cultural and natural heritage and healthy life motives into new tourism products and packages that will attract more visitors to the region to stay for a longer period of time and to provide a high standard of services for them. The programme area will benefit from new Green parks, Fairy Tale park network, energetic parks, new accommodation facilities, eco camps, museums, network of local providers, creation of new wine tourism products, new themed routes (wine routes, route of traditional houses etc.) and development of different new tourism packages (offering active holidays (including cycling, hiking, water activities) or equestrian, culinary, natural, cultural experiences of the area), other tourism-related services and capacity building actions will be implemented. One of the strongest themes (also finance-wise) in the frame of this PA is cycling. Almost half of the approved projects are focused on developing and promoting cycling tourism, by developing/upgrading cycling routes that promote natural and cultural heritage on their way and connect them into the CBC cycling destination. In addition, they will improve cycling-friendly services (cycling centres, e-bike chargers, biker-friendly accommodation, joint mobile app, thematic routes etc.). Strong emphasis is also put on the promotion of the new tourism products.

Expected contribution of the projects approved under PA1 to the programme output indicators:

- projects will contribute to the increase in the number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions with 44,325 visitors, representing 440% of the target value of indicator C0009
- the indicator 6c.2 (people participating in interpretation and educational events related to cultural and natural heritage) has already been surpassed standing at 310% of the target value, meaning that 6,261 people will participate in interpretation and educational events
- 96 new CB-tourism-related products/services account for 760% of the target value of indicator 6c.3
- approved projects will also contribute to the indicator 6c.4 (cycle tracks and footpaths) with 28.14 km of newly built or reconstructed roads/cycle tracks and footpaths. The indicator target value was surpassed (350%).



Other applications submitted for the programme co-financing show that the project applicants in the programme area do not cooperate significantly, as similar applications were received from different applicants. To receive synergy between such project applications, JS enhanced counselling services provided at the project development stage targeting applicants with similar ideas. JS tried to combine project applicants with similar ideas to minimise repetition of projects with the objective to reach as many applicants as possible and to cover larger areas within the programme. The objective of the programme is also to increase the diversity of the projects, thus covering various topics with similar amount of co-financing.

PA2: Cooperative region

The expected result should reflect in higher level of cooperation, and in more stable, extended legal and administrative cross-border cooperation among institutions and organizations from both sides of the border, more efficient public administration, delivery of quality public services and functional governance initiatives to effectively address the joint challenges manifested in the programme area.

Eight approved projects under this PA, which account for 70% of ERDF funds allocated to PA2, are addressing the institutional cooperation in the field of environmental protection, energy efficiency, renewable energy, employment, cultural cooperation, education and local economic development. The fields that have not been tackled yet are: social services (social innovation), healthcare, spatial planning, accessibility, civil protection, risk prevention and management.

Under this PA, altogether 61 applications were received in the frame of all five deadlines by the end of 2018 (42% of all received applications), eight projects were approved to be co-financed. No projects were selected under the PA in the frame of the 1st deadline, mainly due to the fact that the general project idea was ok, but grew into something too complex (finance- and content-wise) losing the basic concept of the planned project; organisations that already cooperated did not upgrade the cooperation, instead they just signed the protocol, and continued focusing on partners that they already knew, a lot of project ideas could be implemented without the cross-border cooperation dimension. The problem kept resurfacing through all subsequent deadlines, but working together on extra measures, the MA and JS managed to reduce these problems.

The programme received many applications for PA2, but in terms of the content these applications did not fulfil qualitative criteria nor were they aligned with cooperation programme. The application assessment showed that applicants did not understand properly the intention of the programme priority, so the MA and JS discussed and decided to use a more targeted approach under the PA2 for the next deadlines giving a special focus to understanding the programme logic of PA2.

MA and JS made significant efforts to target PA2 already at the 3rd workshop for applicants before the 2nd deadline and continued their efforts at subsequent workshops held for the 3rd, 4th and 5th deadline. The focus was given to a more detailed explanation of cooperation programme, especially in light of PA2. Applicants were informed about what kind of projects were expected under the programme priority. They also learned how to prepare a quality project by developing good intervention logic. They were also warned of the most common mistakes that occurred in the preparation of project. Also, round tables focusing on PA2 were held to highlight cooperation, institutional capacity under three different themes: pre-conditionality, target orientation and sustainability, quality of projects in terms of the Interreg V-A SI-HU Cooperation Program and assessment of the implementation of CP Interreg V-A SI-HU. In addition, invitations for the workshop were also sent to many different potential stakeholders within the region by using the NA databases. In order to facilitate project development, the JS/IPs carried out many individual consultations with potential beneficiaries on a face-to face basis and many more over the phone.



The approved projects will aim to increase the level of cross-border cooperation, connect the experience, knowledge and existing best practice of involved organisations, make the cross-border area the centre of European economic renewal, establish common cross-border regional development platform and knowledge centre network, enable better addressing labour market challenges (better coordination between the supply of occupations and demand in the labour market) – better regulation of staff needs in the area, establish the database of cultural-historic data about localities, increase the cooperation between educational institutions, exchange experiences and good practices. Everyone involved will put big effort to establishing strategic relevant partnerships.

Expected contribution of projects approved under PA2 to the programme output indicators:

- 291 institutions will participate in CB structures, so far there are already 337 institutions, which makes 337% of the target value of indicator 11.1 - Increase the number of institutions/organisations involved in cross-border initiatives;

- approved projects will also contribute to the indicator 11.2 - Number of joint professional agreements and protocols with four signed agreements by the end of 2018, which is 20% of the set final target value but 133% of the set milestone at the end of 2018.

PA3: Technical assistance

Seven TA projects were approved in 2016. Achievement of the targets for the TA projects is progressing well and in accordance with the plan. The staff and teams have been set up and operating. Information activities and support to applicants and beneficiaries is implemented by all relevant bodies. The target values of indicators 3.2 and 3.3 have already been achieved. According to the funds available for co-financing projects by the end of the 2018 it seems the indicator could be reached by 2023 with 27 approved projects.

Programme Evaluation Plan and Communication Strategy approved by the MC are implemented as planned.

Overall assessment of the achievement of the programme objectives

Achievement of programme objectives and set targets is progressing well and without significant difficulties.

Expected contributions to the programme specific objectives of twenty approved projects:

with 12 projects approved under PA1 and 8 under PA2, the achievement of output indicators for both priorities is realistic. With already approved projects, the programme has reached the planned milestones for 2018 for set programme output indicators, while for some indicators target values have been surpassed. The final target for separate indicator should also be reached with planned output indicators in approved projects (Table 2 of this document).

9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of



the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

The principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 were respected in the programme implementation in the following ways:

Respect of horizontal principles is included in chapter 3.5 of the Implementation manual for beneficiaries – Part 1 (about the programme). Based on this guidance and concrete actions, applicants were requested to self-assess in the application form the contribution of project proposal to these principles (positive, neutral or negative) and to describe/justify the selection.

The MC adopted the quality assessment criteria for the projects submitted to open call for proposals. The set of strategic criteria examines positive contributions of the project to promotion of equality between men and women and to equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The project demonstrating positive contributions to any of the two principles scores one point for each one.

Respect of horizontal principles was promoted at all five informative workshops for potential applicants carried out by the end of 2018. All projects have to respect horizontal principles. Applicants self-assessed contributions to promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination mainly as positive in terms of respecting these principles in their implementation.

Respect of equal opportunities and non-discrimination is basically demonstrated by enabling free access to project outputs and results (results and knowledge) to all interested target groups, with the intention to address specific ones, such as minorities on both sides of the border, older people, unemployed people, people with different religious beliefs and sexual orientation, enabling access to cultural and natural sites and services to persons with disabilities. Most of the infrastructure developed in the projects will allow access to persons with disabilities. Overall, the projects address to a large extent the population in rural and peripheral areas and focuses on opportunities for activation of their economic potentials that lag behind urban areas.

In projects, a balanced number of men and women participating in the project activities is ensured. Some projects advocate the equality of men and women in terms of equal pay for work performed within the project. Projects ensure equal opportunities for men and women at the time of project creation and implementation. There is also a balanced number of men and women in the staff of the project, with both genders participating in the decision-making process. In addition, almost all project partners use gender-sensitive language.

For example, the project **Iron Curtain cycling** includes participatory decision making on performing project activities by taking into consideration the needs of women with family obligations so that working duties are organized in a way that they strike a time balance between the professional and family work,



and supports providing everyone with the opportunity to choose different forms of flexible employment and equal pay. The project is implemented in a rural area that faces many economic and social problems where tourism can make a significant contribution to the social integration of disadvantaged groups, the creation of jobs, involvement in the provision of services (e.g. production of local products). There will be no barriers to accessing tourism sites and project sites. Older people and persons with reduced mobility will be able to use e-bikes.

Project **GO IN NATURE** will specifically take into account the principle of accessibility for all, which means that measures aiming to reduce barriers are envisaged while developing the infrastructure.

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

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

The principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 were also taken into account in the programme implementation. Strategic Environmental Assessment for the programme has been prepared together with the Ministry for Environment. The projects connected to road construction have been assessed from the sustainable mobility point of view.

Sustainable development as horizontal principle was included in the Implementation manual for beneficiaries – Part 1 (about the programme) in chapter 3.5 including concrete examples to be respected in all projects. Applicants were requested to self-assess in the application form the contribution of project proposal to sustainable development (positive, neutral or negative) and to describe/justify the selection.

The MC adopted the quality assessment criteria for the projects submitted to open call for proposals. The set of strategic criteria examines positive contribution to sustainable development. The projects demonstrating positive contribution score one point.

The main contribution is expected from projects approved under PA1 that focus on valorisation of natural and cultural resources in sustainable cross-border tourism offer and at the same time activate local knowledge and skills. The approved projects promote soft mobility (walking and cycling) and include awareness-raising topics related to preserving cultural and natural heritage in the new tourism programmes being developed.

A number of projects approved under PA 1 tackle “green tourism”. Activities carried out within the framework of these projects are adapted to the ecological concept of "green tourism", accompanied by low noise and air pollution. Special attention is given to the cycling tourism, which is one of the branches of mild tourism; cycling is also a sustainable means of transport and its promotion can reduce environmental burden and air pollution. The project **Iron curtain cycling** promotes development of a cycling connection made of noise-free asphalt with a small rolling resistance, while planning is focused on conserving biodiversity and protecting valuable natural features. The project will aim to encourage visitors to choose sustainable forms of mobility (cycling, hiking, public transport).



In addition, projects will include creation of sustainable products, services and integration of sustainable products and services into the offer or packages through the use of environmentally friendly materials, creation of tourism offer catering to active leisure time needs based on sustainable use of local resources. Most of the projects will carry out green public procurement and will limit the printing to a minimum.

In projects under the PA2, cooperation between institutions will be promoted to create a coherent and solid framework of cooperation and strengthen sustainability of projects. Cooperation agreements concluded within the framework of the projects will lay the foundations for integration and sustainability.

Project under PA2 called **Right profession** contributes to sustainable development and highlights the importance of people and the relevant knowledge to support the development of an economically poorly developed area on both sides of the border which suffers from emigration of young people. The project encourages young people to decide for professions that the region needs or for which they have secured jobs. Indirectly, this means curbing the emigration of young people from the area and, consequently, contributes to greater development and prosperity in the region.

The majority of received project applications at the beginning of the programme implementation did not demonstrate project sustainability after the project closure or did not provide sufficiently a transparent method for monitoring it. This was specifically tackled at the subsequent workshops where JS presented the application process and areas of attention for future applicants. Project proposals in connection with this thematic area became better by the deadline so that approved projects now to a large extent demonstrate sustainability.

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

Priority axis	Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of total allocation of the programme (%)
P 1	1,159,472.37	11.59%
Total	1,159,472.37	7.84%

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

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

The Monitoring Committee was formed in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The process of selection and nomination of MC members was coordinated by the National Authorities of Slovenia and Hungary.



The MC comprises members with voting rights and members in advisory capacity. The voting members are representatives of the national level and regional actors who were nominated with a view to provide representation of all relevant sectors addressed by the Cooperation Programme.

The members in advisory capacity include representatives of the national and regional levels relevant for specific areas of interventions foreseen in the programme, civil society, economic partners, EC.

The functioning of the MC has been effective. MC is supported by Joint Secretariat. MC members have access to relevant materials and information on the intranet. MC decisions are also published on the programme website along with the names of members of MC.

MC members organise preparatory meetings on both sides of the border to discuss the relevant topics and align opinions. Preparation also allows for more efficient and effective discussion at MC meetings, however it has been noted that governmental members play significant role in the work of the MC.

The programme partners are informed about all programme activities (workshops, meetings, etc.) and are invited to programme events organized by MA and JS.

Already at the kick start of the programme, the MC members agreed that a working group with representatives of the MA, NAs and JS and national experts would be set up in connection with evaluation of the programme. This group was established and follows the evaluation of the programme. The MC members are/were acquainted with the results of the evaluation and had the possibility to comment on the results at the MC meetings or via written procedure.

The quality of cooperation between programme partners is perceived as very good. There are regular face-to-face meetings or phone/email communication, and all problems are tackled in a constructive manner.

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

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

Evaluation Plan of the Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary was approved by the MC in September 2016. According to the evaluation plan, four evaluations feeding into the respective Annual Implementation Reports are foreseen; two implementing evaluations and two impact evaluations.

First evaluation started in the second half of 2016 and was, in accordance with the timing foreseen in the evaluation plan, carried out in the first half of 2017. The focus of the evaluation was on programme management and implementation, the project application and selection procedures and the Communication Strategy. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of a desk research, by using an online survey for all Lead Partners of the submitted projects in the frame of the first and second deadline of the Open Call and interviews of the programme structures.

Taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the first implementing evaluation, the programme has undertaken different measures to improve the performance of the programme (programme structures and procedures and effectiveness). E. g. the eMS has been updated regularly, the MA and JS have screened the needs of the applicants and provided additional clarifications/instructions mostly in the frame of workshops but also individually. JS/Info points stepped up the promotion of use of all simplified cost options as recommended by the evaluator. The AB check (administrative and eligibility check of the received applications) has been upgraded so that the possibility of supplements has been included in the formal administrative procedure.



The Evaluation of Communication Strategy done in July 2017 found that the process of reaching the set targets was progressing well and identified some additional needs which called for strengthening action. Such topics were (i) addressing potential PA2 applicants differently, and (ii) addressing the general public more extensively. The proposed topics were taken into account in the communication and promotion activities of 2018. In terms of better involvement of potential PA2 applicants, the JS dedicated several sections of the workshop for applicants organised and implemented before 5th submission deadline to focus on the issue: (i) the presentation on the intervention logic of PA2 projects highlighted the most common mistakes of previously submitted PA2 applications, showed good examples of how the elements of the intervention logic should be elaborated, (ii) there were successful PA2 project applications presented by their respective Lead Partners having practical issues and advice in their focus, and (iii) special roundtable served to identify cooperation potentials and forming of partnerships. Another measure, elaborated in 2018, is the call for Best SI-HU Projects (announced in 2019). In terms of better addressing the general public, the JS identified measures that might have influence on the issue and then selected the option of announcing a photo competition, dedicating the EC Day event to the general public by organising a bicycle tour. As the first step, the JS elaborated a questionnaire for the general public in the first half of 2018 with the questions focusing on the visibility of the CP. The trilingual questionnaire consisted of seven easy-to-answer questions, with the rating of the online tools of the CP also requested. In addition, a post was created on the Programme Facebook page which contained hyperlinks to each language version of the questionnaire.

At the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 the second evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of the programme kick started. Unlike the first evaluation the programme, the evaluation is done internally by the JS due to lack of funds. The objectives of this evaluation are: effectiveness of the programme structures and processes, management of the funds for technical assistance, effectiveness of reporting and reimbursement of funds to the beneficiaries, assessment of the first achievements of the programme, evaluation of project partnership, assessment of milestones within the Performance framework for the year 2018 and Communication Strategy. The evaluation was carried out by the JS members on the basis of a desk research, by using an online survey and data from interviews with the programme structures as well as different types of data from the eMS system; an analysis about project achievements was made (outputs and results indicators, deliverables) and about the financial data of the approved projects. The overall cut-off date was 30 April 2019.

The first results of the evaluation are presented in point 4 of this document.

In March 2019, the Secretariat engaged a consortium of Slovenian and Hungarian consultants on a three-year contract in order to perform the two impact evaluations. The second evaluation focusing on the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness was underway at the time of submission of this annual report. The objectives of this evaluation are: effectiveness of the programme structures and processes, management of the funds for technical assistance, effectiveness of reporting and reimbursement of funds to the beneficiaries, assessment of the first achievements of the programme, evaluation of project partnership, assessment of milestones within the Performance framework for the year 2018 and evaluation of Communication Strategy.

The first impact evaluation will be available in the first half of 2020 and the second one in the second half of 2022 following the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness.



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

The general objective of communication is to enhance public awareness of the EU support for projects in the area of CBC through the effective use of communication instruments, especially by communicating the existence of the European funds and added value that the cohesion policy represents for the CP Interreg Slovenia- Hungary in the period 2014-2020 through a wide array of instruments.

In order to achieve both set communication objectives, different communication tools including annual event in the context of the EC Day initiative, website, newsletter, facebook profile and signing ceremonies of ERDF contracts are used to reach the target audience: i.e. the general public, potential beneficiaries, experts, political audience and the media.

The first two years were really active in the life of the CP Interreg SI-HU Programme. After the Commission approval (18 September 2015) the programme bodies accelerated the communication activities. The MA, in cooperation with the JS, organised the opening conference, which was held on 20 October 2015 in Murska Sobota. In accordance with the Communication Strategy which was approved on 24 November 2015 at the statutory meeting of the Monitoring Committee and in accordance with the Annual Communication Plan 2016, several communication tools and channels were used in order to promote the Programme.

In 2015, the focus was more on the first communication phase. At the opening conference, three successfully implemented and closed projects supported by the OP SI-HU 2007-2013 presented their activities and results, and Final brochure of the OP SI-HU 2007-2013 was produced too.

In 2016, we entered the second communication phase set in the Communication Strategy. During this phase, the focus was no longer on the dissemination of the results and best practices of the previous programming period but on the promotion of the funding opportunities of the current CP Interreg SI-HU Programme. In this context, the Open Call of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary for the period 2014-2020 and the official Application Pack was published consisting of the Implementation Manual for Beneficiaries, templates' of obligatory annexes (Lead Partner statement, Project Partner statement and Partnership Agreement) and the Subsidy Contract template.

In 2017, the third communication phase of the Communication Strategy started which was continued throughout 2018 in order to promote the results, benefits and best practices of the CP Interreg SI-HU 2014-2020. Continuous online presence was ensured on the programme webpage and in the social media to this end, to reach the target group as much as possible and in a cost-efficient way. Work on the 2nd and 3rd communication phase was proportionate in 2018.

The key communication channel of the current programming period was the programme website, just like in the period 2007-2013, but other channels were actively used in order to contribute to the implementation of the general communication objective described in the Communication Strategy. The implemented programme-level events contributed to reaching the specific programme-level-communication objective set out in the Communication Strategy.

Activities are implemented according to the approved Strategy, communication outputs which were set in the Communication Plan 2018 were mostly carried out, with minor delays at some points (i.e. introducing new communication tools, such as storytelling and different kind of competitions). However, the delay still can be handled within the next years, with the expected impact and results. In addition to this, media coverage was also ensured at every event organised under the Programme in 2018.

By the end of December 2018, an amount of EUR 61,000 EUR was spent on communication activities.



For the general objective “Enhancing the public awareness of the EU support for projects in the area of CBC” three result indicators have been defined:

- a. Recognisability of the CP Interreg SI-HU
- b. Knowledge of the programme website
- c. Number of visits to the website

In January 2018, a survey was carried out targeting the general public as respondents and aiming to measure the visibility and recognisability of the Programme. With a 10% response rate we can state that the survey was successful and can be used as the basis for the communication indicators “Recognisability of the CP Interreg SI-HU” with an achievement of 100%, every respondent already knew the Programme, 66% of them also knew the Programme website which was the indicator “Knowledge of the Programme website”. The Programme website as the main tool and channel of communication has already achieved 790% of the set final target value for 2023, since the indicator “Number of visits to the website” shows a figure of 79,188 of visits (targeted value is 10,000 visits to the website by 2013).

Seven output indicators have been defined for the two specific objectives:

- (1) “Motivate (potential) beneficiaries / communicate the possibilities to use the EU Funds” and
- (2) “Inform target audiences of the practical benefits of the projects implemented and their impact on day-to-day life of the citizens in the cross-border area”

The cumulative values of the implemented activities as well as reached indicators by the end of 2018 based on the list of communication tools are:

On-line communication:

The Programme website in all three language versions was continuously updated. By the end of 2018, 127 news articles were published on events, activities and other relevant information. 124 e-newsletters were sent out (original target 40 by 2023), which accounts for 300% of the target value. The number of subscribers is only 212 (after the resubscription which was necessary due to GDPR, before 246), which accounts for 42% of the indicator “Number of mailing list members” (target value 500). The website registered 79,188 visits, by 9,378 single users. The website (www.si-hu.eu) is well recognized and mostly used by the beneficiaries for searching instructions and project news. According to the users/beneficiaries the website is user-friendly and transparent.

In October 2016, the Programme started its social media presence with the creation of a Facebook profile. During its operation by the end of 2018, altogether 161 people signed up and liked the page.

Direct communication:

By the end of 2018, altogether six workshops (target value 8, 75% success rate of the indicator “Number of workshops performed”) were carried out, addressing potential applicants and beneficiaries where almost 400 people participated (target value 400, which is a 100% achievement of the final target value for 2023 of the indicator “Number of participants at workshops”). The workshops served to acquaint the participants with programme requirements, eMS system, they learned how to prepare a quality project using the intervention logic point of view and got to know about the most common mistakes that occurred in the preparation of projects. The reporting workshops highlighted the programme rules the beneficiaries need to take into consideration when implementing the activities on information and communication.

In order to support the project development, the JS/IPs constantly provided individual consultations with potential beneficiaries.

Altogether four promotional events besides workshops were organized with 750 participants (target value 8 events with 600 participants): kick-off event, organisation of the EC Days in 2016, 2017 and 2018.



As for the indicator “Number of events performed” the success rate stands at 50%. The achievement of the indicator “Number of participants at events” is 125%.

Based on the previously explained achievements, it can be stated that mid-term performance concerning the set communication indicators is either acceptable or far beyond acceptable since most indicators show over-performance compared to their set final target values for 2023.

Communication with media and PR / Media communication – advertising:

Press was invited to all public events to get the opportunity to promote the Programme in the local media (TV AS). During the events the programme uses roll-ups in order to visualise the programme.

Other (additional) tools:

On the occasion of public events, participants received promotional items (notepads, pens, cycling t-shirts etc.). Moreover, the uniform visual identity was used for all programme documents (e.g. invitations, handouts, presentations), on the programme website, on the promotional materials, in the scope of the events and other activities.

Publication activities:

Two brochures were published under the programme, i.e. the Cooperation Programme and the Citizen’s Summary.

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

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

The integrated approach to territorial development as stated in the CP was respected during the selection of projects.

The main goal of approved projects under PA1 is common cross-border promotion of existing tourism service related to cultural heritage and natural assets, mostly in rural areas which are less developed and populated, with a focus on the importance of a healthy way of life and sustainable and environmentally friendly means of transport (especially cycling). The recreational parks (green parks – Green exercise, Go in NATURE) on both sides of the border, eco camps in order to promote the following topics: natural environment, protected natural assets, sustainable land-use and means of transport, healthy way of life and exercise (Green exercise, Iron Curtain Cycling, Guide2Visit). Projects also aim to support the integration of service providers through a common brand and consequent development of common tourism packages (Tele-KA LAND, HBT).

PA2 aims at enhancing institutional capacities and CB networks to provide efficient service delivery in areas with significant delivery gaps. The projects aim at establishing different cross border partnerships which will establish cross border cooperation in the field of cultural and natural heritage protection, environmental protection, energy efficiency, renewable energy, education, regional economic development.



The sustainable urban development and community-led local development under the cooperation programme are not implemented.

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

For the purpose of reinforcing the capacity of authorities, Joint Secretariat (JS) members and the Managing Authority (MA) attended a series of trainings by the end of 2018 organised by Interact (Raising project quality, Financial and Project management, Indicators and data collection, Finance management camp, seminars in connection with communication activities, capitalisation, reporting, monitoring). Also, training regarding the eMS system was organised for the programme authorities (FLC, CA, AA). Regular meetings with the authorities (JS/MA) from CP Slovenia-Austria and CP Slovenia-Croatia were organised to share the experience and to reinforce the knowledge of programme management. In addition, meetings supporting the exchange of experience with other cross-border programmes (Austria-Hungary, Hungary-Croatia, Central Baltic) were organized.

At the beginning of the implementation of the programme, all relevant guidelines for the beneficiaries were prepared and detailed information regarding the project implementation, reporting process and programme rules in general were presented to the beneficiaries of the approved projects at face-to-face meetings; throughout the implementation period the beneficiaries have received all the support needed from their JS contract managers. The implementation of the project selected under the 1st deadline of the Open Call started in August 2016, the last three projects in the frame of the 5th deadline will start in the 1st half of 2019. The 1st reporting period ended in January 2017. The first project will end in June 2019.

There were several workshops organized for beneficiaries regarding the reporting, namely:

- 1st Workshop on reporting, 22 June 2017, Rakičan, SI
- 2nd workshop on reporting, 8 May 2018, Gosztola, HU

At the workshops the following topics were presented: (a) instructions on information and communication, (b) instructions on reporting, (c) practical presentation of reporting in the electronic monitoring system (eMS), focusing on the most common mistakes that occur in the reporting process.

At the beginning, the IT skills and knowhow were not only a problem for applicants, but for programme structures as well. To improve the capacity at this level, information system workshops were frequently organized and a lot of processes within programme bodies altered to adjust to electronic documents and communication. Now, half way through the implementation period, it can be said that the knowledge level significantly improved by all parties. In addition, JS members also joined seminars for using different Office programmes and more analytical tools.

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

The contribution to the relevant macro-regional strategies has to be described by the project partners within the application, however in this regard no additional points are allocated to the projects under the quality check.



The 20 projects approved by the end of 2018 under the Open Call of the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary are contributing to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

In general, all 20 projects contribute to macro-regional strategies, however only some of the projects have a distinct impact on the targets and challenges set by the macro-regional framework and are listed below.

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

EUSDR (Slovenia, Hungary)

Pillar 1 Connection the Danube Region

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

Pillar 2 Protecting the Environment in the Danube region

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

Pillar 3 Building prosperity in the Danube region

3.2 Competiveness (E-ECONOMY, Sens network)

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

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

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

n.a.

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

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

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



13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

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

The conceptual orientation of the CP Slovenia-Hungary also reflects the ambition of the Europe 2020 strategy and its aims for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. Common challenges of the regions of the programme area were taken into account within the selection of thematic objectives in order to contribute to social, economic and territorial cohesion. The CP is expected to contribute most to the sustainable growth objectives, followed by smart and inclusive growth.

- Sustainable growth knowledge and innovation-based tourism development (new, high quality products and services with cutting-edge technologies; bilateral cooperation); knowledge sharing in cooperation actions

- Smart growth - preservation and sustainable utilization of cultural and natural values and resources by promoting resource-efficient, greener and more competitive tourism development (green tourism brand)

- Inclusive growth - tourism development (as labour intensive economic sector) in remote areas delivering social and territorial cohesion, promoting cooperation by involving new actors from the public and civil world in addressing jointly important policy fields and combatting against climate change, poverty and social exclusion, based on participatory approach and large stakeholder involvement

The Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A Slovenia-Hungary aims at promoting sustainable, safe and vibrant border area by fostering smart approaches to preservation, mobilization and management of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the people living and working in or visiting the area. The programme contributes to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth through its PA1 and PA2.

Investment priority 6c – Protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage contributes to the Sustainable growth of Europe 2020 priority. 12 projects are approved under the priority (including project HOUSES approved in 2018 and contracted in 2019).

Third main Union 2020 priority – Inclusive growth programme addresses with second priority axis through ESF thematic objective 11 – Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration within investment priority 11b – Promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institution. 8 projects (including projects Sens network and Dual Transfer approved in 2018 and contracted in 2019).

Based on selected thematic objectives, the CP reduces barriers to development by promoting sustainable and integrated territorial approaches. CP and its projects make use of potentials and therefore support territorial integration which results in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, thus directly contributing to the Europe 2020 goals.

At this stage of the programme implementation, where by the due date none of the approved projects have been concluded, the assessment of the impact of the project to achieving the Union goals cannot be performed.

However, considering already implementing and planned activities of selected projects, it is foreseen that



the programme will undoubtedly contribute towards achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. More profound information and external assessment of the programme's contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth will be available after the first, and especially the second impact evaluation will be performed.



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

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

By the end of 2018, all the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework were fully achieved. Some were achieved and reported by the end of year 2018, some were achieved by the end of 2018, but reported in 2019 (by April 2019).

