



**Interreg** 

**Austria-Hungary 2014-2020**

European Union – European Regional Development Fund

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**factory**

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**/ ROSINAK & PARTNER /**  
Ziviltechniker GmbH

**Interreg V-A AT-HU 2014-2020**

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**Evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and  
impact of the programme**

**Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary**

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

*Disclaimer:*

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*Authors:*

*M&E Factory monitoring and evaluation GMBH: Christine Hamza, Angelos Sanopoulos*

*Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH: Elisabeth Stix*

*MultiContact Consulting Kft: Zsuzsanna Uszta, Éva Magyar*

*Contractor:*

*Mag. (FH) Tatjana Paar*

*Verwaltungsbehörde Interreg V-A AT-HU*

*Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH*

*Technologiezentrum, 7000 Eisenstadt*

*e-mail: [tatjana.paar@rmb.co.at](mailto:tatjana.paar@rmb.co.at)*



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## Abbreviations

BWG	Bilateral Working Group
CO	Common output indicator
EC	European Commission
EEIG	European Economic Interest Grouping
ERDF	European Region Development Fund
IP	Investment priority
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
OI	Output indicator
PA	Priority area
RI	Result indicator
RC	Regional coordinator
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SO	Specific objective
TO	Thematic objective







### Executive summary

Interreg V A Austria-Hungary Cooperation Programme (Interreg AT-HU) is a cross-border cooperation programme under the European Territorial Cooperation objective of the EU cohesion policy 2014-2020. The Managing Authority (MA) of Interreg AT-HU, represented by Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH, contracted M&E Factory GmbH, Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH and MultiContact Consulting with the "Evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programme Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary" on June 2019.

The evaluation of the programme follows the requirements of European Regulation 1303/2013 Article 56, according to which the MA should carry out an evaluation addressing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme.

The evaluation of the cooperation programme is vital for understanding **whether** and **how** the programme has achieved its specific objectives. The evaluation is based on a theory-based approach addressing two levels:

- the **OP level** focusing on general achievements and the character of the programme;
- the **level of the eight specific objectives**.

The evaluation was done through a thoroughly defined evaluation system containing evaluation questions, key elements of the activities, judgment criteria, evaluation indicators and methodologies addressing the key evaluation criteria:

- **Effectiveness and durability** of the projects in each SO, answering the main evaluation questions with findings and conclusions.
- **Impact** and whether projects have contributed to the result indicators and SOs.
- **Strategic approach** of the SO and the coherence of the intervention logic.
- **Efficiency** related to types of activities. An assessment of costs in relation to outputs has been prepared, but due to the differences between projects a comparison is almost impossible and would lead to the wrong conclusions. Thus the conclusions based on the efficiency analysis should be seen as an input for the programme management but should under no circumstances replace any audit trails.

Data collection, interviews and the online survey, as well as the analysis phase followed the structure evaluation design.

#### *Conclusions at programme level*

The programme **successfully addressed the two overall aims** stated in the OP with eight specific objectives. At the time of the evaluation (September - December 2019) **39 projects** were contracted, with most of them still in a very early stage. The majority of projects were either pilot projects or last-mile projects, though some projects incorporated different stages (political agreements, strategy developments, pilot projects, and last mile projects).

The **total absorption rate** of the programme was 93%.

When comparing projects in the different specific objectives there are groups of interventions which are more successful:





- Projects in **risk management and environmental protection** have the potential to contribute successfully to the objectives of the programme, and in many cases have already done so.
- Projects with the aim of **better cooperation of administrative bodies** in aspects such as environmental and risk prevention, the labour market and education also have great potential for successful impact achievement. Additionally, in many cases they provide intangible results in terms of a better atmosphere for cooperation at the border (the so-called 'cross-border marker').

Overall, projects with a **clear thematic focus have a higher potential** to achieve measurable impact than projects which cover a wide range of different partners and topics.

The **partnership breakdown** within projects is dominated by public administrations, followed by interest groups and NGOs with a high quality of cooperation and although the Survey revealed that the Interreg process is considered to be time-consuming and bureaucratic the majority of the respondents were positive about being involved in an Interreg project. Based on the network analysis the main partner of the largest network is the Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung. This beneficiary is the driver of the programme, with 18 projects and several partners.

The **average project** budget in 2014-2020 is EUR 2.3 million, which is considerably larger than the average project budget in 2007-2013 was around EUR 1 million. Compared to the previous period, the average budget per partner has almost doubled, while the number of partners has decreased by more than half.

### *Conclusions at the level of specific objectives*

#### **Specific objective 1.1 - Strengthening regional entrepreneurship, the performance of start-ups and the innovation capacities of SMEs with a focus on the development of (internationally) competitive products**

The specific objective opens up a wide range of topics, but it is questionable whether in the frame of Interreg those topics have any impact on the economic situation in the region. The measures do not seem to reach the actual needs of SMEs. The focus of many projects is somewhat unspecific and thus tend to miss out on achieving any long-term effects. Concerns expressed in various studies show that the main needs of SMEs lie in reducing administrative burdens and legal barriers. Those aspects cannot be sufficiently addressed by an Interreg programme, however, but instead need to be tackled at national or regional level.





### **Specific objective 2.1 - Improving the protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage through common approaches to sustainable tourism**

Projects in this specific objective lack a certain strategic approach. They cover a wide range of different activities contributing to tourism in the cross-border area. Nevertheless, the projects in this specific objective reflect the possibilities offered by the programme in terms of joint strategy, development of products and standards, and investments to improve existing areas. Synergies between projects are not visible, but could significantly support the valorisation process in the region. Especially in the field of tourism, synergies are considered important and should be used to increase the efficiency of individual activities and ensure better durability for the project results.

### **Specific objective 2.2 -Improving the ecological stability and resilience of landscape and ecosystems**

Projects in this specific objective show some ambiguity in thematic focus. They cover tourism as well as the protection of natural sites. However, the need for better natural protection is clearly addressed in the project objectives. But some of the projects have faced delays in the public procurement procedure.

The aim of improving the protection of natural sites in the cross-border area is to be continued. The results of the projects are of high value but should be better embedded in the strategic and regulatory framework of the region. Furthermore, better links between projects in the same specific objective, as well as with projects in specific objective 2.1 and 4.1, would add value to both the whole programme impact.

### **Specific objective 2.3 - Improving the management and protection of water bodies**

Projects in this specific objective focus on specific cross-border problems and trigger cross-border expert exchange. This **mirrors the purpose of the Interreg approach**. Most of the project activities are based on research and data collection, with a view to monitoring and creating forecast models. These activities all contribute to risk management and thus the reduction of natural risks. All the projects contribute to climate change adaptation and are relevant in terms of preparing for potential climate change impacts. The fact that some of the projects build on existing structures of the **Austro-Hungarian Water Commission** allows the assumption that the project results have a high chance of future take-up.

### **Specific objective 3.1 - Improving cross-border connectivity of regional centres to the TEN-T network**

Projects in this specific objective focus too much on individual traffic. The approach does not match the overall objective of increasing sustainable traffic. The improvement of small cross-border links in the northern part of the region is not directly related to TEN-T networks and might lead to increases in traffic, by offering alternative routes for those who want to avoid main roads and tolls. The accessibility of the southern part of the region was not the main concern of the only high-ranked road project.





It is not clear whether the high-ranking road connection improves poor accessibility in the border region as a by-product of supporting cross-border commuters.

The main obstacles to mobility in the border regions are missing **public transport links**. This should be better addressed.

### **Specific objective 3.2 - Enhancing sustainable mobility on the local and regional level**

The single project addressing this specific objective covers a wide variety of different tasks aiming to serve the whole region. Considering the number, size and range of these tasks, the project appears almost **like an Interreg sub-programme**. There is a danger that too many different activities and loose ends will hamper the effective implementation of the project. Compared to the subject as such, the **region might have different needs** and different responses. This is not visibly reflected in the project reporting. Since the cross-border region is so diverse it might be necessary to deal with different aspects in different parts of the region. The project, however, needs to take into account projects in other specific objectives, which has not been yet done as far as the reporting reveals.

### **Specific objective 4.1 - Improving institutional cross-border cooperation in order to strengthen the integration**

Projects in this specific objective contribute a great deal to cross-border cooperation between public administrations, and some of the projects have already achieved joint agreements and common standards. A considerable proportion of the projects has contributed, or aim to contribute, to balancing governance capacities in the cross-border region. Most successful were projects with a specific thematic focus. Supplementary results of the projects, such as tools and small-scale investments, have to be considered as important anchor points for lasting project impact.

However, both 'cross-border activities' and 'better cooperation' are rather vague labels for results that can be easily met by most projects. Although the specific objective is a test-bed for cooperation in new fields, it also mirrors the **requirement for thematic concentration** at programme level.

### **Specific objective 4.2 - Strengthening intercultural capacities and labour mobility of the border population by supporting cross-border education initiatives and vocational training**

In this specific objective there are two types of projects one focusing mainly on **reducing language barriers** across the border and supporting the educational system in general, and others that focus on **specific topics** such as robotics, animal welfare and energy. The immediate results of the projects are the provision of a **basis for language education and lifelong learning for several different levels and sectors**. Those projects address subjects that have little attention at national level and thus need to be continuously supported by Interreg.





### *Recommendations*

The current 2014-2020 Interreg AT-HU programme addresses **topics and objectives that are all covered in the new programming period**. Some of the projects also address other specific objectives from the post 2020 legislative proposal.

Considering all the proposed novelties in the legal framework **post 2020**, the current programme could be continued in the new programming period, especially with the **following thematic** fields:

- climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk management and environmental protection;
- improving institutional cross-border cooperation in order to strengthen the integration;
- strengthening intercultural capacities.

The necessary **SME support** should be addressed through more suitable instruments than Interreg. When continuing with subjects concerning **mobility and connectivity** a clear focus on sustainability of mobility projects should be ensured. In the light of a potentially reduced future budget, the programme should focus on two to three policy objectives and improve the **utilisation of synergies** at programme and project level, for example by embedding projects in a **more strategic framework**. However, the thematic focus should not be narrowed and should allow **new topics**, such as for example healthcare and social inclusion. Experience from **best practices** should be used for future project development.

Apart from the thematic orientation **simplification and reduction of administrative burden** should be of high priority in the future programming period in order to ensure better cost-effectiveness. Result indicators should be chosen in the light of measurability but also intangible results should be acknowledged as valid results of Interreg programmes.

For some thematic approaches a more **strategic umbrella for future project** implementation would increase the value added of single projects. This can be done for example for natural and cultural heritage projects. The strategic approach should enable a better take up of synergies among projects and among specific objectives. The take up and future utilisation of projects as well as the quality of the project management should be an important element in the choice of projects.

The **externalisation of budget and tasks** should be handled with care in order to keep the added value of Interreg projects among the key stakeholders and thus assure sustainability of project results.





## 1 Introduction

The Managing Authority (MA) of the Interreg V-A AT-HU Programme, represented by Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH, contracted M&E Factory GmbH, Rosinak and Partner and MultiContact Consulting with the "Evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programme" on 17 June 2019.

The evaluation of the programme follows the requirements of European Regulation 1303/2013 Article 56, according to which the MA should carry out an evaluation addressing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme.

This report addresses the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme. The evaluation is based on the questions outlined by the MA and defined in detail by the evaluation team.

The evaluation of the cooperation programme is vital for understanding **whether** and **how** the programme has achieved its specific objectives. However, the programme is still in a stage where only a small number of projects have been finalised. The impact evaluation was thus based on assumptions and lessons learned from the previous programming period. The evaluation report in hand should support the programme management in the implementation of the current programme and the preparation of the future programming period. The level of insight of an external evaluator is less detailed than from the programme management, but it offers a different perspective that should be seen not as a criticism but as a useful insight and input for discussion.

### 1.1 Background

Interreg V A Austria-Hungary Cooperation Programme is a cross-border cooperation programme under the European Territorial Cooperation objective of the EU cohesion policy 2014-2020 (Interreg AT-HU).

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the budget of Interreg AT-HU amounts to EUR 95 million, out of which EUR 78 million are ERDF.

Interreg AT-HU covers the following geographical areas:

- Nord-, Mittel- and Südburgenland, Wien, Wiener Umland-Südteil, Niederösterreich Süd, Graz and Oststeiermark in Austria; and
- Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala counties in Hungary.

The overall objective of the Interreg AT-HU cross-border cooperation programme within the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy is to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to reduce regional disparities by enhancing regional competitiveness and strengthening economic, social, cultural and ecological contacts in the border region.

Cross-border projects are implemented jointly by Austrian and Hungarian partners. The focus is to strengthen cooperation structures in defined areas that are linked to the fields of activity of EU priorities. As the number of cooperating players is limited, the programme tries to concentrate on areas with sufficient institutions and potential for cooperation.





To address this overall objective the programme is structured along **four priority thematic axes** (PAs), with nine specific objectives addressing four thematic objectives (TOs) and one technical assistance PA:

- PA 1: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (TO3)
  - SO 11 Strengthening regional entrepreneurship, the performance of start-ups and the innovation capacities of SMEs, with a focus on the development of (internationally) competitive products
- PA 2: Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (TO6)
  - SO 21 Improving the protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage through common approaches to sustainable tourism
  - SO 22 Improving the ecological stability and resilience of landscape and ecosystems
  - SO 23 Improving the management and protection of water bodies
- PA 3: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures (TO7)
  - SO 31 Improving cross-border connectivity of regional centres to the TEN-T network
  - SO 32 Enhancing sustainable mobility on the local and regional levels
- PA 4: Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration (TO11)
  - SO 41 Improving institutional cross-border cooperation in order to strengthen the integration
  - SO 42 Strengthening intercultural capacities and labour mobility of the border population by supporting cross-border education initiatives and vocational training
- PA5: Technical assistance
  - SO 51 Implementing the Cooperation Programme in a sound and effective way

### 1.2 Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation is based on a theory-based approach. It is about how projects have contributed to the planned results **effectively**, whether the projects have been implemented **efficiently**, and whether there is an **impact** to be expected from the results. **Conclusions related to the impact are mainly based on assumptions**, since the current programme at the time of the evaluation did not have a critical mass of finished projects on which it is possible to base evaluation statements about quantitative or qualitative data.

The terms of reference provide a thorough set of indicative evaluation questions. The overall aim of the report is to answer the individual evaluation questions properly, identify possible bottlenecks, draw conclusions and formulate practical recommendations.



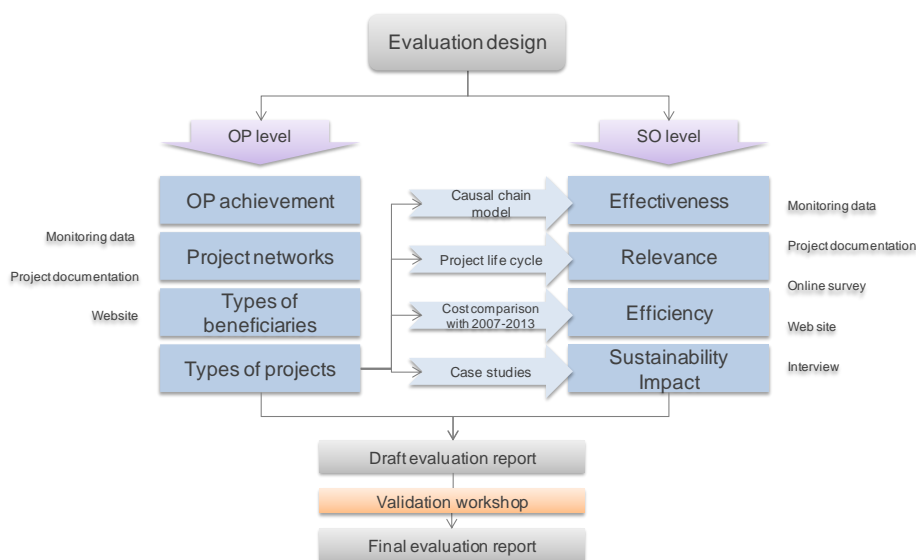


The evaluation process focuses on two levels:

- at the OP level the report focuses on general achievements and the character of the programme;
- at the level of the specific objectives (SOs) the report addresses effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, durability and impact for each specific objective.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the work process of the impact evaluation.

**Figure 1: Project flow chart**



Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

The evaluation follows four steps: structuring, observing, analysing, and judging.

**Structuring:** In the structuring phase the evaluation team focused on the development of the causal chain model for each SO and the evaluation design for the whole programme and each SO.

**Observing:** The data collection follows the evaluation design. The evaluation covers four main data collection methods:

- monitoring data (eMS, internal monitoring data of the programme management);
- screening of the project reports and application forms, annual implementation report and project evaluations;
- online survey covering beneficiaries of the programme periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020;
- interviews with experts to fill gaps and open questions not covered by the above methodologies.







**Analysing:** The analysis phase reflects the content of the different evaluation questions, and the nature of the different SOs.

The first part of the analysis focused on the general programme:

- programme status quo
- success rate of project application
- type of projects
- achievement of objectives and potential utilisation after funding
- quality of the partnership and added value of the cooperation
- efficiency of the projects
- main project networks, programme drivers and partners
- location of project applicants and projects.

The second part of the analysis focuses on each SO along the evaluation criteria (Table 1).

**Table 1: Overview of the evaluation per SO**

Evaluation criteria	Judgment criteria	Sources
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is sufficient interest in addressing the specific objectives</li> <li>• The programme is important for the target groups and addresses their needs</li> <li>• The programme corresponds with Austrian and Hungarian policies as well as EU overarching policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of beneficiary</li> <li>• Project budget</li> <li>• Absorption rate per SO</li> <li>• Survey results (survey September 2019)</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The projects supported by the programme address the initially defined needs and SOs</li> <li>• All aspects of the SOs have been addressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Output indicators</li> <li>• Project results compared to SO objectives</li> <li>• Achievement of results</li> <li>• Achievement of target groups</li> <li>• SO causal chain model</li> <li>• Survey results (survey September 2019)</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The projects made a difference in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Result indicator achievement</li> <li>• Evaluation indicator achievements</li> </ul>
Durability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The projects have been integrated into the regional/local structures</li> <li>• The projects have been adopted by local stakeholders</li> <li>• Cross-border stakeholders are committed to run the projects after the funding ends</li> <li>• The project has generated follow-up activities not funded by the programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results (survey September 2019)</li> <li>• Comparison with 2007-2013 projects and their survival rate after funding ended</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The costs of the projects were reasonable compared to market prices</li> <li>• The benefits of the projects can be estimated as proportional or superior compared to the costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs per type of activity</li> </ul>

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019





Finally, for in-depth analysis of the impact or potential impact of the programme, case studies have been conducted for selected projects.

**Judging:** The analysis is followed by answering the evaluation questions and drawing conclusions. The draft evaluation report in hand has been validated by the bilateral working group of the programme. The results of the validation are incorporated in the report.

**The evaluation is based on the data available in September 2019.**

### 1.3 Structure of the report

The structure of the report is:

- introduction, including an outline of the methodology (section 1);
- summary of the analysis at OP level (section 2);
- findings based on the analysis at SO level (section 3);
- conclusions relevant for the post 2020 programming period (section 4);
- recommendations, in the form of a table considering the current programming period and the next one (section 5);
- The annexes contain the background analysis, including network analysis, impact models, overview of the projects' SOs, and the results of the online survey.





## 2 Summary of the analysis at OP level

The evaluation focuses on the status quo of the programme, the type of beneficiaries and projects contracted at the time of the evaluation (September 2019), the achievement of objectives, durability and added value, and the perceptions gained from the online survey about the quality of cooperation and obstacles to cooperation.

At the time of the evaluation (September 2019), 93% of the budget was contracted (Table 2) and additional projects are in the process of contracting.

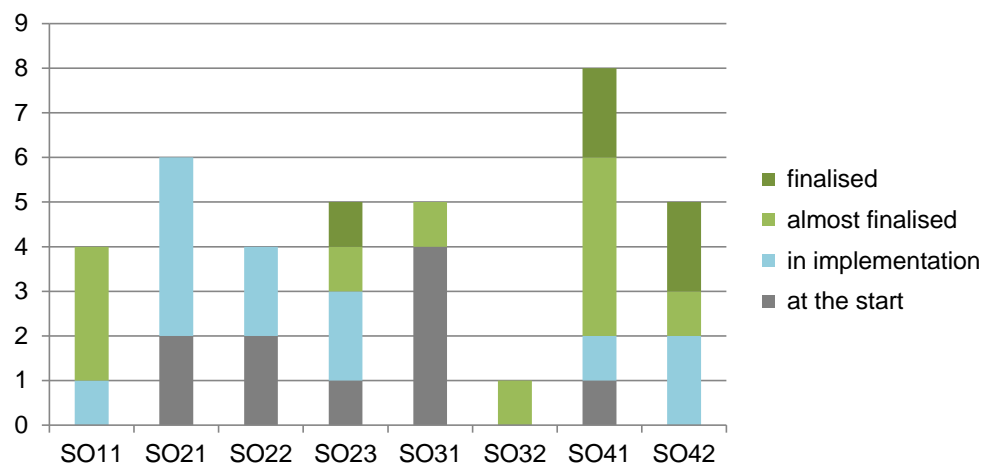
**Table 2: Status of approvals September 2019**

PO	SO	Programme ERDF budget	Total ERDF of contracted and approved projects	Total CA certified expenditure (ERDF)	Remaining ERDF at programme level	Absorption rate
1	11	6,979,350.00	5,002,372.27	1,938,203.72	1,976,977.73	72%
2	21	7,619,400.00	6,875,345.91	1,078,511.26	744,054.09	90%
	22	5,690,750.00	4,887,596.72	821,433.31	803,153.28	86%
	23	11,381,500.00	11,651,047.47	685,534.43	-269,547.47	102%
3	31	20,071,250.00	19,842,561.99	3,903,026.86	228,688.01	99%
	32	3,376,000.00	3,478,289.63	312,021.02	-102,289.63	103%
4	41	18,998,758.20	8,064,231.69	2,100,798.37	2,138,673.88	89%
	42		8,795,852.64	1,608,114.33		
Total		<b>74,117,008.20</b>	<b>68,597,298.31</b>	<b>12,447,643.30</b>	<b>5,519,709.89</b>	

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat, 10.10.2019

The programme start was rather late, for several reasons mentioned in the 2019 process evaluation. The project implementation is thus not yet at an advanced stage (Figure 2). Only 29% of the projects are at the final stage, and 13% are finished.

**Figure 2: Status quo of project implementation**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019





*Almost finalised: the planned finalisation of the project is envisaged for 2019.*

Regarding the success of project applications, there are no rejected projects in priority 3, where most of the projects were predefined and straightforward. Apart from priority 3, the average share of rejected projects was 33%, with the lowest share (14%) found under SO 2.3 (Table 3).

The success rate of projects might suggest that those SOs with more tangible objectives have less ambiguity in addressing these objectives compared to those projects where the objectives are rather vague. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the projects in priority 3 were rather predefined, the likelihood of any application failing was deduced from the beginning.

**Table 3: Projects compared to applications**

SO	Number of approved (not yet contracted) projects	Number of contracted projects	Number of applications rejected	Total applications	Share of applications rejected
1.1		6 <sup>1</sup>	4	10	40%
2.1		6	3	9	33%
2.2		4	2	6	33%
2.3		6 <sup>2</sup>	1	7	14%
3.1		5	0	5	0%
3.2	1	1	0	2	0%
4.1	2	8	6	16	38%
4.2	1	5	4	10	40%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat, September 2019

Based on the responses of the project survey, and the projects submitted, it can be concluded that the programme objectives are relevant in the region.

### 2.1.1 Types of beneficiaries

According to the evaluation survey, the majority of the final beneficiaries are local and regional governments, followed by SMEs, NGOs and natural persons. This suggests that Interreg projects might not be a tool for SMEs as applicants, but that they very much address services for SMEs (Annex 5, Figure 30). However, the questions of whether these services are sustainable and whether the final intended beneficiaries ultimately get value from the projects cannot be answered.

<sup>1</sup> One newly contracted project: FEMskil

<sup>2</sup> One newly contracted project: AquaPinka





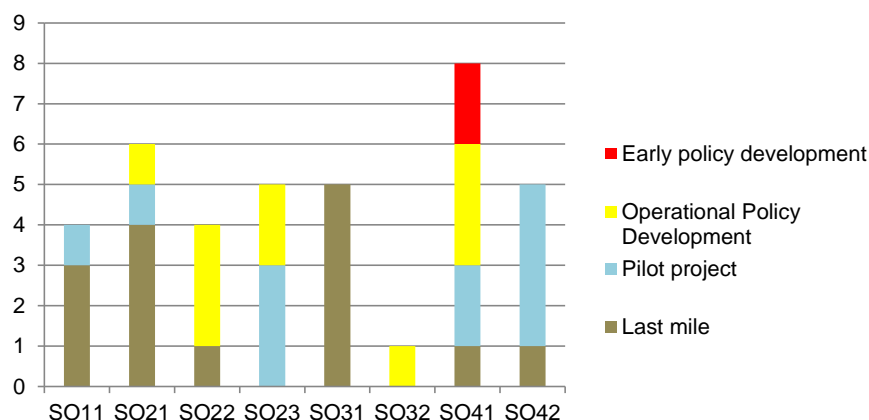
### 2.1.2 Types of projects

The project life cycle model considers the policy development phases within which each project lies. The life cycle model shows four stages a project can contribute to:

- Early Policy Development: e.g. definition of a strategic orientation framework;
- Operational Policy Development: i.e. the formulation of specific policy documents, agreements etc. deriving from strategic papers developed at an earlier stage;
- Pilot Approaches: i.e. testing concepts developed in an earlier phase of Operational Policy Development;
- Last Mile projects: e.g. the definition of a specific training curriculum on a CBC base, closing a specific gap for an identified need.

The majority of projects are either pilot projects or last-mile projects, though some projects incorporate different stages of the life cycle (Figure 3). The programme has a lower share of projects supporting early cooperation developments, policy and strategy development. The highest share of these types of projects is in SO 2.2 and SO 4.1 (Figure 3). For a future programme, not only the SOs but also the type of project for each SO should be considered in the strategy development.

**Figure 3: Types of projects**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019

### 2.1.3 Achievement of programme specific objectives

Out of the 41 projects contracted at the time of the evaluation, most are still at a very early stage. Figure 4 thus shows not only how projects have achieved the programme objectives but if they have the potential to achieve these objectives to a medium, high or very high extent, assuming that all projects contribute to some extent to the programme SOs. The judgment of the level of achievement is based on the following criteria:

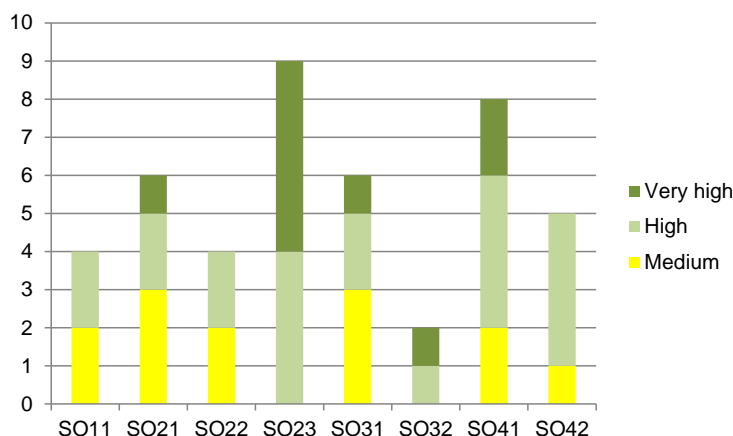
- contribution of the projects to the main content of the SO,
- contribution of the projects to the direct results shown in Annex 2,
- tangible results suggesting that the project results will be durable,
- level to which projects are embedded in institutional structures, enabling take-up of project results after the funding ends,
- direct and indirect contributions to the result indicators.





Table 4 shows the result of the evaluation at the programme level, but does not go into each project in detail.

**Figure 4: Contribution of the projects to the programme specific objectives**



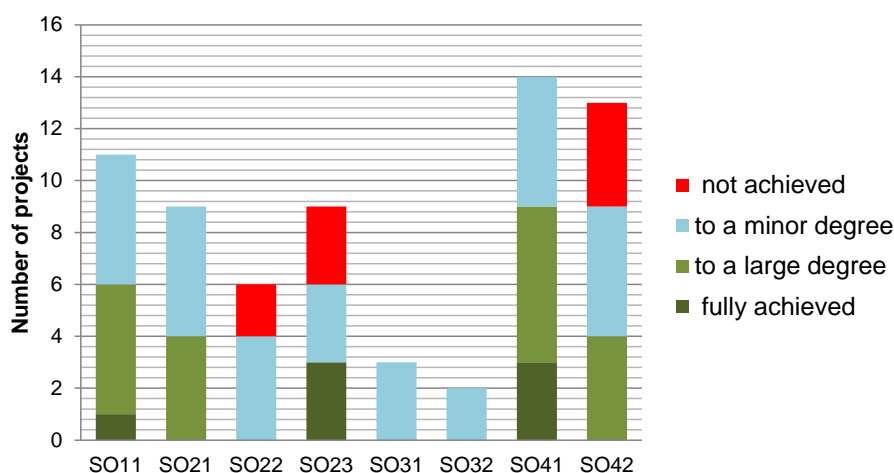
Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019

For the purpose of measuring the programme’s effects, the result indicators (RIs) are of limited value. The RIs are based on the ERDF regulation and mainly address ERDF mainstream programmes. In the programme preparation phase it was already clear that those indicators are not suitable for Interreg programmes.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1.4 Achievement of project objectives

Apart from the specific objectives of the programme as a whole, each project has its own defined objectives (Annex 4). These project objectives are at different stages of achievement. As Figure 5 shows, the highest share of fully achieved project objectives are in SO 2.3 and SO 4.1.

**Figure 5: Achievement of project objectives**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019

<sup>3</sup> MA and JS meeting 28.2.2020.



According to an online survey among project beneficiaries 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, respondents are generally **satisfied with their achievements**. 48% of the Austrian respondents for 2007-2013 said they achieved more than they expected, while Hungarians were more moderate in their perception of project achievements (Annex 5, Figure 31).

### 2.1.5 Durability of project results

The evaluation provides a broad overview of the potential utilisation of project results after the project ends.

The utilisation of each project after the funding ceases is addressed by the project evaluation. Each applicant had to describe how they would ensure the uptake of the project results. At the current stage, however, with a large proportion of unfinished projects the durability of the project results is not clearly visible. Based on the project progress reports and the descriptions in the applications, the **lowest share** of projects **with a clear uptake strategy** is in SOs 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2 (Figure 6). The project screening reveals that projects with a high share of investment have a higher potential for their results to be utilised after funding ends. The following elements have been considered as key when assessing the likeliness that project results will be applied after the funding ends:

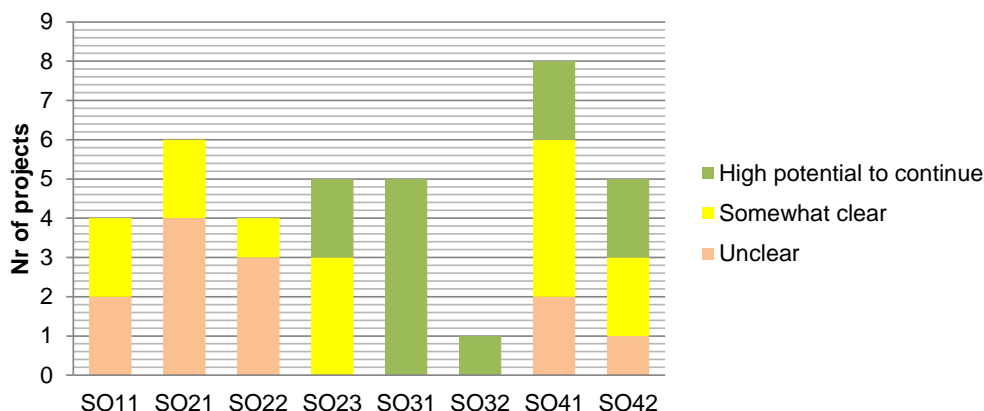
- tangible results which are taken up by 'enabler' organisations (e.g. InnoWood),
- projects specifically addressing the future take-up of the results (REBE II),
- 'enabler' organisations involved in the project partnership (e.g. RaabSTAT, Raab Flood 4cast),
- legislative changes or agreements (e.g. Joint Ambrosia Action, Wrestling Without Borders),
- projects embedded in existing systems or structures (e.g. Vogelwarte Madárvárta),
- projects in line with needs and policy objectives with higher priority (e.g. Joint Ambrosia Action),
- projects with a high share of infrastructure investments (e.g. SEDDON II).

Based on these criteria, 18 out of 41 projects have planned or actually incorporated their processes and results in regional or local structures, giving higher confidence that their results will be utilised after the project funding ends. Finally, six projects have achieved or plan to achieve joint agreements or legislative changes (VELOREGIO, Fairwork, Joint Ambrosia Action, CODES AT-HU, Wrestling Without Borders, WomEn-Puls). Another three projects (RaabSTAT, REBEN, PLATFORM) are anchored in the AT-HU water commission.





**Figure 6: Potential of projects to be utilised after funding ends**

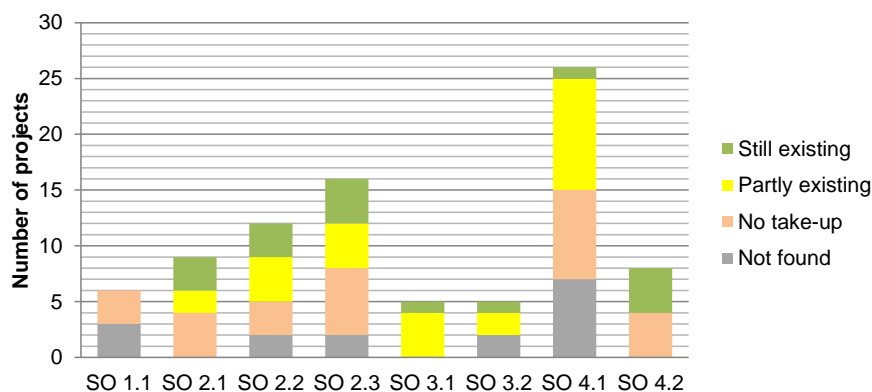


Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019

Due to the lack of finished projects, the evaluation also looked at projects from the 2007-2013 programming period. Project beneficiaries involved in 2007-2013 programming period took part in the online survey of this evaluation, and the projects documents were screened by the evaluation team. Most of the survey respondents stated that their projects are now **permanently integrated in beneficiary organisations** or regional/local authorities. Another quarter of the respondents said they had planned measures to ensure **continuity** after the funding ends (Annex 5, Figure 34).

However, a quick assessment of the projects from the 2007-2013 programming period showed that despite the beneficiaries' optimism, more than half of the projects did not survive the end of the project funding (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Durability of projects 2007-2013**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on project reports eMS, September 2019

The durability of project implementation depends not only on the management but also on **external influences**. Quite a few respondents stated in the online survey that changes in legislation, or political interference, had influenced the implementation of their projects (Annex 5, Figure 35).

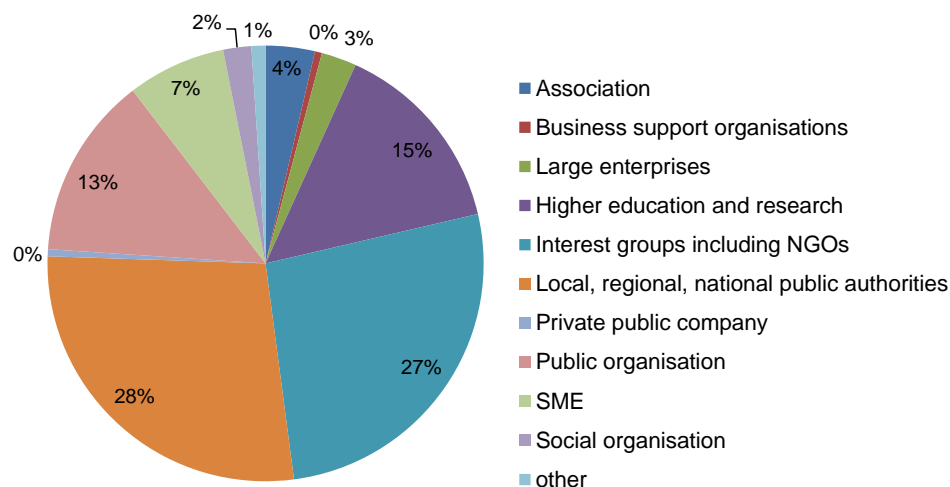




### 2.1.6 Partnership

The partnership breakdown within projects is dominated by public administrations, followed by interest groups and NGOs (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Types of partners**



Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat, September 2019

The **cooperation among partners** was generally perceived as very good, though some respondents have highlighted problems, especially in the programming period 2014-2020 (Annex 5, Figure 32).

The perception of the **quality of the partnership** has changed slightly between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. In the previous programming period, both the Hungarian and the Austrian respondents were very optimistic (HU 93% and AT 91% rated partnership quality as “very good” or “good”). In the 2014-2020 programming period, however, the share of respondents noting “some issues” or “many problems” increased in both countries (HU 19%, AT 16%) (Table 4).

**Table 4: Quality of the partnership**

	2007-13		2014-20	
	AT	HU	AT	HU
Very good	69%	33%	55%	47%
Good	22%	59%	29%	34%
Some issues	9%	4%	14%	16%
Very problematic	0%	4%	2%	3%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Online survey, September 2019 – 74 AT responses, 59 HU responses

According to the respondents, the most important **factors for successful cooperation** in a project start with a common understanding of the topic, followed by a good project concept and good management. All three aspects are covered during the project preparation phase (Annex 5, Figure 33).





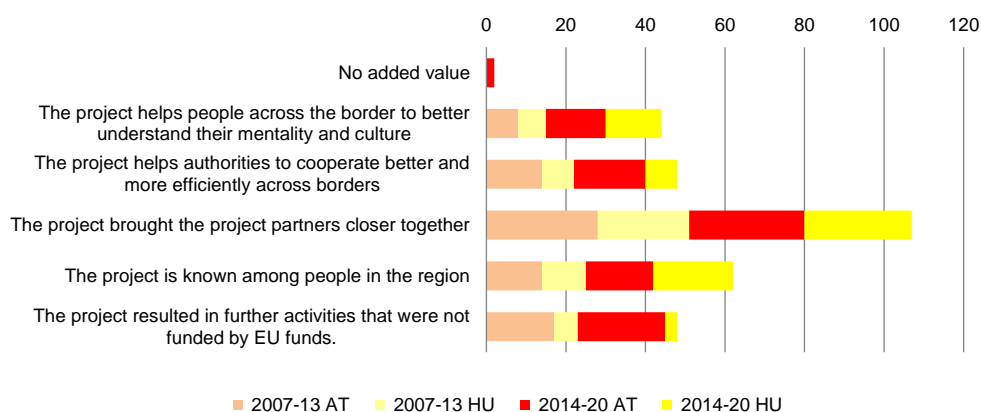
As **success factors for a positive relationship** between partners, respondents mainly named the common understanding of the topic, a good project concept and management, followed by a long-lasting relationship (Annex 5, Figure 36). However, language is perceived as an issue in cross-border cooperation (Annex 5, Figure 37).

90% of the Austrian and 85% of the Hungarian respondents stated that the projects in 2007-2013 would not have been realised without funding. In the 2014-2020 programming period, 79% of the Austrian and 88% of the Hungarian respondents said they would not have realised the project without funding.

The vast majority of respondents consider that cross-border cooperation brings **added value** to projects, especially in terms of bringing people together (Figure 9). In general, cross-border cooperation was valued in terms of getting to know each other. In specific fields such as river management, however, cross-border cooperation was considered essential for better risk management in the future.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, awareness of cross-border natural assets is increasing thanks to the project activities. Respondents said cross-border projects helped to:

- initiate friendships,
- improve understanding of the economic situation in Hungary, and
- improve understanding of the culture and issues in the other country.

**Figure 9: Added value of cooperation projects**



Source: Interreg AT-HU Online survey, September 2019– 182 AT responses, 127 HU responses

Although the Interreg process is considered to be time-consuming and bureaucratic (process evaluation Interreg AT-HU), 73% (2007-2013 84%) of the Austrian and 94% (2007-2013 92%) of the Hungarian respondents stated that they **will apply again** in this programme.

89% of the Hungarian and 62% of the Austrian respondents stated that they are still involved in **follow-up activities** for projects from the previous programming period. Finally, 70% (2014-2020 100%) of the Hungarian and 81% (2014-2020 92%) of the Austria respondents consider the Interreg AT-HU programme to be important for better cross-border cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung, Wasserwirtschaftliches Planungsorgan, 23.10





### 2.1.7 Efficiency

The average project budget in 2014-2020 is EUR 2.3 million including SO 3.1, and EUR 1.5 million without SO 3.1, while the average project budget in 2007-2013 was around EUR 1 million. Compared to the previous period, the average budget per partner has almost doubled, while the number of partners has decreased by more than half. Projects are larger, with more partners per project, but there is a considerably lower total number of projects.

**Table 5: Comparison of average project budget**

	2007-2013	2014-2010	Increase
<b>Number of projects</b>	87	49	-44%
<b>Number of partners</b>	362	196	-46%
<b>Total average budget per partner</b>	EUR 272,239.62	EUR 524,084.05	192%
<b>ERDF average budget per partner</b>	EUR 209,965.03	EUR 366,767.96	175%

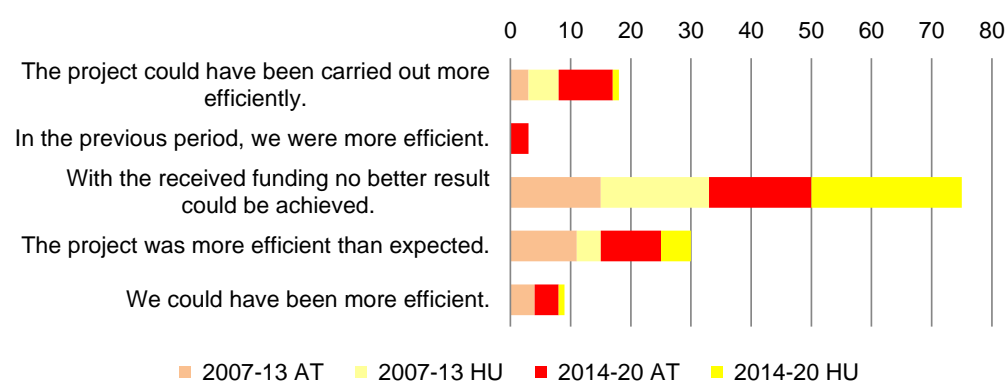
Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat, March 2020

Note: including technical assistance; figures are based on ex-ante budgets and may change after finalisation of the projects.

The **larger project budget** is not justified in all cases. A detailed analysis is done for each SO (section 3).

The online survey revealed that the majority of the respondents consider the project implementation to be efficient (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Perceived efficiency of projects**



Source: Interreg AT-HU Online survey, September 2019: 76 AT responses, 59 HU responses





However all respondents stated that the **bureaucracy** dramatically hampers the success of the projects. Other aspects mentioned by respondents are:

- One respondent mentioned the perception of a certain political involvement in the thematic focus of the projects during the application process.
- Another respondent stated: *The added value and meaningfulness of the Interreg programmes in their current form must be critically examined. On the one hand there is a thematic narrowing; on the other hand, Interreg is not proven to be an efficient use of taxpayers' money.*
- Language barriers hamper the project implementation process.
- The regional awareness of the public is low and should be improved.
- The results of the projects should be better maintained.

### 2.1.8 Partners and project location

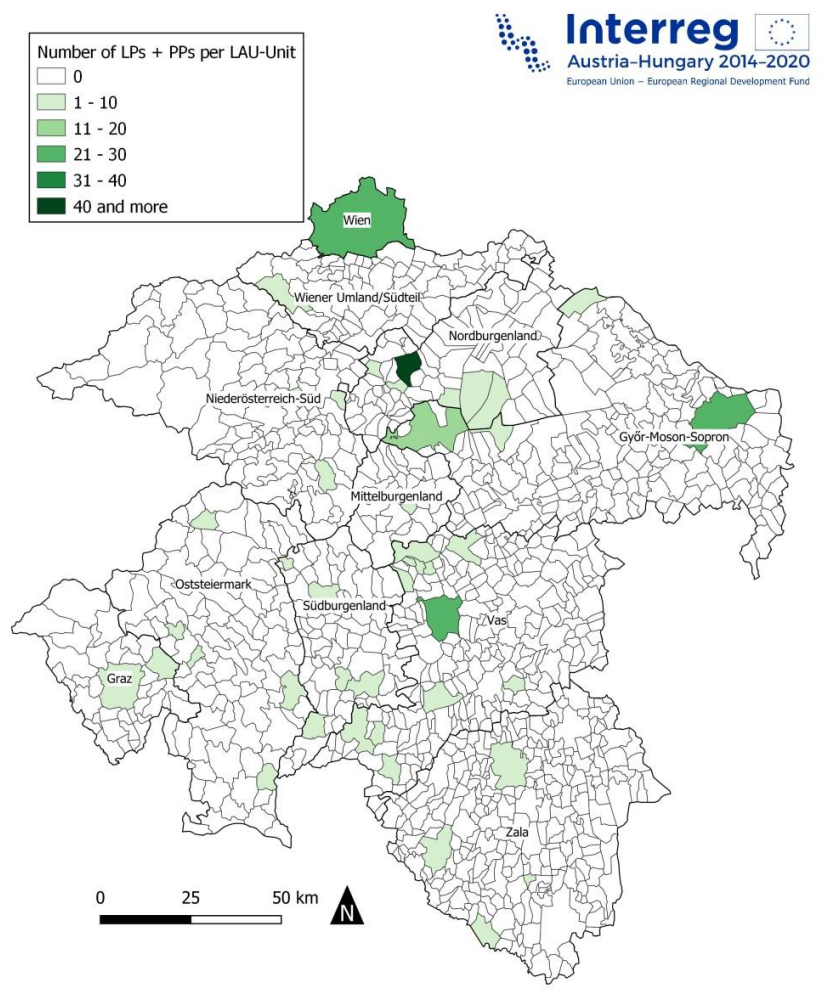
Based on the network analysis the main partner of the largest network is the Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung. This beneficiary is the **driver of the programme**, with 18 projects and several partners. Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH plays another significant role in this hub: it participates in eight projects and has the most active relations with Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt. The second-largest network is significantly smaller; its main beneficiary is Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland (Annex 1, Figure 21).

Figure 11 shows the distribution of project partners and the locations of projects. The **most active regions** are Vienna, Eisenstadt, Sopron, Győr and Szombathely. Zala, Styria and the western part of the programme region are less well served with projects.

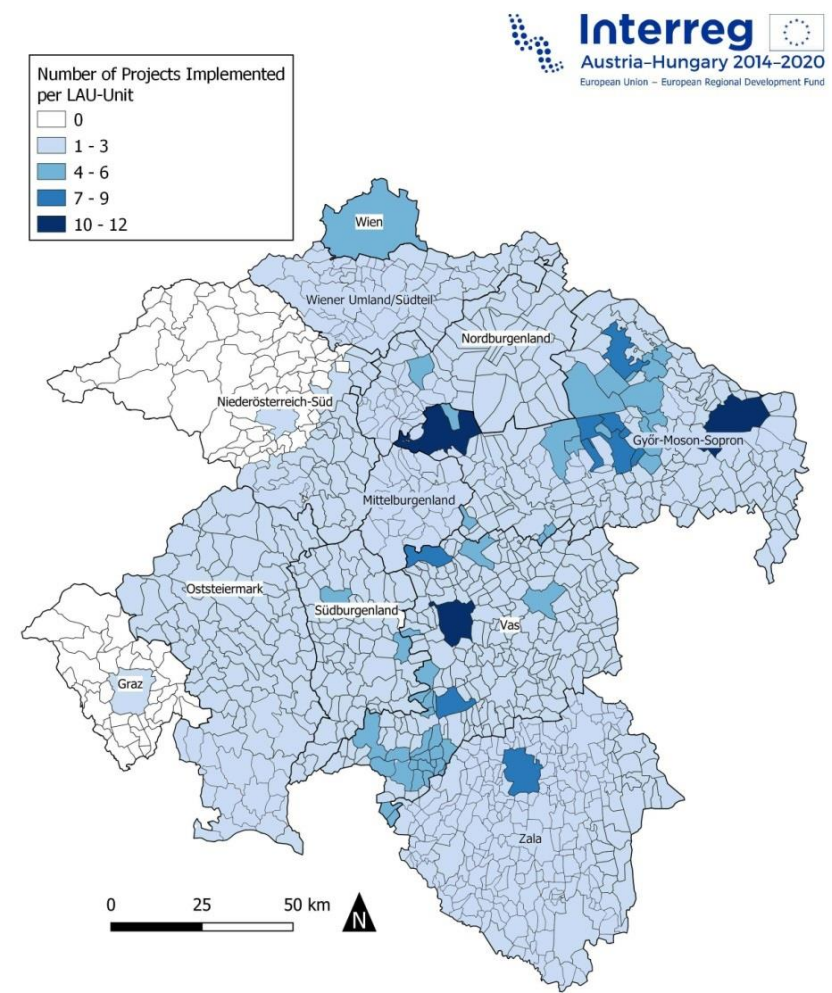




Figure 11: Distribution of project partners and project locations



Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat, September 2019



Source: M&E Factory et al based on project application forms and progress reports, September 2019





### 3 Findings and conclusions per specific objective

The following section forms the main part of the evaluation report. It contains all the relevant evaluation questions at the level of the specific objectives, and addresses relevance, effectiveness, durability, impact and efficiency. All answers are linked to a thorough background analysis. Tables of data justifying the conclusions are provided in the respective Annexes. There are four subsections:

**Effectiveness and durability** of the projects in each SO, answering the main evaluation questions with findings and conclusions.

**Impact** and whether projects have contributed to the result indicators and SOs.

**Strategic approach** of the SO and the coherence of the intervention logic.

**Efficiency** related to types of activities. An assessment of costs in relation to outputs has been prepared, but due to the differences between projects a comparison is almost impossible and would lead to the wrong conclusions. Thus the conclusions based on the efficiency analysis should be seen as an input for the programme management but should under no circumstances replace any audit trails.

#### 3.1 Specific objective 1.1

##### 3.1.1 Evaluation question 1.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 1: How far have the projects under this priority axis contributed to the survival rate of enterprises after three years?**

- Sub-evaluation question 1.a: Have Hungarian counties gained best practices and know-how from cooperating with Austria?
- Sub-evaluation question 1.b: Have clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks been linked to SMEs?
- Sub-evaluation question 1.c: Has the individual capacity of SMEs to cooperate been enhanced?
- Sub-evaluation question 1.d: Have joint measures with intermediate organisations been implemented?
- Sub-evaluation question 1.e: Have universities and research institutions been embedded in the innovation system?

**Table 6: Elements of the intervention logic for SO 1.1**

<b>SO</b>	<b>1.1</b>	Strengthening regional entrepreneurship, the performance of start-ups and the innovation capacities of SMEs with a focus on the development of (internationally) competitive products
<b>TO</b>	<b>3</b>	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
<b>IP</b>	<b>3d</b>	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation process

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018





**Findings**

At the time of the evaluation, **five projects** with 38 project partners had been contracted, of which four projects were in an advanced state of implementation (Table 7). In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 1.1 was 72%.<sup>5</sup>

According to the project life cycle model in SO 1.1, four pilot projects, two projects between pilot and last mile, and one last mile project were funded. Projects supported:

- increasing the number of women in technical jobs (femcoop PLUS),
- promoting innovation in the wood sector (InnoWood),
- establishing cross-border network (REGIONET Competitive)
- establishing a start-up cross-border community (SMART-UP).

**Table 7: Projects in SO 1.1**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget (EUR)	Type of project
femcoop PLUS	ATHU005	01.05.2016	31.10.2019	Contracted	684,315.89	Pilot Last mile
REGIONET Competitive	ATHU007	01.02.2017	31.07.2019	Contracted	1,699,405.00	Last mile
InnoWood	ATHU059	01.05.2017	31.10.2019	Contracted	840,889.39	Pilot
SMART-UP	ATHU052	01.01.2018	30.06.2020	Contracted	886,011.33	Pilot Last mile
ROMABIZ	ATHU104	07.08.2019	28.02.2021	Contracted	552,651.59	Pilot
FEMskill	ATHU127	01.01.2020	31.12.2021	Start-up	339,099.00	Pilot
IMPROVE!		01.01.2020	30.06.2022	Eligible	654,922.87	Pilot
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>4,663,273.20</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>5,657,295.07</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

All projects have a clear cross-border approach.

Beneficiaries

In SO 1.1 currently 38 project partners are involved in five projects<sup>6</sup> (Table 8). The main **types of beneficiaries** in SO 1.1 are business support organisations, followed by higher education and research. SMEs, although the main target group, are involved only to a limited extent.

<sup>5</sup> The absorption rate is the ERDF budget for contracted and approved projects as a percentage of the available funding.

<sup>6</sup> Excluding FEMskill and IMRPOVE!



Two projects (InnoWood, femcoop PLUS) out of the four projects in SO 1.1 **involved SMEs** directly (5 SMEs with only one in HU) in the project partnership. Three out of four contracted projects involve **intermediate organisations** (REGIONET Competitive, femcoop PLUS, SMART-UP). Three out of four contracted projects **involve university and research institutions** (InnoWood, femcoop PLUS, SMART-UP). Out of the four projects considered in this evaluation, one involved a Hungarian university (SMART-UP).

**Table 8: Types of beneficiaries in SO 1.1**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Interest groups including NGOs	17
Higher education and research	8
Enterprises, excluding SME	5
Public organisations	3
Business support organisations	2
Local, regional, national public authorities	2
Sectoral agencies	1
Total	38

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18072019

Output indicators

In terms of SME involvement in cooperation projects, 85% of the programme output target value has been achieved. Only two projects contributed to the OI target value (InnoWood and femcoop PLUS).

150% of the programme output target for the involvement of intermediate organisations in cooperation projects has been achieved. Only two projects contributed to the OI target (InnoWood and femcoop PLUS).

**Table 9: Output indicators for SO 1.1**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>7</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>8</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 11	SMEs involved in cooperation projects	100	85	182	47%	85%
OI 12	Intermediary organisations involved in cooperation projects	8	12	28	43%	150%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Output Indicator-18 07 2019

<sup>7</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>8</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019





Only some of the cross-border topics mentioned in the programme are addressed and achieved by the projects. Annex 3, Table 65 shows gaps, especially in administrative and structural improvements to support the SO. Additionally, two projects directly address innovation, while three out of four projects provide training, capacity building and networking as their main activities. The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects:

- capacity building measures (4 projects),
- Hungarian counties gain best practices and know-how (3 projects),
- joint market building (1 project),
- existing R&D and innovation potential will be better utilised (1 project),
- SMEs involved in cooperation projects (4 projects),
- intermediate organisations involved in cooperation projects (1 project),
- enhanced innovation capacity (2 projects),
- joint sale systems (1 project),
- enhancing regional entrepreneurship (1 project).

According to the project descriptions, measures and effects that could have been better addressed are:

- joint research activities,
- improved products, services or supply chains,
- better access to research results and funds for innovation,
- cross-border linkages among research and innovation.

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- innovation and product development (InnoWood),
- service package for improved recruitment (femcoop PLUS),
- platform for start-ups and entrepreneurs (Smart-Up).

### Online survey

The online survey relating to specific objectives was addressed by only a small number of respondents. In total, 5 HU and 10 AT responses addressed these questions for the 2014-2020 programme. This corresponds with the low number of projects (5 projects in the implementation phase). The online survey results indicate that 2014-2020 projects mainly contributed to network development and better cooperation, rather than economically measurable results. HU respondents were more positive about gaining best practices and know-how. 80% of the HU respondents and 100% of the AT respondents reported the establishment of networks across sectors. For a third of the respondents the projects achieved tangible results such as joint research projects or SME support, but only a quarter or less achieved the introduction of product or process innovations. In total, three respondents claimed to have had some problems in the cooperation partnership.

Compared to the results from the 2007-2013 programming period there are no significant differences in the perceptions. This leads to the assumption that the types of projects were similar and had similar results (Annex 5, Figure 38 to Figure 41).





Durability

Due to the fact that the projects in the programming period 2014-2020 are not finalised, their impacts cannot be assessed. Looking into similar projects in Action field 1.1. of the 2007-2013 programming period, however, shows that projects addressing SME networks no longer seem to exist, and the impact of those previous projects is not clearly visible. In contrast, comparison with thematically more focused projects on health cooperation and natural park networks shows signs that their cooperation activities continued to exist after funding ended.

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 1.1

**Table 10: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 1.1**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of project budget per SO	Reference
Have Hungarian counties gained best practices and know-how from cooperating with Austria?	Based on the application forms, three projects addressed the specific aim of improving best practice and know-how in Hungary. Two of the projects (REGIONET Competitive and InnoWood) have finalised the tasks addressing the aim. InnoWood is the only project so far to have achieved enhanced innovation capacity.	73%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 65
	The InnoWood project focuses directly on know-how transfer and best practice learning in Hungary.	18%	Case study InnoWood
	Five respondents to the questionnaire partly or fully agreed that they gained best practices from cooperation. Nevertheless the types of projects do not show enough evidence to conclude that all projects in SO 1.1 contributed to a substantial gain in best practices on the Hungarian side.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 38, Figure 39, Figure 40, Figure 41
Have clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks been linked to SMEs?	Only one project links clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks (InnoWood).	18%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 65
Has the individual capacity of SMEs to cooperate been enhanced?	85% of the programme output target for SME involvement in cooperation projects has been achieved. Only two projects contributed to the OI target (InnoWood and femcoop PLUS).	33%	eMS OI per project table JS (July 2019)
	Two (InnoWood, femcoop PLUS) out of the four projects in SO 1.1 involved SMEs directly (5 SMEs <sup>9</sup> with only one in HU) in the project partnership.	33%	Application forms
Have joint measures with intermediate organisations been implemented?	Four contracted projects involve intermediate organisations (InnoWood, REGIONET Competitive, femcoop PLUS, SMART-UP).	88%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 65

<sup>9</sup> Effix-Marketing Kft., Holzcluster Steiermark GmbH, Innovation Region Styria GmbH, Weizer Energie- Innovations- Zentrum GmbH., NÖ Forschungs- und Bildungsges. m.b.H. (NFB).



Sub-question	Findings	Share of project budget per SO	Reference
	150% of the programme output target regarding the intermediate organisations' involvement in cooperation projects has been achieved. Only two projects contributed to the OI target (InnoWood and femcoop PLUS).	33%	eMS OI per project table JS (July 2019)
Have universities and research institutions been embedded in the innovation system?	Three out of four contracted projects involve university and research institutions (InnoWood, femcoop PLUS, SMART-UP)	52%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 65
	Out of the four projects considered in this evaluation, one involved a Hungarian university (SMART-UP).	19%	Project partner table JS (July 2019)

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

### Conclusions

#### Have Hungarian counties gained best practices and know-how from cooperating with Austria?

Based on the application forms, three projects addressed the specific aim of improving best practice and know-how in Hungary. Two of the projects (REGIONET Competitive and InnoWood) have finalised the tasks addressing this aim. InnoWood is the only project so far that has achieved enhanced **innovation capacity**. InnoWood focuses directly on **know-how transfer and best practice learning in Hungary**.

The projects have the potential to achieve intangible objectives such as improved cooperation and trust. Those assets should characterise the nature of Interreg projects, but are difficult to measure at the programme level. The durability of such assets is only ensured if the project is sufficiently embedded in an organisational structure.

#### Have clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks been linked to SMEs?

Only one project (InnoWood) links clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks. Although services and support for SMEs and entrepreneurs are manifold and broad, the value added by additional platforms is not always evident. Synergies with existing platforms are not sufficiently tackled.

According to a recent European Commission study, the main issues for start-ups and entrepreneurs in central Europe relate to bureaucracy, lack of seed money and lack of access to research and innovation.<sup>10</sup> Interreg might not be the right tool to tackle these border obstacles, and a future Interreg programme should reconsider how to address PO 1.

<sup>10</sup> EC DG Regio, Overcoming obstacles in border regions, April 2016





**Has the individual capacity of SMEs to cooperate been enhanced?**

The SMEs directly involved are educational institutions, marketing companies, and one cluster organisation. Capacity enhancement in SMEs seems to be established in the InnoWood and femcoop PLUS projects through training and capacity building. The long-term effect of this training depends on the individual participants and the final beneficiaries. Past projects showed that in many cases the commitment of partners and beneficiaries ends with the funding. If the programme is to aim for sustainable results, projects need to show how they will ensure the take-up of project results after the funding ends.

**Have joint measures with intermediate organisations been implemented?**

Projects address joint measures with intermediate organisations. Based on the application forms, only one project (InnoWood) **links clusters, innovation centres and regional innovation networks.**

The involvement of intermediary organisations is very important in order to ensure take-up of the project results. However, those organisations must make sure they incorporate the project results into their systems. If they do not do this, the knowledge gained does not spread beyond the person originally involved in the project.

**Have universities and research institutions been embedded in the innovation system?**

Universities and research institutions have been embedded in the majority of projects. The involvement of universities is important and should be continued. However, the incorporation of results into the university system needs to be better described in the project applications and thus assessed during the project evaluation.

**3.1.2 Evaluation question 1.2 – impact**

**How far have the projects under this priority axis contributed to the survival rate of enterprises after three years?**

*Findings*

The survival rate of enterprises is addressed by result indicator RI 1.1. According to the monitoring data, the projects have achieved 60% of the target value (Table 11).

**Table 11: Programme result indicators for SO 1.1**

RI		Baseline value	Target value	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 1.1	Survival rate of enterprises after 3 years	66.27%	62%	60.40%	182

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

Due to updated Eurostat figures from the Austrian NUTS3 regions for 'Enterprises newly born in t-3 having survived to t', the values in the 2017 column needed minor corrections compared to the data provided in the previous AIR. Compared to the previous year the tendency in HU is still rising, and in AT the downward tendency seems to have stopped.



**Conclusions**

The **result indicator** ‘survival rate of enterprises after 3 years’ cannot be directly linked to the programme projects. Nevertheless, considering that the answers to the sub-questions contribute to the main evaluation question it can be said that two out of four projects currently in the implementation phase have the potential to **contribute indirectly to the survival rate of enterprises**. This is only an assumption, however, based on the current documentation. None of the projects is at a stage where it would be possible to measure the effect on the survival rate of enterprises after three years.

**3.1.3 Evaluation question 1.3 – strategic approach**

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

**Findings**

**Table 12: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 1.1**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measured results and objectives	When analysing the impact model based on the cooperation programme it can be said that there is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 22).	
	A link between the direct results and the result indicator is too far-fetched. The result indicator value is very much dependent on several factors outside the control of the programme, so the indicator is not a suitable way to measure the impact of the programme.	
Degree of thematic concentration	Two out of the four contracted projects that are in the implementing stage do have a certain degree of thematic concentration (InnoWood, femcoop PLUS). Similar projects in the programming period 2007-2013 show that projects with a more thematic focus showed a higher potential to proceed after funding (Annex 3, Table 65).	
Selected topics	Selected topics are in line with the measures proposed in the programme (Annex 4, Table 80).	
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy between projects in SO 1.1. Projects in SO 1.1 could be better connected through national and/or business support platforms with the same aims.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	According to the border obstacle study from DG Regio, the most pressing problems for SMEs in border regions are administrative burdens and legal barriers. These cannot be tackled by the programme. The disparity between the border region and the Vienna region, as a major focal point of labour and business, could be a topic to address.	
Target groups	The target groups correspond with the SO in aiming to strengthen regional entrepreneurship, the performance of start-ups and the innovation capacities of SMEs, with a focus on developing (internationally) competitive products. However, the score in terms of target group values achieved might not in all cases reflect whether the project succeeded in terms of the target groups addressed. For example, REGIONET Competitive and SMART-UP report a high number of SMEs addressed, but there is no evidence of how many of those SMEs actually benefit from the projects (Annex 3, Table 66).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, cooperation programme, application forms, project reports, websites



**Conclusion**

The strategic approach of SO 1.1 is very broad. The measures do not seem to reach the actual needs of SMEs. Currently the specific objective opens up a wide range of topics, but it is questionable whether in the frame of Interreg those topics have any impact on the economic situation in the region. The focus of many projects is somewhat unspecific and thus tend to miss out on achieving any long-term effects. Concerns expressed in various studies (among them one from DG Regio<sup>11</sup>) show that the main needs lie in reducing administrative burdens and legal barriers. Those aspects cannot be sufficiently addressed by an Interreg programme, however, but instead need to be tackled at national or regional level.

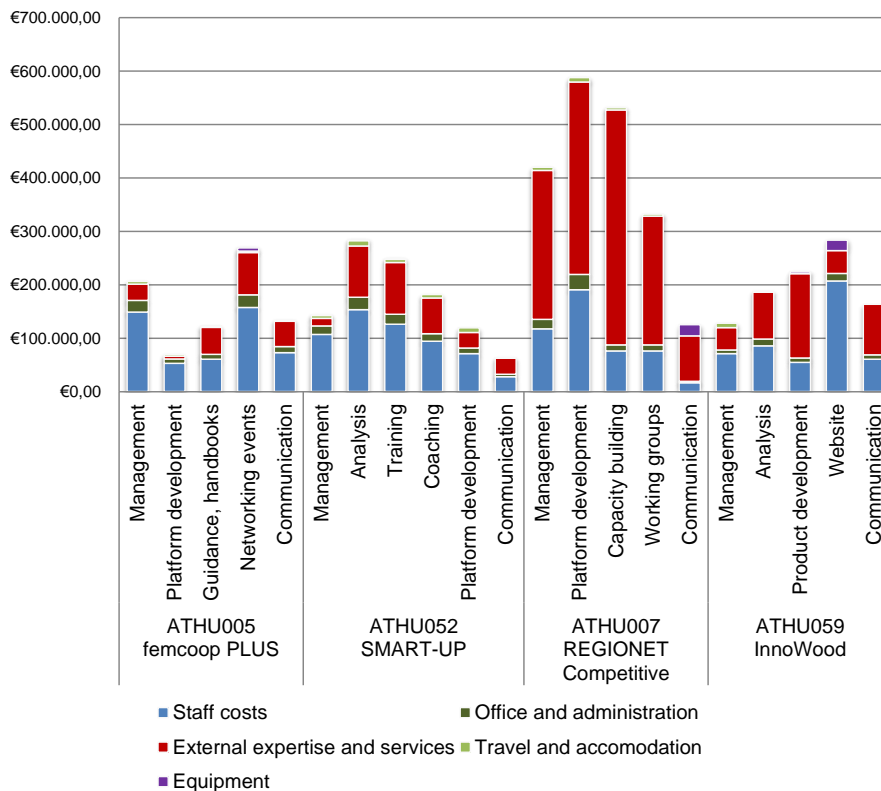
**3.1.4 Evaluation question 1.4 – efficiency**

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

**Findings**

Based on the application forms and project reports, analysis of the budget distribution shows that in all projects external expertise is responsible for the highest share of costs (49% on average, and 71% in the case of REGIONET Competitive), followed by staff costs (42%).

**Figure 12: Budget per activity and project – SO 1.1**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

<sup>11</sup> European Commission DG Regio, Overcoming obstacles in border regions, April 2016.



When it comes to different types of activities, the highest share of the budget is allocated to 'management' (19% on average), followed by 'platform development' (16% on average) (Figure 12). These types of activities mainly relate to searching for partners and establishing a stable network.

### Conclusions

The share of the budget allocated to management should be justified by the amount of work required for the type of project. In other words, management's average budget share of 18% should not be allocated automatically but should be adequately justified in each case. In some projects the management budget seems disproportionately high (e.g. 21% for REGIONET Competitive).

Some of the projects in SO 1.1 do not show any value added and are redundant to existing national or regional efforts. Thus in some projects the high budget is not justified by the outputs or other results. It seems that projects with a comparably lower budget and a higher thematic focus are more efficient in reaching the specific objectives. The large amount of **external expertise is a black box** within the project, about which there is only a little information. In many cases the external costs are generated through product development, networking and analysis. The danger of losing the necessary expertise and knowledge after the project ends is higher when there is a high share of external expertise.

## 3.2 Specific objective 2.1

### 3.2.1 Evaluation question 2.1.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 2.1: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to an increased number of overnight stays in the AT-HU border region?**

- Evaluation question 2.1.a: Has cross-border cooperation and capacity building led to common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism and the development of cross-border destinations?
- Evaluation question 2.1.b: Have common strategies and standards for cross-border model regions been developed?
- Evaluation question 2.1.c: Have coordinated approaches to valorising natural and cultural heritage for green tourism been developed?

**Table 13: Elements of the intervention logic for SO 2.1**

<b>SO</b>	<b>2.1</b>	Improving the protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage through common approaches to sustainable tourism
<b>TO</b>	<b>6</b>	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
<b>IP</b>	<b>6c</b>	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **six projects** with 32 project partners had been contracted, with five at an advanced stage of implementation (Table 14). By September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 2.1 was 89%. According to the SO 2.1 project life cycle model,



the five projects in question covered three pilot projects, one project lying between the pilot and last mile stages, and one operational policy development project with a focus on strategy development. The **aim** of all the projects is to improve the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage in the region.

All the projects address tourism, but under four different aspects (see also Annex 3, Table 81):

- joint strategies and plans for improving existing cross-border offers (3 Határlos);
- awareness raising of natural heritage (PaNaNet+, alpannonia plus, VELOREGIO);
- focus on cultural heritage and architecture specific to the region (Weinidylle AT-HU, ArcheON);
- joint tourism offers (alpannonia plus, VELOREGIO, Weinidylle AT-HU).

**Table 14: Projects in SO 2.1**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget (EUR)	Type of project
VELOREGIO	ATHU064	01.01.2018	31.12.2020	Contracted	1,007,964.00	Last mile
Weinidylle AT-HU	ATHU049	01.01.2018	31.12.2020	Contracted	836,381.63	Pilot Last mile
PaNaNet+	ATHU003	01.05.2016	30.04.2020	Contracted	2,330,555.50	Last mile
3 Határlos	ATHU101	01.05.2019	31.10.2021	Contracted	603,894.91	Operational policy development
ArcheON	ATHU121	01.06.2019	30.11.2021	Contracted	512,040.00	Last mile
alpannonia plus	ATHU020	01.01.2017	30.06.2020	Contracted	1,584,509.83	Last mile
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>6,875,345.87</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>6,875,345.87</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

All projects have a clear cross-border approach.

#### Beneficiaries

In SO 2.1 currently 32 project partners are involved in six projects (Table 15). The main **types of beneficiaries** in SO 2.1 are interest groups, including NGOs, followed by local, regional, and national public authorities. However, as Table 15 shows, the majority of partners are interest groups and public authorities, especially in the projects alpannonia plus and PaNaNet+.

**Table 15: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 2.1**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Interest groups including NGOs	11
Local, regional, and national public authorities	10
Public organisations	5
SMEs	3
Associations	2
Enterprises, excluding SMEs	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>32</i>

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18.07.2019





Output indicators

So far only the **output indicator** 'Common offers' has been 100% achieved, while 'jointly developed strategies' and 'jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites' are significantly below their target values.

The **output indicators** are:

**Table 16: Output indicators for SO 2.1**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>12</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>13</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 2 1	Jointly developed strategies, action plans and capacity building measures	5	1	8	13%	20%
OI 2 2	Jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites	5	1	7	14%	20%
OI 2 3	Common offers	3	3	16	19%	100%

Source: Joint secretariat, Output indicator 18072019

Projects in SO 2.1 are very broad, with a variety of different sub-tasks that contribute to cross-border understanding and support the promotion of cultural and natural heritage. Those activities are in some cases very 'bottom-up' and have a 'people-to-people' character (e.g. PaNaNet+).<sup>14</sup> The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (see also Annex 3, Table 67):

- standards for products and services (1 project),
- know-how transfer and development (3 projects),
- jointly developed strategies (1 project),
- jointly developed action plans (2 projects),
- jointly developed capacity building measures (2 projects),
- common marketing or promotion (5 projects),
- common offers (2 projects),
- preservation, reconstruction, development and utilisation of cultural and natural heritage sites (2 projects),
- jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites (3 projects),
- common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism (2 projects),

<sup>12</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>13</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/PaNaNet-359772347423787>.



- improving the protection, promotion and development of natural heritage (1 project),
- improving the protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage (2 projects).

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- sustainable tourism activities (bike tourism, awareness raising, nature safaris),
- maps of walking trails,
- joint cycle events,
- information points, people-to-people activities.

Online survey

Based on the responses from the online survey, both HU and AT respondents see their contribution to joint tourism activities, joint standards and products, and overnight stays as very high. On the Hungarian side, the perception that the projects achieved a common understanding of green tourism is lower than in Austria, however.

Perceptions of the projects’ contributions to joint tourism development, joint products and understanding were considerably less positive in 2007-2013 than in 2014-2020. Considering the fact that the projects in the current period are all still in the implementation phase, the results from the 2007-2013 questions are likely to be more reliable and realistic than the current ones (Annex 5, Figure 42 to Figure 45).

Durability

The projects in SO 2.1 are all in the middle or even at the beginning of their implementation. Thus it cannot be said what their impact would be, or whether they will yield their intended results. What is equally important is how these projects will continue after the project funding ends. A certain durability of project results is likely thanks to common promotion activities in projects such as PaNaNet+ and alpannonia plus. However, the cross-border character of the projects is yet not visible, with the exception of one (VELOREGIO). None of the other projects foresee any binding cross-border agreements to aid their durability.

Experience from the 2007-2013 programming period has shown that projects with a focus on service promotion and joint service marketing, for example through websites, are not sustainable as long as it is not clear who will continue to maintain the websites.

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 2.1

**Table 17: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 2.1**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Has cross-border cooperation and capacity building led to common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green	Nine respondents to the questionnaire partly or fully agreed that the projects currently ongoing will establish a common understanding of green tourism. The online survey showed a more optimistic response in Austria than in Hungary.		Survey application form Annex 5, Figure 42, Figure 43,



Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
tourism and the development of cross-border destinations?	Answers from the current period are less positive than those from 2007-2013, even though the current projects have a similar character and content, and in some cases are the successors of those from the previous period. For 2007-2013 around 10% (HU) to 20% (AT) of the respondents partly or fully agreed that the projects led to a common understanding of green tourism; while for the 2014-2020 projects 90%(AT) and 80% (HU) partly or fully agreed that the projects contributed to green tourism and 90% (AT) and 100% (HU) partly or fully agreed that projects contributed to joint products and services.		Survey application form Annex 5, Figure 44, Figure 45
	Two projects (PaNaNet+, alpannonia plus) are aiming to establish a common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism, but have not yet reported any achievements.	57%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 67
Have common strategies and standards for cross-border model regions been developed?	20% of the programme output target regarding jointly developed strategies and action plans and capacity building measures has been achieved. Only one project contributes to the OI 21 target (PaNaNet+).	34%	OI per project table JS (July 2019)
	One project aims to establish common strategies (3 Határlos).	21%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 67
	One project is aiming to improve the protection, promotion and development of natural heritage (3 Határlos).	9%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 67
Have coordinated approaches to valorising natural and cultural heritage for green tourism been developed?	20% of the programme output target regarding jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites has been achieved. Only one projects contributes to the OI 22 target (PaNaNet+).	34%	OI per project table JS (July 2019)
	Two projects are aiming to improve the protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage (Weinidylle AT-HU, ArcheON).	19%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 67
	Four projects contribute to the development of cross-border tourism facilities and offers (PaNaNet+, alpannonia plus, Weinidylle AT-HU, VELOREGIO).	83%	Application forms Annex 3, Table 67

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019



### Conclusion

#### **Has cross-border cooperation and capacity building led to common understanding and integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism and the development of cross-border destinations?**

The review of projects from the 2007-2013 programming period led to the conclusion that the effects and potential take-up of the projects are not always visible or long-lasting. However, the results of the survey for the 2014-2020 programming period suggest that the take-up of project results will contribute to **common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism**. In general, all projects address aspects of sustainability.

#### **Have common strategies and standards for cross-border model regions been developed?**

Most of the projects are last mile projects not following a particular strategic approach. The project 3 Határlos is the only one developing a strategy, but its partnership network seems to be very small and this would limit the potential outreach of the project. Projects predominantly address the south of the cross-border region, with the exception of PaNaNet+ which addresses the whole cross-border region. The south of the cross-border region shows the highest need for a harmonised and visible promotion of cultural and natural heritage in this region.

A clear take-up from previous projects, especially if they are implemented by the same consortia, should be ensured.

#### **Have coordinated approaches to valorising natural and cultural heritage for green tourism been developed?**

The projects are quite heterogeneous. Two (PaNaNet+, alpannonia plus) are very broad, with correspondingly limited focus (and high budgets). The valorisation of natural and cultural heritage is clearly the aim of all the projects, although only three have explicitly targeted this. However, it is not clear how these valorisation activities contribute to a wider national/regional strategic approach. Projects will have a measurable effect only if they can ensure strategic embedding of their activities. Apart from this, the projects are not promoted to the same extent as commercial tourism websites. From this it seems that the projects' offers lack visibility.

Another factor not particularly addressed by these projects is the accessibility of cultural and natural heritage by sustainable means of transport. The resulting lower air pollution would help the aim of green tourism.





### 3.2.2 Evaluation question 2.1.2 – impact

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to an increased number of overnight stays in the AT-HU border region?**

#### Findings

The contribution to an increased number of overnight stays is addressed by result indicator RI 2.1. According to the monitoring data, the target was achieved at a level of more than 100%. However it is not clear on what basis the values were reported.

**Table 18: Programme result indicators for SO 2.1**

RI		Baseline value	Target value	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 2.1	Overnight stays	22,809,823	25,000,000	26,063,357	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

Observation: Status: n-1 year

#### Conclusions

The projects **do have the potential to increase overnight stays**, since they all **aim to increase the attraction of the cross-border region**. Although there is no statistical evidence, we assume that the increase in overnight stays differs between Hungary and Austria, with a higher increase in Austria. With some distinctions in certain national parks, or nature parks in Hungary. A **permanent effect of the projects would be ensured by better cooperation among regional tourism agencies** and a **strategic framework**. Currently the promotion and visibility of the projects is considered weak. Although all the projects foresee rising awareness through communication, their visibility online and the quality of the online services are in some cases not sufficiently developed. The projects are also not interlinked, even though they are located in the same region, nor do they link to other existing tourism platforms. Although two of the largest projects are follow-ups to previous projects. Better coordination between projects and with the projects under SO 2.2 would increase the overall impact of the SO.

### 3.2.3 Evaluation question 2.1.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

#### Findings

**Table 19: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 2.1**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	The links between measures and direct results described in the programme are coherent (Annex 2, Figure 23).	
	The result indicator (increase of overnight stays) does not reflect the SO, which aims to improve the protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage through sustainable tourism.	



Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Degree of thematic concentration	Four projects have a thematic focus, while two projects are very broad in their approach.	●
Selected topics	The selected topics are appropriately linked to the SO (Annex 4, Table 81).	●
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy between projects. The projects seem to work separately, without links or an overall framework.	●
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	Projects focus on the southern part of the region, reflecting the needs of the cross-border region.	●
Target groups	The target groups addressed correspond with the aim of promoting cultural and natural heritage for tourism as well as raising awareness for protection. However, the amounts reported in relation to the target group values achieved might not in all cases reflect whether the project has an effect on the target groups addressed. For instance, PaNaNet+ and alpannonia plus say they have addressed large numbers of people (360,000 and 100,000 respectively), for example through newsletters, but there is no evidence for how many of those actually benefit from the projects (Annex 3, Table 68).	●

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

### Conclusions

SO 2.1 lacks a certain strategic approach. It covers a wide range of different activities contributing to tourism in the cross-border area. The projects reflect the possibilities offered by the programme in terms of joint strategy, development of products and standards, and investments to improve existing areas. Synergies between projects are not visible, but could significantly support the valorisation process in the region. Especially in the field of tourism, synergies are considered important and should be used to increase the efficiency of individual activities and ensure better durability for the project results. These synergies include also existing platforms, which could be better integrated and used by the projects.

### 3.2.4 Evaluation question 2.1.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project reports, analysis of the budget allocation shows that external expertise again has the highest budget allocation, with an average of 53% (63% for PaNaNet+ and 78% for ArcheON).

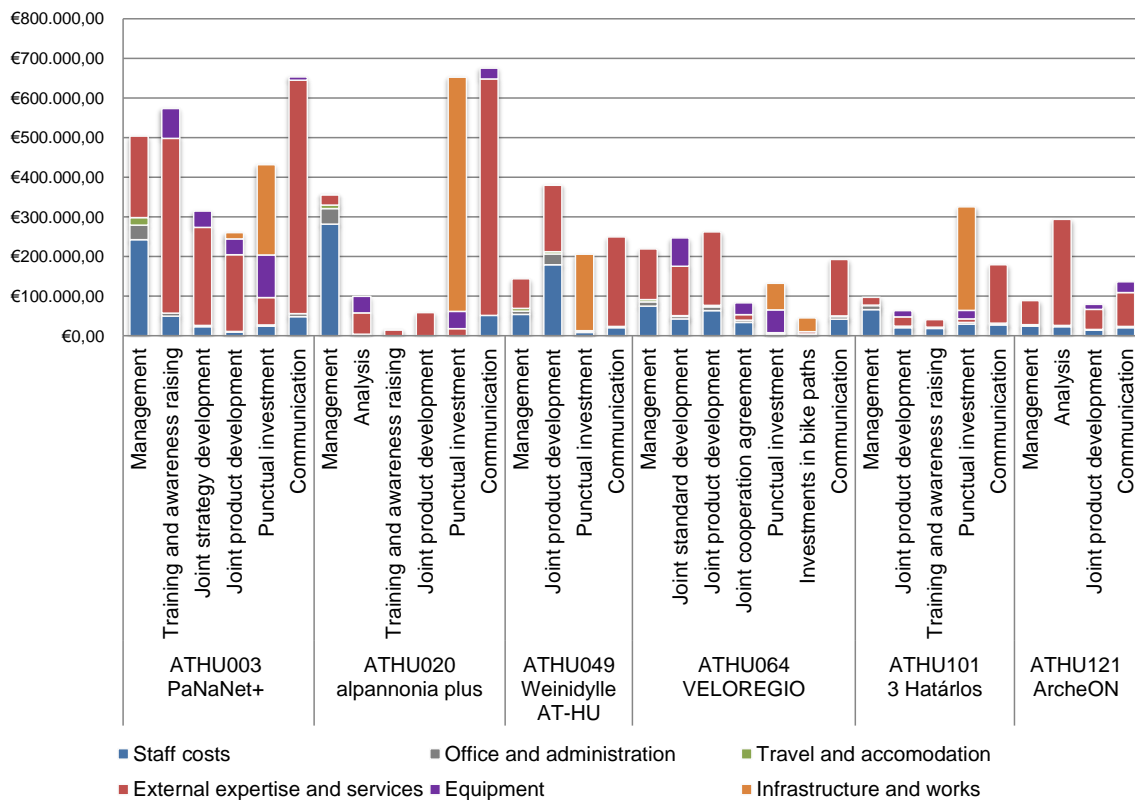




When it comes to different types of activities, the highest budget share is for 'management' (19% average) followed by 'platform development' (16% average). These types of activities mainly relate to establishing a stable network and finding partners. The budget is only justified if the networks and partners are long-lasting and sustainable in terms of both the sizes of partnerships and the types of platforms. PaNaNet+ and alpannonia plus have the highest management costs.

The 'communication' work package accounts for the largest share of spending on external expertise. alpannonia plus has the highest budget share for communication (36%, or EUR 675,357), followed by PaNaNet+ (24%, EUR 653,164) (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Budget per activity and project – SO 2.1



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

Conclusions

Based on the content of the projects, and the achievements compared with the budgets, it seems that projects with **comparatively lower budgets and tighter thematic focus** are **more efficient** in reaching the SOs. The **large amount of external expertise** budgeted in some projects is a black box about which little information is available. In many cases the external costs are for communication activities; these costs might be lower if existing communication channels and platforms were better utilised.

As in SO 1.1, management's share of the budget should be justified by the amount of work required according to the type of project. The share of the 'management' budget should not be automatically the same as for projects with a lower budget.



### 3.3 Specific objective 2.2

#### 3.3.1 Evaluation question 2.2.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 2.2: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to raising the level of conservation in the Natura 2000 sites in the programme region?**

- Evaluation question 2.2.a: Has cross-border cooperation resulted in common approaches and the implementation of joint protection measures which lead to better resilience of the ecosystems on both sides of the border?

**Table 20: Elements of the intervention logic SO 2.2**

<b>SO</b>	<b>2.2</b>	Improving the ecological stability and resilience of landscape and ecosystems
<b>TO</b>	<b>6</b>	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
<b>IP</b>	<b>6d</b>	Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructures

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **four projects** with 13 project partners were in the implementation phase, of which only two are at a mature stage (Table 21). Two out of the four projects are in a very early stage of implementation. In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 2.2 was 84%. According to the project life cycle model in SO 2.2, two operational development projects, one pilot project and one last mile project were funded. Projects support:

- better management and protection of protected areas (AgriNatur AT-HU),
- a better understanding of ecosystems and human influences with research (Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2, WeCon),
- awareness raising to increase environment-friendly behaviour (Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2, NEduNET, WeCon).

**Table 21: Projects in SO 2.2**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget (EUR)	Type of project
Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	ATHU002	01.07.2016	30.06.2020	Contracted	1,893,719.58	Last mile
AgriNatur AT-HU	ATHU050	01.01.2019	28.02.2022	Contracted	1,172,278.73	Operational development
WeCon	ATHU077	01.01.2018	31.12.2020	Contracted	849,049.27	Last mile Pilot
NEduNET	ATHU113	01.04.2019	30.09.2021	Contracted	972,549.11	Operational development
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>4,887,596.69</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>4,887,596.69</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

All projects have a clear cross-border approach.







Beneficiaries

In SO 2.2 currently 13 project partners are involved in four projects (Table 23). The majority of projects are led by national park organisations. One project involves an SME: a limited liability company of the Lunz water cluster. The **types of beneficiaries** are mainly public authorities and interest groups.

**Table 22: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 2.2**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Public organisations	4
Interest groups including NGOs	3
Local, regional, national public authorities	3
Higher education and research	2
SMEs	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18.07.2019

Output indicators

So far only the **output indicator** OI 27 ‘Participants in joint education programs and awareness programs’ was achieved, to a level of 31%. None of the other indicators show any achievements.

**Table 23: Output indicators for SO 2.2**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>15</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>16</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 24	Jointly developed protection and management plans (No.)	2		2		
OI 25	Protective measures (including investments) (No.)	15		3		
CO 23	Area of habitats supported for better conservation status (ha)	100,000		257,090.48		
OI 26	Joint research projects (No.)	3		3		
OI 27	Participants in joint education programs and awareness programs (No.)	200	62	835.00	7%	31%

Source: Joint secretariat, Output indicator 18 07 2019

<sup>15</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>16</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019



The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (Application forms, Annex 3, Table 69):

- joint management plans targeting Natura 2000 and other protected areas (1 project),
- joint protection plans targeting the conservation of species (1 project),
- joint species protection (1 project),
- investments in green infrastructure (1 project),
- joint education and training schemes (1 project),
- joint research projects (2 projects),
- small-scale infrastructure investments (1 project),
- enhance knowledge (2 projects),
- enhance awareness (3 projects),
- sound management (1 project),
- better cooperation between conservation institutions (1 project).

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- protection strategies and infrastructure to improve awareness in protected areas.

### Online survey

The online survey for the current programming period 2014-2020 did not have a high response rate regarding SO 2.2. The reason may lie in the low number of projects and the early stage of their implementation. However, responses from the programming period 2007-2013 show significant differences between Austria and Hungary in terms of both perception and response rate. While in Austria the topic clearly seems to play a significant role and projects seem to have led to some impact, on the Hungarian side the response rate was low and the perception of the impact of the projects was significantly less positive, with a high rate of blank responses. Nevertheless, in both cases the majority of the responses agreed that the projects:

- increased know-how,
- increased awareness, and
- enabled future research projects.

The answers are less coherent in terms of:

- the contribution to smoothing the management and connectivity of Natura 2000 or other protected areas,
- contribution to joint standards, and
- increased cooperation with other conservation institutions in the same region.

This could lead to the conclusion that there is still potential for future cooperation to intensify cooperation and better connect conservation areas (Annex 5, Figure 46 to Figure 49 Annex 5).

### Durability

In the programming period 2007-2013, eight projects were comparable with those in SO 2.2. Of these, six projects continued either partly or fully at the time when the funding ended. Two of them (Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2, NEduNet) continued over the longer term.





The high score of successor projects and the continuation of projects after funding ended show that there is a strong stakeholder interest in research, awareness raising and education regarding biodiversity and environmental protection. The dominant area of the Neusiedlersee forms a strong basis for further development of the topic.

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 2.2

**Table 24: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 2.2**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Has cross-border cooperation resulted in common approaches and the implementation of joint protection measures which led to better resilience of the ecosystems on both sides of the border?	Beneficiary responses from the programming period 2007-2013 show significant differences between Austria and Hungary in terms of both perception and response rate. While in Austria the topic clearly seems to play a significant role and projects seems to have led to some impact, on the Hungarian side the response rate was low and the perception of the impact of the projects was significantly less positive, with high rate of blank responses. Nevertheless, in both cases the majority of the responses agreed that the projects led to increased know-how and awareness, and enabled future research projects. The responses for the 2014-2020 programming period were too low to yield significant findings.		Survey Application forms Annex 5, Figure 46, Figure 47, Figure 48, Figure 49  Case study Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2
	The answers regarding the 2007-2013 programme are less coherent in terms of their contribution to smoothing the management and connectivity of Natura 2000 and other protected areas, contributing to joint standards, and increasing cooperation with other conservation institutions in the region.		
	Two projects focus on joint management and protection plans in Natura 2000 areas (AgriNatur AT-HU + WeCon).	24%	Application forms, Annex 3, Table 69
	All projects contribute to knowledge and awareness raising (NEduNET, Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2, WeCon, AgriNatur AT-HU).	100%	
	The programme target of 15 protective measures has yet not been met by the projects. The current forecast includes only three protected measures in two projects (NEduNET, Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2).		

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

**Conclusions**

**Has cross-border cooperation resulted in common approaches and the implementation of joint protection measures which lead to a better resilience of the ecosystems on both sides of the border?**

The projects, especially Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2, do contribute to a common approach. However, issues raised by project partners include the different legal systems in HU and AT and the differences in ownership of protected areas. These factors hamper the development of joint protection measures. In both cases, projects must aim for better implementation of results within their respective national legal frameworks.



Cross-border cooperation between research institutions and organisations managing protected areas is important and needs to be supported further. Support for protective measures should thus be followed up by the programme, with future emphasis on indicator OI 25.

Some of the projects have faced delays in the public procurement procedure. The results of the projects are of high value but should be **better embedded in the strategic and regulatory framework of the region.**

### 3.3.2 Evaluation question 2.2.2 – impact

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to raising the level of conservation in the Natura 2000 sites in the programme region?**

#### Findings

The contribution to the level of conservation in Natura 2000 sites is addressed by result indicator RI 2.2. According to the monitoring data, the projects achieved a value of 10.91%, which is 1.1 percentage points below the target value.

**Table 25: Programme result indicators for SO 2.2**

RI		Baseline value	Target value	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 22	Conservation degree A (of all habitat types in the Natura 2000 sites of the programme)	10.5%	12%	10.91%	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

Observations: To be reported next time in AIR2020

#### Conclusion

Due to the various factors (behaviour, climate change, natural disasters) influencing this indicator, it is not possible to measure the impact of the projects even after they are finalised. However the projects **have the potential to support the level of conservation in protected areas.**



### 3.3.3 Evaluation question 2.2.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

*Findings*

**Table 26: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 2.2**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 24).	
	The result indicator (conservation level) is not suitable for measuring the results of the programme.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO has a clear thematic concentration.	
Selected topics	The selected topics are in line with the measures proposed in the programme and appropriately linked to the specific objective (Annex 4, Table 82).	
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy between projects. The projects seem to work separately, without an overall link or framework. There is no visible synergy with projects in SO 2.1 and SO 4.1.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	The needs in the region include overcoming legal differences between AT and HU and the pressure on protected areas by different users. This is only partly addressed by the current set of projects (e.g. Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2).	
Target group	The addressed target groups correspond with the aim of raising awareness among the general public in relation to natural preservation and protection. However, the reported number of people addressed by the project AgriNatur AT-HU might not reflect the actual reach of the project, since it is based on the distribution of newsletters which are often not adequately read by recipients (Annex 3, Table 70).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

**Conclusions**

In general the strategic approach of SO 2.2 is appropriate. However, SO 2.2 shows **some ambiguity in thematic focus**. It covers tourism as well as the protection of natural sites. The need for **better natural protection is clearly addressed** in the project objectives. The aim of improving the protection of natural sites in the cross-border area is **to be continued**. **Better links between projects** in the same specific objective, as well as with projects in SO 2.1 and SO 4.1, would add value to both SOs.

### 3.3.4 Evaluation question 2.2.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

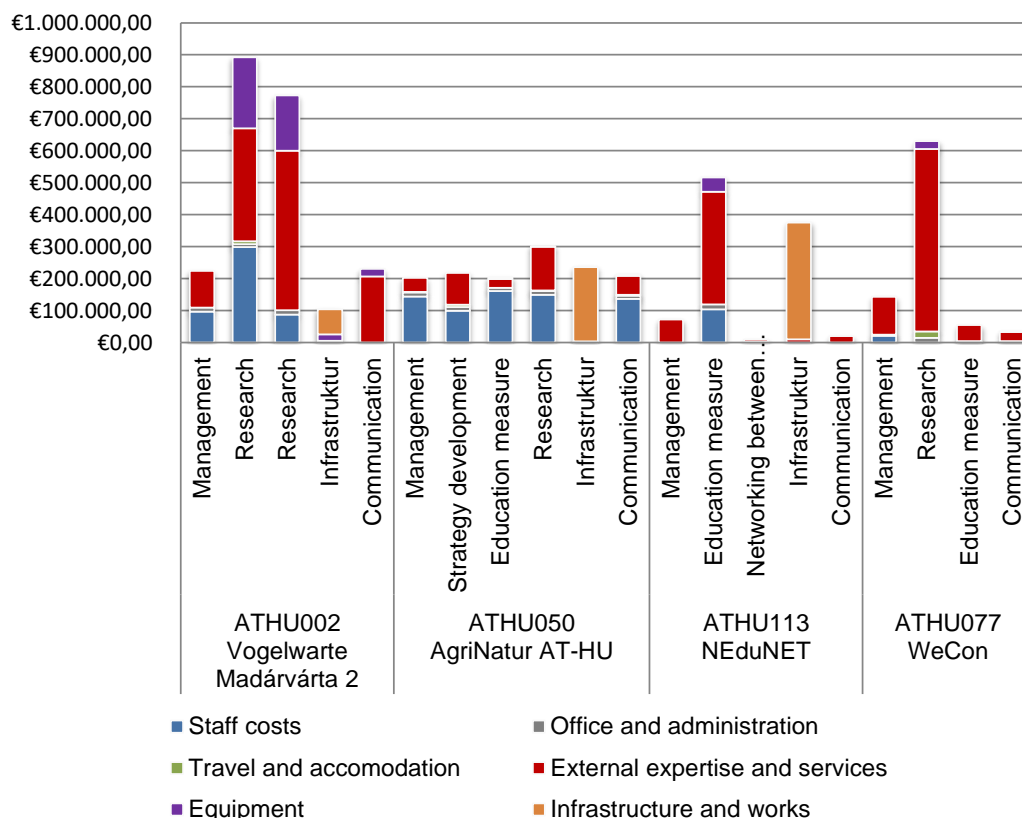
*Findings*

When comparing the four projects in terms of budget, Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2 has a significantly higher budget than the other three. Based on the application forms and project reports, all four projects have a high share of external expertise (average 48%, WeCon 67% and Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2 53%).



When it comes to different types of activities (Figure 14), in three out of the four projects the highest share of costs is allocated to 'research'. Some projects' budgets show that the highest shares of the research budget go to data collection (WeCon) or networking between educational institutions (NEduNET). The highest share of external costs is allocated to networking between institutions, followed by education measures and management.

Figure 14: Budget per activity and project – SO 2.2



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

When it comes to output indicators compared with budget allocations, SO 2.2 shows some significant differences between target values reported and budgets allocated to these target values:

- Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2 has a high budget for communication activities, but according to the latest project report its objectives – including awareness raising – have only been achieved to a small extent, even though the project officially started 2016. Given the high budget compared to the other projects, and based on the evidence of the progress reports, Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2 has a low efficiency with respect to its output.
- AgriNatur AT-HU addresses a significantly lower area than the other three projects in SO 2.2, yet has a comparably high budget of EUR 1.4 million.
- AgriNatur AT-HU budgeted for 'productive investments' and 'education measures' without setting any target values for the respective indicators: 'protective measures' and 'participants in joint education programs and awareness programs' (Table 27).



Table 27: Costs per addressed output indicator per project in SO 2.2

Project no.	ATHU002	ATHU050	ATHU077	ATHU113
Project	Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	AgriNatur AT-HU	WeCon	NEduNET
Status quo	In implementation	In implementation	In implementation	In implementation
Total budget	EUR 2,222,905.40	EUR 1,374,151.42	EUR 1,139,175.40	EUR 993,881.50
Output indicator values project level				
Jointly developed protection and management plans (No.)		1	1	
Protective measures (including investments) (No.)	1			2
Area of habitats supported for better conservation status (ha)	102,409.24	8,378.00	43,944.00	102,359.24
Joint research projects (No.)	1	1	1	
Participants in joint education programs and awareness programs (No.)	215		365	255
Costs				
Jointly developed protection and management plans (Staff costs and external expertise)	-	EUR 198,617	EUR 4,178	
Protective measures (Investments)	EUR 78,296	EUR 232,000	-	EUR 365,000
Area of habitats supported for better conservation status (Total project costs)	EUR 2,227,905	EUR 1,379,151	EUR 1,144,175	EUR 998,882
Joint research projects (Staff costs and external expertise)	EUR 1,236,916	EUR 286,242	EUR 846,417	
Participants in joint education programs and awareness programs (Staff costs and external expertise)		EUR 188,654	EUR 53,725	EUR 456,250

### Conclusions

The differences in legal systems reduce the efficiency with which project results can be achieved. Cost-effectiveness in achieving the SO could be improved through legally binding instruments on both sides of the border.

Apart from this, the underlying objective lies in fostering a cooperative approach to protecting natural habitats and raising awareness in the cross-border population. This to some extent reduces cost-effectiveness compared to national projects, but increases the commitment of the actors in the project. Thus the added value of a joint understanding and more intensified cooperation between institutions in AT and HU outweighs monetary cost-effectiveness.

All the projects have considerable external costs, which in many cases are spent on research. Since this is knowledge that should be kept after the finalisation of the projects, outsourcing research might cause a loss of knowledge and value added by the projects.

The allocation of budgets should be aligned with the target values of project-related output indicators.





### 3.4 Specific objective 2.3

#### 3.4.1 Evaluation question 2.3.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 2.3: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to improving the water quality of surface water and groundwater?**

- Evaluation question 2.3.a: Has cross-border cooperation reduced natural water management risks, maintained and further improved the high quality of protection and sustainable use of water resources, and prepared for potential climate change impacts?
- Evaluation question 2.3.b: Has environmental protection and flood risk management been better coordinated, especially along the rivers Raab/Rába and Leitha/Lajta?

**Table 28: Elements of the intervention logic SO 2.3**

<b>SO</b>	<b>2.3</b>	Improving the management and protection of water bodies
<b>TO</b>	<b>6</b>	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
<b>IP</b>	<b>6f</b>	Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **five projects** with 18 project partners were in the implementation phase, of which only two were at a mature stage (Table 29). In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 2.3 was 102%. With regard to the project life cycle model, SO 2.3 is addressed by one project between pilot and last mile, three last mile projects, and one operational policy development project.

Projects in SO 2.3 receive more direct political support, and the pressure of environmental and climate change is more visible to the general public. The projects are strongly related to thematic policies and thus are relevant for government institutions dealing with climate change and risk management.

SO 2.3 supports two types of projects that have a potential future impact on improved water quality. First are projects aiming to raise awareness and thus potentially change behaviour (PLATFORM, REBEN). Second are projects that improve water management, monitoring and evaluation (SEDDON II, Raab Flood 4cast , RaabSTAT). Projects support:

- improvement of water conditions (PLATFORM, REBEN),
- cross-border water and flood risk management (SEDDON II),
- cross-border research and monitoring (SEDDON II, Raab Flood 4cast, RaabSTAT).

The high absorption rate, as well as the early start achieved by four of the five projects, reflect the interest in this SO and allow the assumption that this it is relevant.





Table 29: Projects in SO 2.3

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget EUR	Type of project
SEDDON II	ATHU010	01.04.2016	31.12.2020	Contracted	7,500,232.37	Pilot / Last mile
PLATFORM	ATHU033	01.07.2016	31.12.2018	Contracted	236,300.00	Last mile
RaabSTAT	ATHU100	01.02.2019	31.01.2021	Contracted	511,564.00	Last mile
REBEN	ATHU053	01.01.2017	31.12.2020	Contracted	1,216,916.66	Operational policy development
Raab Flood 4cast	ATHU031	01.07.2016	30.06.2020	Contracted	1,643,181.92	Last mile
AquaPinka	ATHU115	01.01.2020	30.09.2022	Recommended	542,852.50	Operational policy development
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>11,108,194.95</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>11,651,047.45</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

All projects have a clear cross-border approach.

#### Beneficiaries

The **types of beneficiaries** in SO 2.3 show an equal distribution between education and research institutions, public authorities at all levels (national, regional, local), private and public companies, and public organisations (Table 30).

Table 30: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 2.3

Type of beneficiary	Number
Local, regional, national public authorities	13
Higher education and research	4
Public organisations	1
Total	18

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18.07.2019

This composition of beneficiaries fits the orientation of the SO and its intentions: research institutions and public authorities are important for knowledge transfer and development of new models for risk management or modelling of hydraulic flows; public authorities have to implement proposed measures or provide the legal basis; public organisations are important in implementation as well as for information and knowledge transfer to the general public.

#### Output indicators

So far, achievement of the OI 29 target value is at 20% ('measures securing or improving the status of water bodies in qualitative and quantitative terms'). Target values for OI 28 and CO 42 have not been reached. The forecast provided by the beneficiaries for 2019 was far more optimistic than the achievements actually reported.





**Table 31: Output indicators for SO 2.3**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>17</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>18</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 28	Jointly developed pilots and infrastructures	2	-	2	0%	0%
OI 29	Measures securing or improving the status of water bodies in qualitative and quantitative terms	5	1	10	10%	20%
CO 42	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	5	-	5	0%	0%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat - Output\_Indicator-18 07 2019

The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (Annex 3, Table 71):

- joint monitoring surveys and status assessment (5 projects),
- determination of ecological minimum flow needs (2 projects),
- determination of available ground water resources (1 project),
- construction or upgrading of jointly used infrastructure (1 project),
- measures for integrated flood protection (3 projects),
- preparing and implementing joint pollution load assessment (1 project),
- developing measures based on strategic studies (5 projects),
- enhanced resource management (3 projects),
- cross-border research projects (5 projects),
- joint pilots and infrastructure (2 projects).

Programme results that are not sufficiently addressed are:

- exchange of innovative waste water purification methods,
- preparing and implementing river restoration measurements.

At the time of the evaluation only one project had achieved programme results in:

- sustainable water management,
- awareness raising.

<sup>17</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>18</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019



**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- awareness raising for the general public,
- research infrastructure,
- modelling and building a hydraulic engineering laboratory,
- implementing a bilateral memorandum for strategic flood risk management,
- an updated flood forecast model for the river Raab/Rába,
- development of a flood warning tool.

### Online survey

The online survey results for 2014-2020 show some differences between the Austrian and Hungarian respondents: Hungarian respondents generally have more positive perceptions. According to the responses, the projects contribute to the reduction of natural risk in cross-border water management, cross-border data exchange, availability of jointly used monitoring tools, and better coordination of flood risk management. The knowledge exchange was assessed reasonably positively, and the respondents believe in the durability of their projects.

For the 2007-2013 period, the picture is heterogeneous and does not really allow a common assessment. The Hungarian answers are generally more reserved and temperate (Annex 5, Figure 50 to Figure 53).

### Durability

The projects build on existing structures like the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission, contribute towards the implementation of general framework documents (e.g. EU Floods Directive), and/or are embedded in the work of mainly public authorities and research institutions. The need for cross-border cooperation will be increasingly important in the context of climate change, flood protection and risk management.

Apart from that, all the currently implemented projects are either follow-ups to predecessor projects or at least can build on outcomes of earlier projects:

- SEDDON II: SEDDON I,
- Raab Flood 4cast: ProRaaba and ProRaaba 2,
- PLATFORM: CEFAME (Central Europe),
- REEBEN: 'Strategiestudie Neusiedler See' of the AT-HU Water Commission, and project GeNeSee,
- RaabSTAT: OPENWEHR

If we include all these aspects, the durability of the project outcomes and results should be on a good track. The online survey also points in that direction.





Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 2.3

**Table 32: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 2.3**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Has cross-border cooperation reduced natural risks in the field of water management, maintained and further improved the high quality of protection and sustainable use of the natural resources, and prepared for potential climate change impacts?	Beneficiary responses agree partly or fully that the projects reduced natural risks in water management and increased understanding of the ecosystem. However, the answers were less positive in terms of jointly developed risk management plans and improved coordination across borders.		Application forms Annex 5, Figure 50, Figure 51
	Beneficiaries were less positive about the outcomes in the 2007-2013 programming period, where a third of the responses denied any achievement on the AT side.		Application forms Annex 5, Figure 52, Figure 53
	Three out of five projects are addressing measures for integrated flood protection (SEDDON II, PLATFORM, Raab Flood 4cast).	84%	Application forms, Annex 3, Table 71
	One project produced an improved monitoring system (PLATFORM), and another yielded water quality improvement (REBEN)	13%	
	All projects contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources and preparation for potential climate change impacts.	100%	
Has environmental protection and flood risk management been better coordinated, especially along the rivers Raab/Rába and Leitha/Lajta?	Two projects focus on the river Raab (RaabSTAT and Raab Flood 4 cast).	19%	
	Two projects support the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission and thus supports better coordination of flood risk management.	19%	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

**Conclusions**

**Has cross-border cooperation reduced natural water management risks, maintained and further improved the high quality of protection and sustainable use of water resources, and prepared for potential climate change impacts?**

Most of the project activities are based on research and data collection, with a view to monitoring and creating forecast models. These activities all contribute to risk management and thus the reduction of natural risks. No direct effect is measurable, however, not least because only one project is finished and the others are still in a premature phase. Thanks to their aim of improving flood risk management, all the projects contribute to climate change adaptation and are relevant in terms of preparing for potential climate change impacts.

The fact that some of the projects build on existing structures of the **Austro-Hungarian Water Commission** allows the assumption that the project results have a high chance of future take-up. The SEDDON II research infrastructure project also has a high chance of take-up due to the importance of this laboratory in studying the future impact of climate change on the Danube and its cross-border effects.



**Has environmental protection and flood risk management been better coordinated, especially along the rivers Raab/Rába and Leitha/Lajta?**

The finished projects have the potential to improve the coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management if they are embedded in an institutional framework. Two projects focus particularly on the river Raab; since both of these support the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission, successful take-up is more likely than in other projects. Additionally, all the projects build on former projects or project results.

Projects in SO 2.3 are currently delayed, but the beneficiaries show a very high commitment (online survey Annex 5). **The clear focus on needs that can only be solved through cross-border collaboration is the most effective driver for successful project implementation in the long run.**

**3.4.2 Evaluation question 2.3.2 – impact**

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to improving the quality of surface water and groundwater?**

*Findings*

The contribution to improved quality of surface water and groundwater in Natura 2000 sites is addressed by result indicator RI 23 ‘Chemical and ecological condition of border water bodies classified as ‘good’ and ‘very good’. RI 23 is based on an expert report on the condition of the Austrian-Hungarian border water bodies by the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission (Ständige Österreichisch-Ungarische Grenzkommision). This report assesses the chemical and ecological condition of surface water bodies and the quantity and chemical condition of groundwater bodies.

**Table 33: Programme result indicators for SO 2.3**

RI		Baseline value	Target value	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 23	Chemical and ecological condition of border water bodies classified as ‘good’ and ‘very good’	2 (of 9)	4	2	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

Observation: To be reported next time in AIR2020

*Conclusion*

RI 23 focuses on ‘improvement of chemical and ecological condition of border water bodies’. That does not necessarily reflect the (project-specific) objectives and activities related to ‘improved flood risk management’ that are also carried out under the umbrella of this SO. Due to the various influences on this indicator that are outside the scope of the programme, it is not possible to measure the impact of the projects even after they are finalised. However, the projects **have the potential to support the improvement of the quality of surface water and groundwater.**



### 3.4.3 Evaluation question 2.3.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

*Findings*

**Table 34: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 2.3**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 25).	
	The result indicator (chemical and ecological condition of water bodies in border regions) is not always suitable for measuring the results of the programme.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO has a clear thematic concentration.	
Selected topics	The project results match the intended programme measures and results (Annex 4, Table 83).	
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy with projects in SO 2.1 and other SOs.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	Both the projects and the SO address the needs of the border region and are well embedded in organisational structures.	
Target group	According to the project reports from the end of 2018, a good half of the target groups were approached to a greater extent than planned (International organisation, EEIG under national law, public authorities, international groups including NGOs, education/training centre, school, and the general public). The target groups addressed correspond to the SO, aiming to contribute to better resource efficiency and innovative water management. However, two projects report addressing a very high number of target groups; this might not reflect the actual reach of the project. (Annex 3, Table 72)	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

**Conclusions**

The focus on specific cross-border problems and the trigger for cross-border expert exchange with Interreg funding **mirrors the purpose of the Interreg approach.**

As stated above, the projects in SO 2.3 focus to some extent on infrastructure investments. The joint activities in terms of water quality and flood risk have the highest impact currently measured among all the projects examined. These projects directly address current problems jointly affecting Austria and Hungary, and there is thus a strong interest in their results.



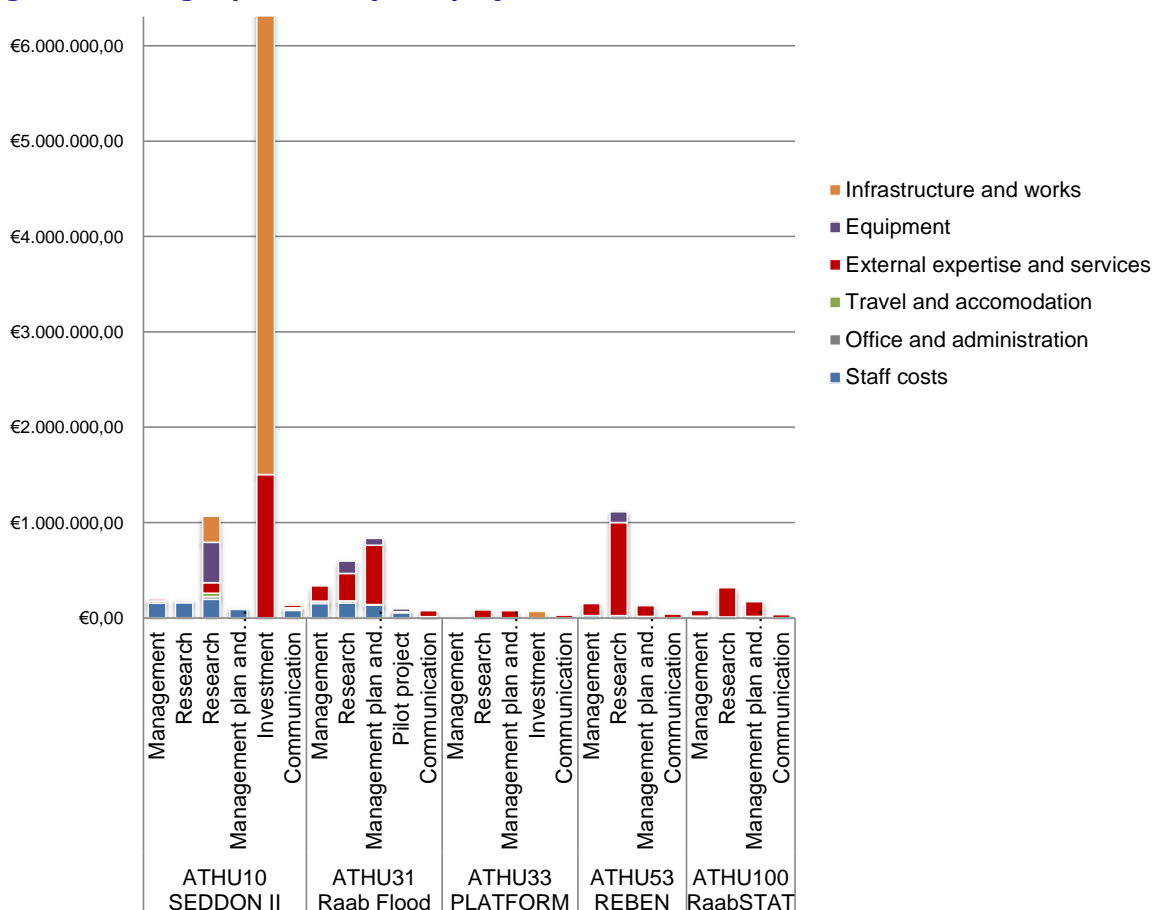
### 3.4.4 Evaluation question 2.3.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project reports, analysis of the budget allocation shows that all projects have a high share of external expertise, with an average of 64% (93% for RaabSTAT and 88% for REBEN). When it comes to different types of activities the costs are dominated by one project, SEDDON II, which has a high share of investments in infrastructure (72%). Excluding SEDDON II, the highest proportion of the budgets is allocated to research, which also receives the highest share of the external budgets (Figure 14).

**Figure 15: Budget per activity and project – SO 2.3**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

#### Conclusions

The high level of external expertise, especially in RaabSTAT and REBEN, is hard to understand. In the case of REBEN, for instance, practically the whole project is based on research activities done mainly by external organisations. In terms of Interreg, cost-effectiveness cannot be ensured if the main work – and thus knowledge generated – is outsourced from the partner network.



Comparing project budgets in this SO is impossible due to the differences in the nature of the projects. The largest project, SEDDON II, takes a difficult approach in using almost the entire budget for investment. The management of this project in Interreg is particularly difficult. SEDDON II is a long-term construction project whose costs are influenced by market fluctuations. At the time of the evaluation (September 2019) the construction market was at a peak and costs were overrunning. Infrastructure projects are difficult to manage in the Interreg context since the programme does not provide for cost adjustments. Long-term projects with a high risk of price volatility thus need to be tackled differently in future programmes. In particular, the management of the project needs to be of high quality.

All in all it is assumed that all projects in SO 2.3 contribute effectively to the objectives of the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission. With this in mind it can be assumed that the cost-effectiveness of the projects in this SO is a given.

### 3.5 Specific objective 3.1

#### 3.5.1 Evaluation question 3.1.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 3.1: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to decrease the average travel time (individual transport) to a node with TEN-T network connection?**

- Evaluation question 3.1.a: Has permeability of the border increased and led to shorter and faster connections between the municipalities directly affected by the investments?
- Evaluation question 3.1.b: Have accessibility levels in the southern part of the region improved?
- Evaluation question 3.1.c: Has the capacity of cross-border transport systems in the northern part of the region increased?
- Evaluation question 3.1.d: Have the actions under this priority led to a better quality of life for the inhabitants of the region as they can reach the regional centres more easily and quickly?

**Table 35: Elements of the intervention logic SO 3.1**

<b>SO</b>	<b>3.1</b>	Improving cross-border connectivity of regional centres to the TEN-T network
<b>TO</b>	<b>7</b>	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
<b>IP</b>	<b>7b</b>	Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **five projects** with 13 partners addressed SO 3.1. Projects addressing this SO are pure infrastructure projects, mostly in road construction and restoration (Table 36). The projects are very much influenced by political demands, so they have a high degree of commitment at political and public level. Nevertheless, with the exception of CrossBorder Rail the projects do not adequately report their progress and so insufficient information is available about their outputs and results achieved.





In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 3.1 was 99%. According to the project life cycle model in SO 23.1 all projects are last mile projects.

The **main aims** of the projects are:

- better accessibility of the border region and across the border (Várbalog-Halbtorn, Rajka-Deutsch Jahrndorf, CrossBorder Road, St. Margarethen-Fertőrákos, CrossBorder Rail);
- faster and better connectivity between the municipalities (Várbalog-Halbtorn, Rajka-Deutsch Jahrndorf, St. Margarethen-Fertőrákos);
- better accessibility of the southern part of the region (CrossBorder Road).

**Table 36: Projects in SO 3.1**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget EUR	Type of project
Várbalog-Halbtorn	ATHU079	22.05.2017	31.01.2021	Contracted	2,644,778.93	Last mile
Rajka-Deutsch Jahrndorf	ATHU094	22.05.2017	30.09.2020	Contracted	2,052,038.17	Last mile
CrossBorder Road	ATHU015	01.06.2017	31.10.2021	Contracted	3,665,488.83	Last mile
St. Margarethen-Fertőrákos	ATHU093	01.06.2017	30.04.2020	Contracted	2,073,490.08	Last mile
CrossBorder Rail	ATHU016	01.07.2015	31.01.2020	Contracted	9,406,765.92	Last mile
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>19,842,561.93</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>19,842,561.93</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

#### Beneficiary

In SO 3.1 currently 13 project partners are involved in five projects (Table 37). The main **types of beneficiaries** in SO 3.1 are public authorities at local, regional and national levels, followed by enterprises (excluding SMEs) (Table 36). The main beneficiary in SO 3.1 is the NIF Nemzeti Infrastruktúra Fejlesztő zártkörűen működő Részvénytársaság.

**Table 37: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 3.1**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Local, regional, national public authorities	5
Enterprises, excluding SMEs	4
Public organisations	3
SMEs	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18072019

#### Output indicator

In SO 3.1 little information is available about the achievement of the **output indicators** at programme level (Table 38 and Table 84). Just one project (Cross-border Rail, CO 12) provided figures for its actual achievements in 2019.

Generally the forecasts provided by the beneficiaries in 2019 slightly exceed the programme target values. In terms of the road projects, this could relate to slowdowns as



the construction work is planned in detail. But without any data about the actual achievement, no further conclusion can be drawn.

**Table 38: Output indicators for SO 3.1**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>19</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>20</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
CO 13	Roads: Total length of newly built roads (action 1)	8 km	-	8.3 km	0%	0%
CO 14	Roads: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads (action 2)	10 km	-	11.55 km	0%	0%
CO 12	Railway: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway line (action 2,3)	10 km	4.5 km	48.66 km <sup>21</sup>	9%	45%
OI 31	Pre-investment studies	2	-	3	0%	0%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat - Output\_Indicator-18 07 2019

The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (application forms, see Annex 3, Table 73):

- upgrading and technical improvement of the cross-border rail network (1 project),
- pre-investment studies for rail infrastructure investments (1 project),
- constructing missing border-crossing elements of road links (4 projects),
- reconstructing border-crossing elements of road links (4 projects),
- reconstructing missing border-crossing elements of rail links (1 project),
- improving border connectivity (5 projects),
- improving the connection to tertiary TEN-T nodes (5 projects),
- shortening travel time in the project area (5 projects).

<sup>19</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>20</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019

<sup>21</sup> CO 12 (CrossBorder Rail): the relationship between the target value (10 km), the forecast provided by the beneficiaries (48.6 km) and the actual achievement in 2019 (4.5 km) is not plausible: it is unlikely that 48 km will be reconstructed/upgraded instead of the planned 10 km.



Programme results that are not addressed are:

- pre-investment studies for road infrastructure investments,
- constructing missing border-crossing elements of rail links.

Online survey

The online survey related to specific objectives was only addressed by quite a small number of respondents.

Generally AT respondents have a more positive picture of whether the objectives were achieved (two-thirds agree partially, one-third fully), and see a clear follow-on from joint pre-investment studies to actual investment. Compared to AT respondents, on the other hand, HU respondents are more positive about improvements to the general result indicator (reduction of average travel time to a node with TEN-T connection).

For the 2007-2013 survey most positive AT responses were about achievements in terms of shorter and faster connections between municipalities, increased capacity of the transport system in the northern parts, and the cross-border accessibility of regional centres.

The most positive HU responses addressed future investments enabled on the basis of pre-investment studies (Annex 5, Figure 54 to Figure 57).

Durability

Assuming that the projects are eventually completed as planned, the resulting road and rail infrastructure will be highly durable after the funding ends.

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 3.1

**Table 39: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 3.1**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Has permeability of the border increased and led to shorter and faster connections between the municipalities directly affected by the investments?	Beneficiary responses partly or fully agreed that the projects achieved a reduction of average travel time for individual transport through projects in the 2014-2020 programming period. However only three AT and three HU participants responded. This reflects the number of partners involved in SO <sup>3.1</sup> . Hungarian respondents considered the upgrade of standards of the railway system as not achieved.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 54 Figure 55 Figure 56 Figure 57
	The CrossBorder Rail project is improving the connectivity of the middle and northern part of the region on the east side of the lake.	47%	Application forms Annex 3 Table 73
	Two projects are connecting two small municipalities in the northern part of the region. Those road projects do not foresee any connectivity other than individual transport. There are no specific plans for bikes or public transport, as far as the documents reveal.		Application forms
Have accessibility levels in the	Austrian respondents considered that the accessibility of the southern part of the cross-border region had not been improved by the		Survey Annex 5, Figure 54



Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
southern part of the region improved?	2014-2020 projects. Only three participants responded, however.		Figure 55 Figure 56 Figure 57
	Only one road project concerns the middle to southern part of the region. Although not finished, CrossBorder Road will contribute to improved accessibility in the southern part of the region for individual traffic only. The link mainly improves connectivity between Szombathely/Kőszeg and the higher ranked road network in Austria.	18%	Application forms Progress report eMS Case study CrossBoder Road
Has the capacity of cross-border transport systems in the northern part of the region increased?	Beneficiary responses in Austria and Hungary partly or fully agreed that the 2014-2020 projects increased the capacity of cross-border transport by cutting average travel time for individual transport. Only three participants responded, however.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 54 Figure 55 Figure 56 Figure 57
	The road projects have gone some way to improve the capacity of the transport system. However, two of the three projects are low-ranked cross-border routes.	53%	Application forms Progress report eMS
Have the actions under this priority led to a better quality of life for the inhabitants of the region as they can reach the regional centres more easily and quickly?	None of the respondents in the online survey answered this question.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 54 Figure 55 Figure 56 Figure 57

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

### Conclusions

#### **Has permeability of the border increased and led to shorter and faster connections between the municipalities directly affected by the investments?**

All road projects have the potential to increase the permeability of the border, mainly in the northern part of the region. The two small road projects in the north have the potential to connect two municipalities across the border, but could lead to increased traffic on low-ranked roads.

#### **Have accessibility levels in the southern part of the region improved?**

The only project located in the southern part of the region was CrossBorder Road. However, the accessibility of the southern part of this region was not the main concern of this high-ranked road project between Kőszeg and Rattersdorf. Instead, CrossBorder Road aims to support individual commuting traffic between Szombathely/Kőszeg and Austrian urban centres. It is not clear whether the high-ranking road connection improves poor accessibility in the border region as a by-product of supporting cross-border commuters. Besides, the focus on individual traffic rather than public transport does not address the aim of reducing environmental pollution.





It is doubtful whether support for high-level road connections to allow better access from Hungary to the middle and north of Burgenland and Vienna supports economic development in the southern region.

**Has the capacity of cross-border transport systems in the northern part of the region increased?**

It is assumed that the two small border road projects do not significantly increase the capacity of the cross-border transport system in the northern part, but might better connect the two border municipalities and their surroundings.

The CrossBorder Rail project has potential to improve transport capacity in the northern and middle part of the region. It also supports the aim of reducing environmental pollution.

**Have the actions under this priority led to a better quality of life for the inhabitants of the region, as they can reach the regional centres more easily and quickly?**

Improving accessibility in the programme area might yield a better quality of life. But 'quality of life' is a broad concept, and other aspects have to be taken into account. For instance, an upgraded cross-border road connection between two municipalities is likely to lead to more traffic. The resulting pollution and noise may reduce the quality of life for nearby residents.

**3.5.2 Evaluation question 3.1.2 – impact**

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to decrease the average travel time (individual transport) to a node with TEN-T network connection?**

*Findings*

The contribution to a decrease of travel time to a node with TEN-T network connection is addressed by the result indicator RI 3.1. The **result indicator** value is based on the outcomes of the cross-border project ERRAM HU-AT. A sound analysis and recalculation of the result indicator is only visible after the finalisation of the road projects.

**Table 40: Programme result indicators for SO 3.1**

RI		Baseline value	Target value	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 31	Average travel time (individual transport) to a node with TEN-T network connection	14.08 minutes	13 minutes	Slight improvement	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018 and separate assessment in the year 2018 – see below

*Conclusions*

Only one out of four road projects (CrossBorder Road) contributes to a decrease in average travel time to a TEN-T network connection. The other road projects are too small to achieve this. The CrossBorder Rail project focuses on improving the existing



train infrastructure; this might have the potential to decrease average travel time to a TEN-T, but to a very small extent.

### 3.5.3 Evaluation question 3.1.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

#### Findings

**Table 41: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 3.1**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (see also Annex 2, Figure 26).	
	Result indicator RI 31 'Average travel time (individual transport) to a node with TEN-T network connection' is not directly linked to the programme interventions.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO has a clear thematic concentration.	
Selected topics	The project topics are clearly in line with the measures, but not all topics contribute to the SO. Especially, the small-scale roads in the northern part of the region do not contribute to better accessibility of TEN-T networks, though they do support the low-ranking connectivity of border municipalities (Annex 4, Table 84).	
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy with projects in SO 3.2.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	Neither the projects nor the SO address the pressure to reduce individual traffic, environmental pollution, soil sealing and CO <sub>2</sub> emissions.	
Target group	The target group addressed is the general public (Annex 3, Table 74).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

#### Conclusions

The strategic approach of **SO 3.1** to improve cross-border connectivity **focuses too much on individual traffic**. The approach does not match the overall objective of increasing sustainable traffic. The improvement of small cross-border links in the northern part of the region is not directly related to TEN-T networks and might lead to increases in traffic, by offering alternative routes for those who want to avoid main roads and tolls.

The main obstacles to mobility in the border regions are missing **public transport links**. This should be better addressed.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See also EC DG Regio, Overcoming obstacles in border regions, April 2016.



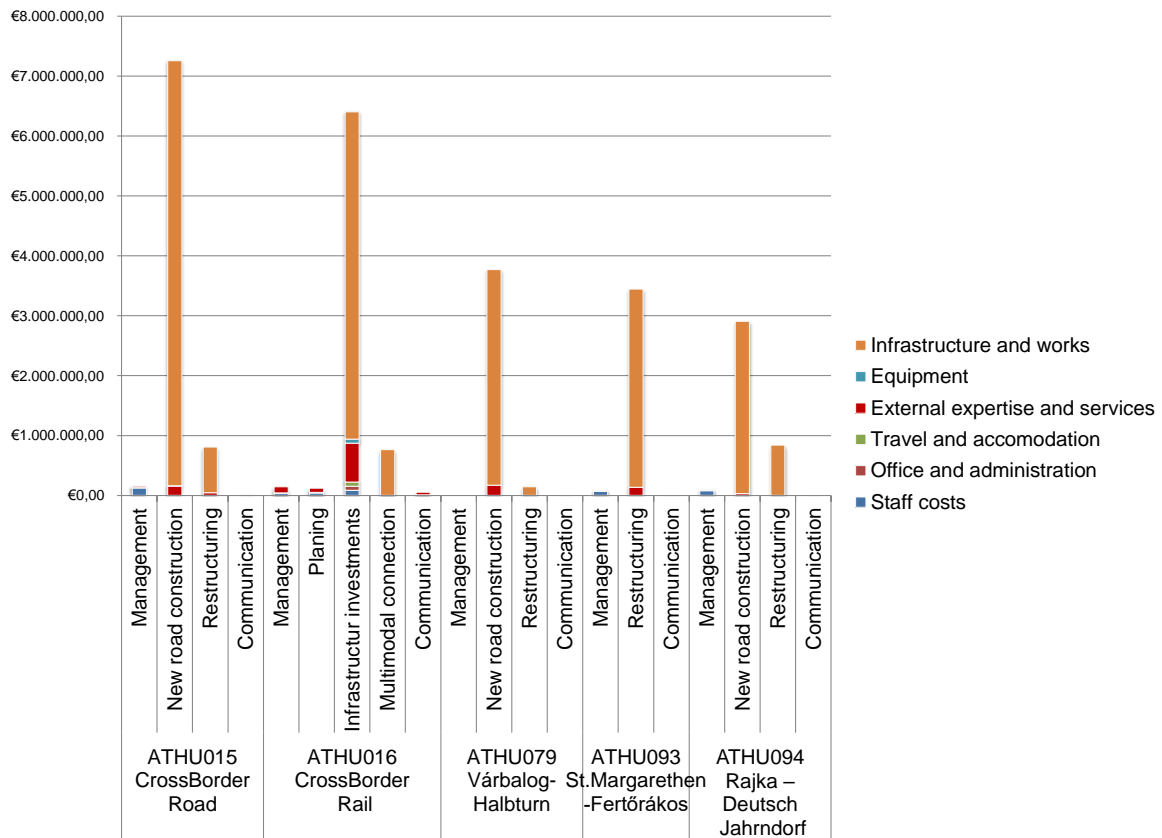
### 3.5.4 Evaluation question 3.1.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project reports, analysis of the budget distribution shows that the types of activities and their distribution correspond to the types of projects. The budgets for each type of activity are dominated by construction work (investments) (Figure 16). The budgets lie within the ranges justified for the different types of roads being built.

**Figure 16: Budget per activity and project – SO 3.1**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

All projects in SO 3.1 are delayed. The reasons for this are increasing construction costs, which were not foreseen at the beginning, and **lengthy public procurement procedures**. Especially in Hungary, the legal framework for public procurement changes regularly. Road and rail construction projects are thus difficult to manage within the strict timescale and financial frame of Interreg projects.

#### Conclusions

Based on the budgets forecast for investments, the costs are comparable with similar projects not funded by Interreg. Potential additional administrative costs might be generated by the specificity of Interreg project management, however.



Public procurement rules are causing problems for these Interreg projects. This needs to be foreseen at the planning stage of future projects, including through the provision of adequate risk management.

### 3.6 Specific objective 3.2

#### 3.6.1 Evaluation question 3.2.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 3.2: Have the planned infrastructure investments been accompanied by a set of additional measures in order to increase the share of people using sustainable means of transport?**

- Evaluation question 3.2.a: Have negative environmental impacts of the overall transport system been prevented or reduced?
- Evaluation question 3.2.b: Has the construction of new, or extension of existing, park and ride facilities:
  - a) Relieved roads which are reaching their capacity limits?
  - b) Improved the interoperability between road and public transport systems, and encouraged car drivers to change to train or bus?
- Evaluation question 3.2.c: Has the provision of bike and ride facilities at railway stations and bus stops:
  - a) Further increased the catchment area of the public transport system and
  - b) Facilitated access to the stations by environmentally friendly means of transport?
- Evaluation question 3.2.d: Have similar results been achieved from the development of flexible public transport services at the local level?

**Table 42: Elements of the intervention logic SO 3.2**

<b>SO</b>	<b>3.2</b>	Enhancing sustainable mobility on the local and regional level
<b>TO</b>	<b>7</b>	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
<b>IP</b>	<b>7c</b>	Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

As stated above, in SO 3.2 currently **one project** – SMART-Pannonia – is being implemented. The project started in 2016 and should finish in September 2020. Another, much smaller, project is in currently in the contracting phase.

SMART-Pannonia has comprehensive objectives and includes a wide range of measures. With regard to the project life cycle model, parts of the project can be classified as ‘pilots’ while other parts are ‘last mile’ (Table 45).

With SMART-Pannonia in progress, SO 3.2 had an absorption rate of 103% in September 2019, which underlines its relevance.





The **main aim** of the project is:

- cross-border traffic cooperation among transport providers,
- development of innovative joint offers strengthening intermodality.

**Table 43: Projects in SO 3.2**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget EUR	Type of project
SMART-Pannonia	ATHU017	01.01.2016	30.09.2020	Contracted	2,628,859.11	Pilot and Last mile
Low Carb mobility	ATHU114	01.04.2019	31.12.2021	recommended	999 330.00	Organisation development
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>2,628,859.11</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>2,628,859.11</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations

### Beneficiaries

In SO 3.2 currently 11 project partners are involved in four projects (Table 44). The main **types of beneficiaries** in SO 3.2 are public organisations. Since public organisations play an important role in the organisation and provision of sustainable (public) transport, important target groups are involved.

**Table 44: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 3.2**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Public organisations	7
Local, regional, national public authorities	2
Enterprises, excluding SMEs	1
Interest groups including NGOs	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18072019

### Output indicator

At the time of the evaluation the output indicator targets have been achieved at a level of 0%. The forecasts provided by the beneficiaries for 2019 show optimistically higher numbers compared to the target values at programme level. However, there is no information about the concrete achievement of the **output indicators** available ('achieved 2019'). The project SOs are currently met 'to a minor degree' (Table 45).

**Table 45: Output indicators for SO 3.2**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>23</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>24</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 3.2	Jointly developed strategies, transport concepts and actions	12	–	13	0%	0%
OI 3.3	Joint schemes for promoting	4	–	6	0%	0%

<sup>23</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>24</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019





OI	Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>23</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>24</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
	environmentally friendly transport				

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat - Output\_Indicator-18 07 2019

The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects:

- improved interoperability of the regional transport system,
- improved planning and coordination of regional public transport services,
- closing gaps in the cross-border public transport system,
- improving mobility at local level,
- better access to information,
- increased use of environmentally friendly means of transport for different target groups,
- actions that support the ability to use bicycles for daily trips,
- establishment and operation of regional mobility centres.

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- awareness of upcoming activities, provision of information, communication, training;
- a cross-border transport platform connecting service providers and experts within an expert forum;
- solutions facilitating smart mobility (e.g. development of a smart mobility app, digitalisation of cycle tracks, and better ticketing services).

Online survey

The online survey 2014-2020 was answered by only one participant on the AT side and none on the HU side. According to this one response, the aim of improving the coordination of regional public transport services does not seem to have been met as well as the increase in cross-border transport systems in the southern part of the region. The increase in the catchment area for public transport was assessed as 'not applicable'. To sum up, the survey answer shows at least that the activities of the one project that is in the implementation stage are pointing in the right direction and supporting the general aim of SO 3.2 to improve sustainable mobility at local and regional levels. However, the response does not demonstrate that the project has yet achieved the desired durability.



Durability

SMART-Pannonia can be considered as a follow-up to the GreMo Pannonia project. SMART-Pannonia builds on the results and the cooperation networks of the 2007-2013 programming period.

SMART-Pannonia entails a lot of networking, cooperation and strategic planning activities. The concrete take-up of awareness-raising activities is not yet measurable, however. The same applies to the deepening of cross-border cooperation structures, e.g. inside public authorities at national, regional and local levels, and to strategic planning measures. The take-up of information and any changes in behaviour can only be assessed in the long term, alongside comparisons of the costs and outputs of these activities.

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 3.2

**Table 46: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 3.2**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Have negative environmental impacts of the overall transport system been prevented or reduced?	No adequate information available.	100%	
Has the construction of new, or the extension of existing, park and ride facilities: a) Relieved roads that are reaching their capacity limits? b) Improved interoperability between road and public transport systems and encouraged car drivers to change to train or bus?	No adequate information available.	100%	
Has the provision of bike and ride facilities at railway stations and bus stops: a) Further increased the catchment area of the public transport system and b) Facilitated access to stations by environmentally friendly means of transport?	According to the available reported information, bike and ride facilities have not yet been implemented.	100%	Case study SMART-Pannonia Application form Progress report eMS
Have similar results been achieved from the development of flexible public transport services at the local level?	At local level, development of concepts and methods for flexible public transport services has started. Examples are a study/evaluation report on micro-public transport, and drafting of a concept for micro-public transport.	100%	Case study SMART-Pannonia

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019



### Conclusions

#### **Have negative environmental impacts of the overall transport system been prevented or reduced?**

It can be assumed that the activities of SMART-Pannonia support reduction of the environmental impacts of the overall transport system. The long-term impact of the activities can only be estimated some time after the measures have been implemented.

#### **Has the construction of new, or the extension of existing, park and ride facilities:**

**a) Relieved roads that are reaching their capacity limits?**

**b) Improved interoperability between road and public transport systems, and encouraged car drivers to change to train or bus?**

The planned activities of the project (e.g. upgrading of waiting areas, cycle racks at park and ride hubs, smart mobility, and all the other activities like awareness raising and information measures) might help to relieve road traffic and improve the interoperability of the transport system.

#### **Has the provision of bike and ride facilities at railway stations and bus stops:**

**a) Further increased the catchment area of the public transport system, and**

**b) Facilitated access to stations by environmentally friendly means of transport?**

The activities have the potential to increase the catchment area of public transport and facilitate access to stations by environmentally friendly means of transport.

The measures foreseen in the project have the potential to facilitate access to stations by environmentally friendly means of transport. This is supported by good-quality bike racks, waiting areas, and measures, yet to be implemented, to provide more and better transport information through digitalisation (e.g. smart mobility apps and route planners).

#### **Have similar results been achieved from the development of flexible public transport services on the local level?**

The whole region is not at all homogeneous in terms of user behaviour, public transport availability and commuter frequencies. The project so far does not sufficiently explain how it tackles heterogeneity between the regional actors and variability in patterns of transport use. At the current stage it is not possible to assess whether the results will be achieved at the local level.

An assessment after project implementation would allow the evaluation questions to be answered.





### 3.6.2 Evaluation question 3.2.2 – impact

**Have the planned infrastructure investments been accompanied by a set of additional measures to increase the share of people using sustainable means of transport?**

#### Findings

The one project currently implemented entails a lot of networking, cooperation and strategic planning activities, as well as awareness raising activities. There is no indicator addressing the increase of utilisation of sustainable means of transport.

#### Conclusions

It is only an assumption that these additional activities will actually increase the share of people using sustainable transport. Awareness raising and the deepening of cross-border cooperation structures – e.g. inside public authorities at national, regional and local levels, and strategic planning measures – **do have the potential to improve** the utilisation of sustainable transport.

### 3.6.3 Evaluation question 3.2.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

#### Findings

**Table 47: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 3.2**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 27).	
	Result indicator 32 'Number of intermodal public transport nodes' is not directly linked to the programme interventions.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO has a clear thematic concentration.	
Selected topics	The project topics are clearly in line with the measures (Annex 4, Table 85).	
Used and unused synergies	There is no visible synergy with projects in SO 3.1.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	The needs of the border region are clearly considered. However it is not clear yet whether the needs of the population are considered in different functional areas.	
Target group	The target groups addressed correspond with the aim of raising awareness among the general public in relation to more sustainable mobility services (Annex 3, Table 75).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

#### Conclusions

The single project addressing SO 3.2 covers a wide variety of different tasks aiming to serve the whole region. Considering the number, size and range of these tasks, the project appears almost **like an Interreg sub-programme**. There is a danger that too many different activities and loose ends will hamper the effective implementation of the project. Compared to the subject as such, the **region might have different needs**



and different responses. This is not visibly reflected in the project reporting. Since the cross-border region is so diverse it might be necessary to deal with different aspects in different parts of the region. The project, however, needs to take into account projects in SO 3.1, which has not been yet done as far as the reporting reveals.

The strategic approach as such is appropriate, but the means of implementation through one single large project might be reconsidered in the future. Nevertheless, to measure the effect of those activities, especially in relation to the evaluation questions, requires a **project evaluation**. This is true not least because thanks to its size SMART-Pannonia almost forms an entire sub-programme rather than a project.

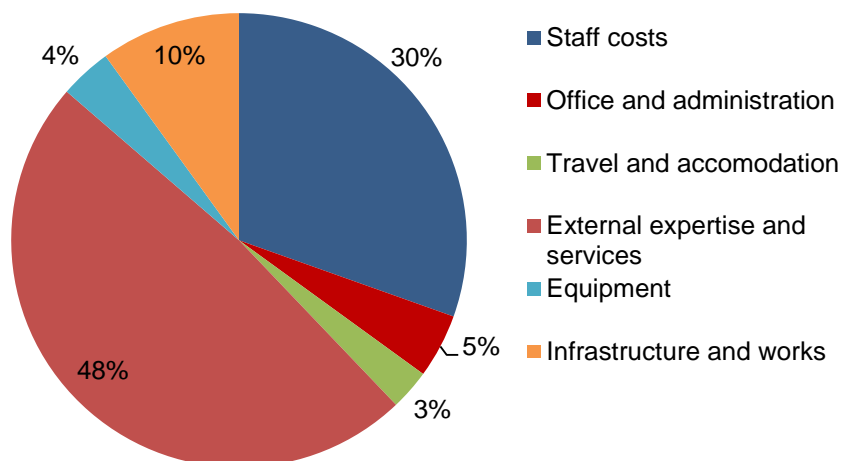
### 3.6.4 Evaluation question 3.2.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project report, analysis of the budget allocation shows that the project reserves the highest share of its budget for external expertise (48%), followed by staff costs (30%) (Figure 17). The share of budget for communication is high (16%) compared to projects in other SOs.

**Figure 17: Budget per activity and project – SO 3.2**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

#### Conclusions

Due to the fact that there is **no reporting** it is not possible to assess the cost-effectiveness of the investment projects.



## 3.7 Specific objective 4.1

### 3.7.1 Evaluation question 4.1.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 4: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to intensifying cooperation intensity/quality in the border region?**

- Evaluation question 4.a: Has support through cross-border cooperation between public administrations balanced governance capacities at regional level in the AT-HU border region and eventually led to more harmonised cross-border strategies and processes?
- Evaluation question 4.b: Has the implementation and strengthening of people-to-people activities, and of new and existing networks and cooperation platforms at local and regional level, resulted in joint regional strategies, processes, services and activities?

**Table 48: Elements of the intervention logic SO 4.1**

<b>SO</b>	<b>4.1</b>	Improving institutional cross-border cooperation in order to strengthen the integration
<b>TO</b>	<b>11</b>	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF
<b>IP</b>	<b>iv</b>	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **eight projects**<sup>25</sup> with 26 partners addressed SO 4.1. Five projects are almost finalised or already finished. Projects address a wide variety of topics including the economy, environment, sports, recreation, tourism and social topics.

Five projects focus on operational policy development. In other words, initial steps having been taken previously, the current projects should contribute to pathways for shared policies and strategies in a broad range of areas. Some projects are hybrids focusing on policy development, including steps towards implementation as pilot projects.

In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 4.1 was 100%.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Border (hi)stories and Co-Age are not included

<sup>26</sup> The indicative ERDF allocation for SO 4.1 is EUR 8,064,231.60.





The **aims** of the projects are:

- better cooperation between local/regional institutions and/or citizens (e.g. City Cooperation II, Fairwork,
- harmonised and high-quality public services (e.g. Ökoachse),
- harmonised cross-border strategies (e.g. ConnReg, Joint Ambrosia Action, WomEn-Puls).
- people-to-people approach (e.g. Wrestling without borders).

**Table 49: Projects in SO 4.1**

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget EUR	Type of project
Ökoachse	ATHU004	01.04.2017	31.01.2020	Contracted	279,477.09	Operational policy development
Age-friendly Region	ATHU012	01.01.2017	31.12.2019	Contracted	1,146,837.17	Operational policy development Pilot
City Cooperation II	ATHU018	01.05.2016	31.10.2019	Contracted	1,299,281.66	Last mile
ConnReg AT-HU	ATHU030	01.01.2016	30.06.2019	Contracted	697,083.08	Last mile
Fairwork	ATHU035	01.01.2017	31.12.2019	Contracted	785,677.31	Operational policy development
Joint Ambrosia Action	ATHU051	01.01.2017	31.12.2019	Contracted	699,078.49	Operational policy development
Wrestling without borders	ATHU106	01.01.2018	30.06.2020	Contracted	376,343.44	Pilot
WomEn-Puls	ATHU116	01.03.2019	28.02.2022	Contracted	714,000.00	Operational policy development
Border (hi)stories*	ATHU126	01.01.2020	30.06.2022	Pre-contract	960,723.49	Pilot
Co-Age*	ATHU123	01.11.2019	31.10.2022	Start-up	1,105,729.85	Pilot
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>5,997,778.24</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>8,064,231.58</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations- Projects marked with an asterisk\* are not part of the detailed analysis

All projects have a clear cross-border approach.

### Beneficiaries

In SO 4.1 currently 26 project partners are involved in eight projects (Table 50). The spread across **types of beneficiaries** (Table 50) is as expected for this SO, which supports cooperation between citizens and institutions: the most frequent types are regional and local authorities, as well as interest groups and NGOs. Higher education facilities support the development of methodologies in some projects. Looking at the types of beneficiaries in more detail reveals the differences between AT and HU in approaches to public tasks – for example, social service providers in HU comprise mostly local authorities.





Such differences do have significant implications for policymaking and policy delivery, in particular when it comes to projects in health and social policies.

**Table 50: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 4.1**

Type of beneficiary	Number
Interest groups including NGOs	7
Higher education and research	3
Enterprises, excluding SMEs	0
Public organisations	0
Business support organisations	0
Local, regional, national public authorities	11
Sectoral agencies	1
Public service providers	1
Other	3
<i>Total</i>	26

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project Partner 18.07.2019

Output indicators

62% of the programme output target value for ‘actors involved in cross-border cooperation’ has been achieved. The projects Age-friendly Region, ConnReg AT-HU, Fairwork and Joint Ambrosia Action have contributed the most.

Quantitative analysis of the **output indicator** related to SO 4.1 points to delays in implementing the projects, since the forecasts by beneficiaries are far more optimistic than the actual achievements. Given the small number of projects that are currently up and running, the performance of every single project is critical to reaching the programme targets.

**Table 51: Output indicators for SO 4.1**

OI	Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>27</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>28</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 41 Actors involved in cross-border cooperation (actions 1,2,3,4,5)	250	156	249	62%	62%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat - Output\_Indicator-18 07 2019

The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (Annex 3, Table 76):

- joint cross-border, cultural, recreational and other type of community events and actions (4 projects),
- harmonised and high-quality public services (3 projects),
- improved regional government structures (6 projects),
- better cooperation between local/regional institutions and/or citizens (4 projects),

<sup>27</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>28</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019



- harmonised cross-border strategies (4 projects),
- harmonised cross-border processes (2 projects),
- harmonised cross-border activities (8 projects).

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- micro-regional energy management pilot project in HU,
- management system for case-based care for elderly people,
- monitoring and reporting system for ragweed and adjustment of the legal framework to allow for measures to contain its spread in AT,
- upgrading of a sports facility.

### Online survey

Only a small number of respondents took part in the online survey on the basis of the SOs. In total, two HU and seven AT responses addressed the questions for the 2014-2020 programming period. Given the small number of respondents it does not seem appropriate to draw any overarching conclusions. None of the respondents fully agreed that their project work led to a change of mindset. Responses to the other questions point rather at different intended levels of achievement: either rather general – such as shared levels of understanding or improved cooperation – or more concrete, such as development of joint strategies.<sup>29</sup> Two AT respondents out of seven reported some problems or significant problems in their partnerships' cooperation.

SO 4.1 was one of only two SOs in which respondents said they encountered problems, the other being SO 1.1. The reason might lie in the character of SO 1.1 and SO 4.1 projects. In both cases the main aspect of some projects is cooperation *per se*, without a clear and focused meaning. The survey results lead to the conclusion that projects having a broad scope, no specific focus and a lot of different stakeholders tend to have problems in implementation (Annex 5, Figure 59 and Figure 60).

### Durability

Based on the analysis of comparable projects in the 2007-2013 programming period it seems that projects that have a broad scope without a specific focus, and many different stakeholders, tend to have problems in implementation and the durability of results. Projects with the aim of cooperation *per se*, without a clear focus, tend to fail in terms of effectiveness and impact. Thus larger projects are not necessarily more effective.

Of the projects in SO 4.1, only three are just finalised and the others are still ongoing. Because of this, the durability of the projects cannot be assessed at this stage.

Lack of both tangible results and durability ranks among the recurring weaknesses of Interreg projects. Experience from the previous periods shows that that these projects have a high risk of ending after funding ceases (Figure 7, page 22). It is evident that these projects need a certain amount of ongoing funding.

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<sup>29</sup> Since we do not know whether these respondents have been working on the same or different projects, we cannot tell whether any apparent disagreements represent variation between projects, or different perceptions from partners in the same projects.





Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 4.1

**Table 52: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 4.1**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
Has cross-border cooperation between public administrations <b>balanced governance capacities</b> at regional level in the AT-HU border region and eventually led to <b>more harmonised</b> cross-border strategies and processes?	In total two HU and seven AT responses addressed the questions for SO 4.1 in the 2014-2020 programming period.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 59 Figure 60
	Three out of eight projects aimed for harmonised and high-quality public services (Ökoachse, Age-friendly Region, Joint Ambrosia Action).	35%	Application form Progress report eMS Annex 3 Table 76
	Six out of eight contracted projects aimed for improved regional government structures (Ökoachse, City Cooperation II, ConnReg AT-HU, Fairwork, Joint Ambrosia Action, WomEn-Puls).	75%	
Has the implementation and strengthening of people-to-people activities, and of new and existing networks and cooperation platforms at local and regional level, resulted <b>in joint regional strategies, processes, services and activities?</b>	AT respondents were very positive regarding the development of joint strategies. All respondents either fully or partly agreed that the projects increase cross-border cooperation.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 59 Figure 60
	Four out of eight projects aimed to harmonise cross-border strategies (Ökoachse, ConnReg AT-HU, Joint Ambrosia Action, WomEn-Puls).	40%	Application form Progress report eMS Annex 3 Table 76
	Two out of eight contracted projects aimed to harmonise cross-border processes (Joint Ambrosia Action, Wrestling without borders). Fairwork and Joint Ambrosia Action address harmonised cross-border processes, but according to the available information only the latter project has delivered so far.	24%	
	All the contracted projects contribute to harmonised cross-border activities.	100%	
	Project results achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• micro-regional energy management pilot in HU (Ökoachse);</li> <li>• management system for case-based care for elderly people (Age-friendly Region);</li> <li>• monitoring and reporting system for ragweed and adjustment of the legal framework to allow for measures to contain its spread in AT (Joint Ambrosia Action);</li> <li>• upgrading of a sports facility (Wrestling without borders).</li> </ul>	47%	
	The project Age-friendly Region is carrying out its own scientific evaluation.		

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019



## Conclusions

**Has support through cross-border cooperation between public administrations balanced governance capacities at regional level in the AT-HU border region and eventually led to more harmonised cross-border strategies and processes?**

SO 4.1 projects contribute a great deal to cross-border **cooperation between public administrations**, and some of the projects have already achieved **joint agreements and common standards**. A considerable proportion of the projects have contributed, or aim to contribute, to **balancing governance capacities** in the cross-border region. Most successful were projects with a **specific focus**. Projects with the potential to achieve a balanced governance capacity are Age-friendly Region and ConnReg AT-HU. Projects with the potential to harmonise cross-border strategies and processes – or which have already achieved this – include Ökoachse, Age-friendly Region, Fairwork, Joint Ambrosia Action, and WomEn-Puls. Age-friendly Region, for example, includes a scientific evaluation that implies the chance to improve the practicability of the results and so help to develop successful solutions for the entire common border area.

In any case, the tangible value of these projects lies in their durability and potential uptake after the project funding ends. Intangible benefits lie with the participants, though in many cases it remains an open question whether those participants are able to transfer the benefits in their organisational surroundings.

**Has the implementation and strengthening of people-to-people activities, and of new and existing networks and cooperation platforms at local and regional level, resulted in joint regional strategies, processes, services and activities?**

It can be said that around 70% of the projects have already achieved, or show a high potential to achieve, cross-border strategies, processes and services, and thus a better understanding among governmental actors.

Supplementary results of the projects, such as tools and small-scale investments, have to be considered as important anchor points for lasting project impact.

However, both 'cross-border activities' and 'better cooperation' are rather vague labels for results that can be easily met by most projects.

Although SO 4.1 is a test-bed for cooperation in new fields, it also mirrors the **requirement for thematic concentration** at programme level. Some projects in SO 4.1 (e.g. City Cooperation II) risk losing perspective and addressing too many topics and actors.





### 3.7.2 Evaluation question 4.1.2 – impact

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to intensifying cooperation intensity and quality in the border region?**

#### Findings

The contribution to intensifying the intensity and quality of cooperation in the border region is addressed by result indicator RI 4.1. This indicator value is based on regular standardised surveys performed by the JS among a selection of stakeholders.<sup>30</sup> The indicator shows an increase of 4.81 percentage points, most probably correlating to the increasing number of projects approved in the programme. In principle the result indicator is relevant, although the term ‘cooperation quality’ as such is difficult to grasp and the survey results might be biased.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 53: Programme result indicators for SO 4.1**

RI		Baseline value 2014	Target value 2023	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 4.1	Level of cooperation quality in the border region (measured as a percentage of the highest rating)	54.03%	65%	58.84% <sup>32</sup>	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

Observation: To be reported next time in AIR2020

#### Conclusions

Due to the fact that among the projects in SO 4.1 only three are just finalised and the others are still ongoing, the effect on intensified cooperation as a result of the projects cannot yet receive a final answer. However, projects in SO 4.1 achieved results in terms of **joint strategies and legal changes**, so it can be assumed that the SO **contributed to intensified cooperation**. This is supported by the answers from the online survey (Annex 5, Figure 59 and Figure 60). Nevertheless, the **lack of tangible results** as well as of durability ranks among the recurring weaknesses of Interreg projects. Experiences from the previous periods show that that these projects have a **high risk of ending after funding ceases** (Figure 7, page 22). It is evident that these projects need a certain amount of ongoing funding.

<sup>30</sup> The sample of institutions is taken from the database of the JS, which has evolved over the years of Interreg programme implementation; according to the CP it includes actual and potential beneficiaries from the periods 2007-13 and 2014-20.

<sup>31</sup> We can assume that successful applicants will be more inclined to take part in a survey than representatives of rejected applications.

<sup>32</sup> For 2017; next reporting date is 2020.



### 3.7.3 Evaluation question 4.1.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

#### Findings

**Table 54: Intervention logic and strategic approach – SO 4.1**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 28).	
	Result indicator 4.1 'Level of cooperation in the border region' is relevant, even though 'cooperation quality' as such is difficult to measure and the survey results might be biased.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO is per se a very open objective. This is reflected in the different topics addressed by the projects. This is considered positive.	
Selected topics	Selected topics are in line with the measures proposed in the programme (Annex 4, Table 86).	
Used and unused synergies	There are potential synergies between SO 4.1 and other SOs (e.g. SO 1.1 and SO 4.2). However, they are not yet adequately used.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	Thanks to the openness of the SO topics, the current needs of the border region could be supported.	
Target group	The target groups correspond to the SO of improving institutional cross-border cooperation to strengthen integration. Local and regional authorities constitute by far the largest target group. Outreach to the national level as well as to the economy is limited. Several of the projects target significant numbers of citizens – an important aspect in strengthening the visibility of the programme 'on the ground.' Some projects (Ökoachse, Fairwork, Joint Ambrosia) report a very high number of target groups (general public) addressed, which might not reflect the true reach of the projects (Annex 3, Table 77).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019, Cooperation programme, Application forms, Project reports, Websites

#### Conclusions

The strategic approach for SO 4.1 addresses the **central meaning of Interreg**. However, the SO implementation meets the needs of the region only if appropriate projects are funded. Thus the selection procedure needs to react flexibly to current needs. Projects in this SO have the potential to address pressing needs in the region and are open to **small scale people-to-people activities**. The latter are currently embedded in larger projects and so not clearly visible, but they have clear benefits and contribute to the SO.



### 3.7.4 Evaluation question 4.1.4 – efficiency

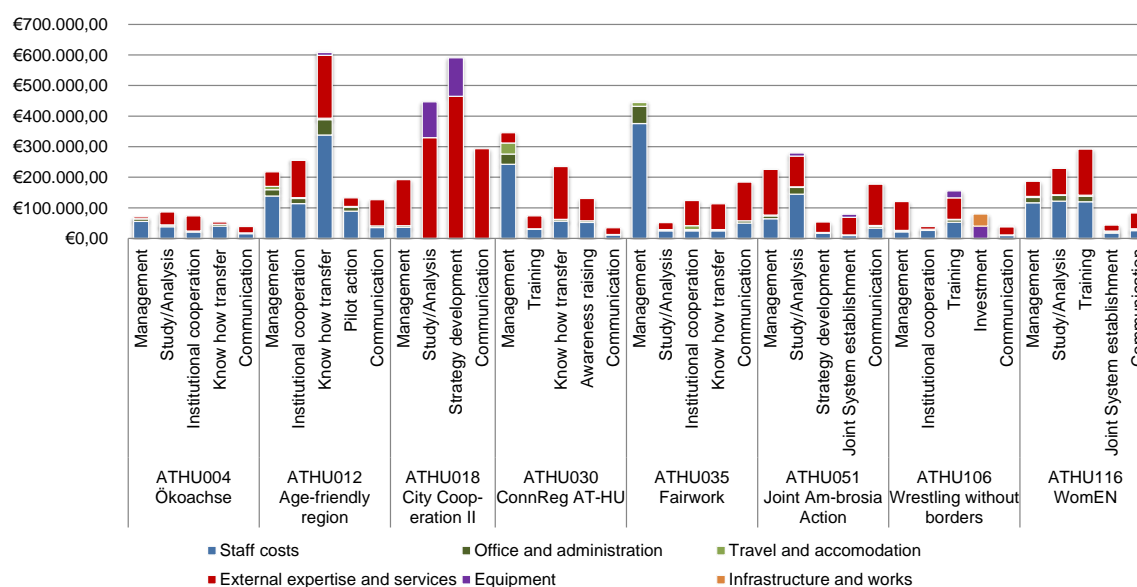
**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project report, analysis of the budget allocation shows a very high share of external expertise (average 51%). City Cooperation II has a particularly high share of external expertise (81%) in preparing studies and developing strategy.

The project budgets are fairly evenly split among different types of activities, though 'management' has the highest average budget, with some projects showing an exceptionally high share (ConnReg 42%, Fairwork 48%) (Figure 18).

**Figure 18: Budget per activity and project – SO 4.1**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

#### Conclusions

Interreg projects tend to be less efficient than other forms of funding, due to their additional administrative requirements and cooperative approach. However, projects in SO 4.1 in many cases would not be realised without Interreg funding. It is therefore necessary to continue such projects within Interreg and accept the risk of lower efficiency.

The most important element of Interreg projects is their **joint activities and cooperation at all levels**. In projects with a high share of **external expertise**, especially in work packages other than management, the **danger of losing the cooperation effect** and know-how after the project ends is considerably higher. Especially in SO 4.1, where cooperation is the main aim, the budget allocation should be reconsidered.



### 3.8 Specific objective 4.2

#### 3.8.1 Evaluation question 4.2.1 – effectiveness

**Evaluation question 4: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to intensifying cooperation intensity and quality in the border region?**

- Evaluation question 4.c: How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to increased intercultural understanding and knowledge as well as to enhanced labour mobility of the border population?
- Evaluation question 4.d: Has vocational training positively influenced the region's challenges with regard to the labour market, such as brain drain and lack of qualified personnel?

**Table 55: Elements of the intervention logic SO 4.2**

<b>SO</b>	<b>4.2</b>	Strengthening intercultural capacities and labour mobility of the border population by supporting cross-border education initiatives and vocational training
<b>TO</b>	<b>11</b>	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF
<b>IP</b>	<b>iv</b>	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions

Source: Cooperation programme Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Version 3.0 adopted by EC on 12 March 2018

#### Findings

At the time of the evaluation **five projects** with 23 partners addressed SO 4.2. The current projects under SO 4.2 show a marked financial emphasis on three large cooperation projects involving the major school authorities in Hungary and Austria. Three out of five projects are almost finished.

In September 2019 the absorption rate of SO 4.2 was 100%.<sup>33</sup>

The projects are predominantly either pilot approaches or last mile projects. BIG AT-HU and CEPI are follow-ups to projects implemented in 2007-2013.

The **aims** of the projects are:

- harmonised skill development based on the needs of regional SMEs (REBE II, ELDRIS),
- fostering multilingual and inter-cultural competencies (BIG AT-HU),
- cooperation among education institutions (BIG AT-HU, CEPI, CODES AT-HU).

<sup>33</sup> The indicative ERDF allocation for SO 4.1 amounts to EUR 8.064,231 ,60







Table 56: Projects in SO 4.2

Project		Start	End	Status quo	ERDF budget (EUR)	Type of project
BIG AT-HU	ATHU001	01.02.2016	31.10.2019	Contracted	2,462,732.05	Pilot Last mile
EDLRIS	ATHU009	01.01.2017	31.05.2020	Contracted	701,619.02	Pilot
CEPI	ATHU019	01.09.2016	31.10.2020	Contracted	768,564.61	Pilot Last mile
REBE II	ATHU026	01.01.2017	31.12.2019	Contracted	902,151.73	Pilot
CODES AT-HU	ATHU074	01.09.2018	31.08.2021	Contracted	1,678,799.98	Pilot
BIG_inn*	ATHU129	01.11.2019	31.10.2022	Pre-contract	2,281,985.15	Pilot Last mile
<i>Total contracted</i>					<i>6,513,867.39</i>	
<i>Grand total</i>					<i>8,795,852.54</i>	

Source: Interreg At-HU Joint secretariat, list of projects 10.10.2019, own considerations. Projects marked with an asterisk\* are not part of the detailed analysis

### Beneficiaries

In SO 4.2 currently 23 project partners are involved in five projects (Table 57). The **types of beneficiaries** show an expected distribution for a SO focusing on cooperation in education. The strong involvement of higher education and research points to the increasing interest of universities and similar actors in cooperation.

Table 57: Types of contracted beneficiaries in SO 4.2

Type of beneficiary	Number
Interest groups including NGOs	3
Higher education and research	9
Education/training centres and schools	5
Local, regional, national public authorities	5
Other	1
Total	23

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat – Project partner-18072019

### Output indicator

48% of the programme output target for 'Joint cross-border cultural, educational, recreational and other type of community events and actions' and 7% of the programme output target for 'Labour market and training' have been achieved (Table 58). At the time of reporting, BIG AT-HU and CEPI were the main contributors to OI 41 and only Age-friendly Region contributed to CO 46.





**Table 58: Output indicators for SO 4.2**

OI		Target value programme level	Achieved <sup>34</sup>	2019 forecast <sup>35</sup>	Achievement compared to project forecast 09.2019	Achievement compared to programme target 09.2019
OI 42	Joint cross-border cultural, educational, recreational and other type of community events and actions ('people to people')	25	12	19	63%	48%
CO 46	Labour market and training: Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across the border	200	13	208	6%	7%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat - Output\_Indicator-18 07 2019

The following measures and effects have been addressed by the contracted projects (application forms, see Annex 3, Table 78):

- acquiring and improving qualifications, skills and competencies (5 projects),
- increasing the number of institutions involved in cross-border cooperation (2 projects),
- serving the needs of SMEs and the joint labour market (2 projects),
- enhancing intercultural understanding and knowledge (5 projects),
- mutual acceptance of qualifications (1 project),
- enhancing labour mobility (3 projects).

**Project results** explicitly prospected are:

- curricula in the fields of robotics and AI,
- summer schools,
- teaching resources.

<sup>34</sup> accepted project reports as at 09.2019

<sup>35</sup> provided by beneficiaries as at 09.2019



Online survey

In total 12 people responded in the online survey: nine from Austria and three from Hungary. The positive result is that in both countries most respondents either fully or partially agreed with the following statements:

- the project positively changed our mindset about HU/AT,
- we now have a better shared understanding of the administrative setup in HU/AT,
- we are planning another joint activity resulting from the project.

These answers confirm that beneficiaries are cooperating 'at eye level' and the general attitude is largely positive. However, three AT respondents out of nine reported some problems in the cooperation partnership (see also Annex 5, Figure 61 and Figure 62).

Durability

Due to the fact that none of the projects in SO 4.2 is finalised, the durability of the projects cannot be assessed at this stage. Lack of both tangible results and durability rank among the recurring weaknesses of Interreg projects (Figure 7, page 22).

Summary of findings from the evaluation sub-questions – SO 4.2

**Table 59: Summary of findings from the evaluation questions – SO 4.2**

Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to <b>increased intercultural understanding and knowledge</b> as well as to enhanced <b>labour mobility of the border population</b> ?	In total three HU responses addressed the questions for SO 4.2 in the 2014-2020 programming period. Those three respondents were generally positive about the effect of the projects on the mindset of the people involved and their joint understanding of administrative structures.		Survey Annex 5, Figure 61 Figure 62
	Two major projects address school education in a bilingual and intercultural context (BIG AT-HU, CODES AT-HU). A third major project targeting a similar field is already approved (BIG_inn).	64%	Application form Progress report eMS Annex 3 Table 78
	Three smaller projects refer to the development of more specific skills (ELDRIS, CEPI, REBE II)	36%	
	All the projects touch sectors enabling skills that are highly relevant to the regional labour market.	100%	
	Two of the projects (REBE II, EDLRIS) are also heading for mutual acceptance of their curricula. This is a crucial step, since only a mutually accepted curriculum is a clear asset in both countries forming the cross-border labour market. REBE II is attempting to develop a curriculum that would become an acknowledged part of education in both AT and HU.	25%	
	BIG AT-HU creates a complete methodological and didactic package of guidelines and materials for teaching and learning. It addresses continuous language education and the strengthening of social and emotional skills, forming the basis for	38%	



Sub-question	Findings	Share of budget	Reference
	language education and lifelong learning at the interface between kindergarten and school.		
Has vocational training positively influenced the region's challenges with regard to the <b>labour market</b> , such as <b>brain drain</b> and lack of <b>qualified personnel</b> ?	Project results achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• curricula in the fields of robotics and AI (EDLRIS)</li> <li>• summer schools (CEPI)</li> <li>• teaching resources (CODES AT-HU)</li> <li>• vocational training on the HU side (REBE II)</li> </ul>	62%	
	EDLRIS and REBE II and CEPI are trying to establish curricula and provide training in fields relevant to the regional economy.	36%	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

### Conclusions

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to increased intercultural understanding and knowledge as well as to enhanced labour mobility of the border population?**

The project that is by far the largest in SO 4.2 contributes to **intercultural and multi-lingual competence**. Such skills, especially knowledge of the neighbouring languages, are key qualifications for participation in social and economic life. In addition, they help to lay the groundwork for future cross-border cooperation and higher mobility in the common labour market.

However, it is not possible to measure the actual enhancement of labour mobility based on those projects.

**Has vocational training positively influenced the region's challenges with regard to the labour market, such as brain drain and lack of qualified personnel?**

There are two types of projects:

- one focusing mainly on **reducing language barriers** across the border and supporting the educational system in general,
- and others that focus on **specific topics** such as robotics, animal welfare and energy.

The immediate results of the projects are the provision of a **basis for language education and lifelong learning for several different levels and sectors**. BIG AT-HU and CODES AT-HU, for example, provide capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, and training to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels.

The projects EDLRIS, CEPI, and REBE II target technology training, research and knowledge transfer. In the long run these projects have the **potential to address the regional labour market** if they are taken up by the general public and in some cases by SMEs and employees. However, labour market challenges depend to a large extent on aspects outside the scope of the programme, and thus the impact of the programme will remain limited.



### 3.8.2 Evaluation question 4.2.2 – impact

**How far have the projects under this investment priority contributed to intensifying cooperation intensity and quality in the border region?**

#### Findings

The result indicator ‘Institutions involved in cross-border education schemes’ is based on results collected at project level. Its status by the end of 2018 indicates that it is quite likely the initial target will be surpassed.

**Table 60: Programme result indicators for SO 4.2**

RI		Baseline value 2014	Target value 2023	Achieved 2018	Forecast provided by beneficiaries
RI 4.2	Institutions involved in cross-border education schemes	35	45	55	

Source: Annual Implementation Report, Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary, Reporting period: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2018

With one contracted (selected) SO 4.2 project in 2018, 7 new actors (project partners and strategic partners) were counted who are new to cross-border education schemes.

#### Conclusions

**Intercultural learning approaches in education rank among the most effective approaches to address barriers** and prejudices, and to foster changes of perspective and mindset. The innovative character of such projects might be limited, but it is **important to sustain such initiatives** in Interreg programmes since quite often cross-border education initiatives lack political interest due to the dominance of national priorities. This corresponds with the perception provided in the online survey: that the projects supported positive changes of mindset, better shared understanding and the planning of joint activities. A study on cross-border obstacles highlighted the need to overcome language barriers as well.<sup>36</sup>

It will be hard to ‘mainstream’ cross-border cooperation in education due to budgetary restrictions and focus on national priorities in both countries. **Thus without support it is very likely that intensity of cooperation will drop.**

At programme level, the future of efforts in education should be discussed.

<sup>36</sup> EC DG Regio, overcoming obstacles in border regions, April 2016



### 3.8.3 Evaluation question 4.2.3 – strategic approach

**How far has the chosen strategic approach been appropriate?**

*Findings*

**Table 61: Intervention logic SO and strategic approach - 4.2**

Judgment criteria	Findings	Score
Link between measures, results and objectives	There is a clear link between the measures planned and the intended results in the intervention logic (Annex 2, Figure 29).	
	The result indicator 'Institutions involved in cross-border education schemes' reflects an immediate result and thus is measurable and relevant. The indicator is relevant, but to represent a convincing result the term 'scheme' should be interpreted as active participation in a shared action plan running on a longer-term basis. Thus the figures provided by beneficiaries should be subject to detailed assessment at the end of each project. The status by the end of 2018 indicates that it is quite likely the initial target will be surpassed. Supplementary results of the projects, such as tools and small-scale investments, are important anchor points for lasting project impact.	
Degree of thematic concentration	The SO is very much focused on labour market issues and skills development, which reflects the logic of the SO.	
Selected topics	All projects selected topics directly related to the SO and contributing to it (Annex 4, Table 87).	
Used and unused synergies	There are potential synergies between SO 4.2 and other SOs. However, they are not yet active.	
New needs in the border region not tackled by the programme	The needs of the border region are adequately addressed. However, it remains open how far the projects can actually contribute to these needs. More importantly, success depends on the durability of the project results and how far the labour market will take up the results.	
Target groups	The target groups correspond to the SO, strengthening intercultural capacities and labour mobility of the border population by supporting cross-border education initiatives and vocational training. By far the largest target groups are SMEs and schools ( Annex 3, Table 78 and Table 79).	

Source: M&E Factory et al September 2019

**Conclusions**

The strategic approach is most appropriate for Interreg projects. SO 4.2 is less broad, but it **overlaps with SO 1.1**. SO 4.2 addresses subjects that have little attention at national level and thus need to be continuously supported by Interreg. The need for **joint labour market support** is appropriately addressed in SO 4.2. Synergies between SO 4.2 and SO 1.1 remain idle.



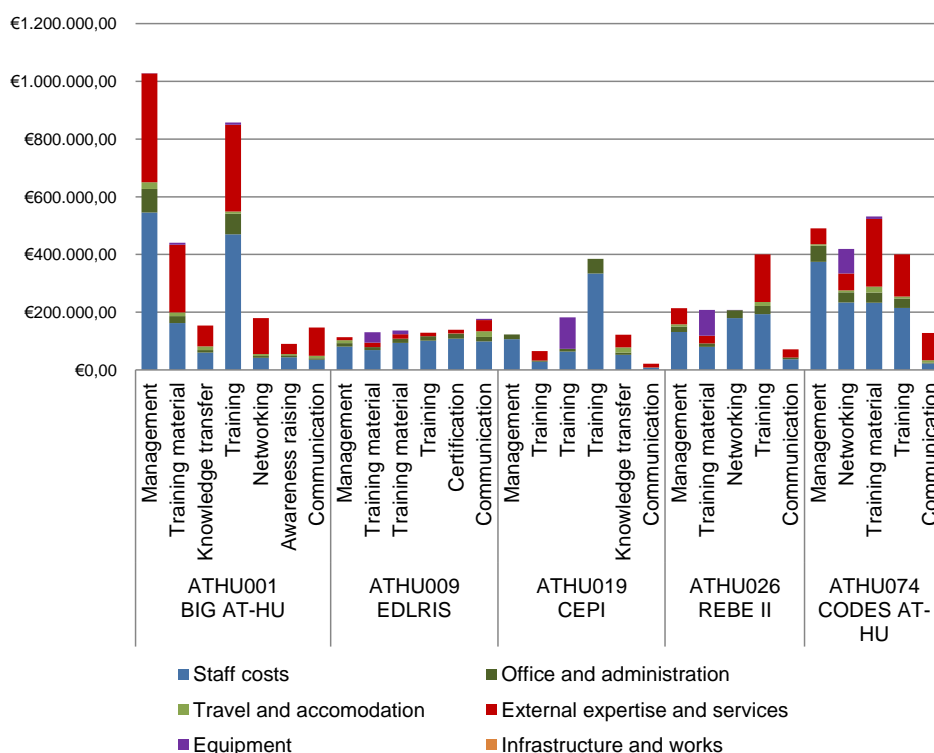
### 3.8.4 Evaluation question 4.2.4 – efficiency

**Would there have been a more cost-effective way to reach the specific objective?**

#### Findings

Based on the application forms and project report, analysis of the budget allocation shows that external expertise receives moderate budget allocations in all the projects. The budget distribution among types of activities is reasonable; only one project stands out with a high share of management costs (BIG AT-HU, at 35.5%).

**Figure 19: Budget per activity and project – SO 4.2**



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and progress reports eMS September 2019

#### Conclusions

In general the **budget shares are smaller compared to SO 4.1** and projects that are **closer to the economy** (e.g. EDLRIS, REBE II and CEPI) reveal comparatively small shares. One of the **sensitive cost elements in projects is management costs**. High costs here might point to inefficient management, but they can also result from the administrative burden common to Interreg projects.

BIG AT-HU stands out with a rather high share of management costs that does not seem to be entirely justified. For example, the project has allocated 77% of its budget to the Austrian partner; this seems to be geographically unbalanced. The Austrian dominance might be regarded as a critical issue, since the availability of funding in education is probably **more challenging on the Hungarian side**.



### 3.9 Results related to all four priorities

#### Have the integrated approach and horizontal principles been considered as planned?

The number of projects explicitly addressing horizontal principles is comparably low with 37% of the projects (excluding double counting). While sustainability has the highest contribution with 11 projects gender equality and non-discrimination are only addressed directly with two projects each (Table 62). Based on the table below it can be said that SO 4.1 is most important for addressing horizontal principles.

**Table 62: Number of projects addressing horizontal principles direct**

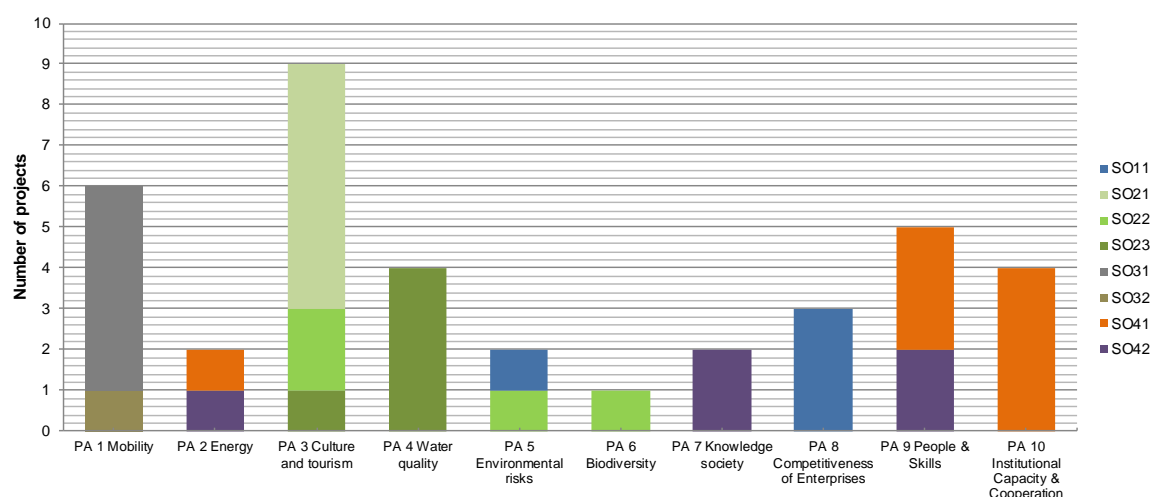
Horizontal principles	SO 1.1	SO 2.1	SO 2.2	SO 2.3	SO 3.1	SO 3.2	SO 4.1	SO 4.2
Gender equality	1 (25%)						3 (37,5%)	
Non-discrimination							1 (12,5%)	1 (20%)
Sustainability		1 (17%)	2 (50%)	4 (80%)			2 (25%)	2 (40%)

Source: project descriptions eMS 09/2019

#### How far has the programme contributed to EU2020 and macro regional strategies?

Regarding the contribution to the Danube Region Strategy the programme contributes to a very high extent to Priority area 3 (Culture and tourism) and 1A (Waterways mobility) and 1B (Rail-Road-Air Mobility) followed by Priority area 9 (People and skills). The lowest contribution shows the programme to Priority area 6 (Biodiversity) (1 project) (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Programme contribution to the EUSDR**



Source: project descriptions eMS 09/2019





## 4 Conclusions

The following section summarises the main issues and conclusions from the previous section and links them to the evaluation questions, with a focus on the programme level. The section answers three main evaluation questions of importance for the future programming period:

- the most promising and successful objectives in the current programme,
- the topics that can continue in the future,
- what could be adapted in the future to improve the programme implementation.

### Which interventions can be considered as particularly successful? Which objectives have been unerringly achieved?

The overall aim of the programme is to “prepare strategic action and pilot projects in fields such as the improvement of poor accessibility or inappropriate business environment, the lack of networks among local and regional administrations, environmental pollution or risk prevention. A second focus is to exploit the untapped potentials in the border area and to concentrate on issues close to the needs of the population in the border region”.<sup>37</sup>

In addressing this overall objective there are two groups of interventions that are more successful:

- Projects in **risk management and environmental protection** have the potential to contribute successfully to the objectives of the programme, and in many cases have already done so.
- Projects with the aim of **better cooperation of administrative bodies** in aspects such as environmental and risk prevention, the labour market and education also have great potential for successful impact achievement. Additionally, in many cases they provide intangible results in terms of a better atmosphere for cooperation at the border (the so-called ‘cross-border marker’).

### Are there links identifiable between the programme’s topics or achievements and the new overarching EU frameworks post 2020 (e.g. EU2030)?

The current 2014-2020 Interreg AT-HU programme addresses **topics and objectives that are all covered in the new programming period** (Annex 6, Table 88). Some of the projects also address other specific objectives from the post 2020 legislative proposal. Thus the following specific objectives of the future proposed legal framework are addressed by the chosen investment priorities of the 2014-2020 Interreg AT-HU cooperation programme:

- PO 1 iii) enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs;
- PO 2 v) promoting sustainable water management;
- PO 2 vii) enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution;
- *PO 3 ii) developing a sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent, secure and inter-modal TEN-T* (this specific objective is only indirectly addressed by the current projects, since four out of five are road projects and thus not sustainable);

<sup>37</sup> Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 cooperation programme, page 5.





- PO 3 iii) developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility;
- PO 3 iv) promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility;
- PO 5 ii) fostering integrated social, economic and environmental local development, cultural heritage and security, including for rural and coastal areas, including through community-led local development;
- Interreg priority 4 a)ii enhancing efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions.

Additionally, current projects contribute to the following future specific objectives:

- PO 1 i) enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies;
- PO 2 iv) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience;
- PO 4 3d) improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services across borders;
- PO 4 3e) promoting social inclusion and tackling poverty, including by enhancing equal opportunities and combating discrimination across borders;
- Interreg priority 4 a)i) enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders.

Considering all the proposed novelties in the legal framework post 2020, the current programme could be continued in the new programming period, especially with PO 2 and PO 4. When continuing with PO 3 a clear focus on sustainability of mobility projects should be ensured. In the light of a potentially reduced future budget, the programme should focus on two to three specific objectives and improve the utilisation of synergies at programme and project level, for example by embedding projects in a more strategic framework. However, the thematic focus should not be narrowed and should allow new topics, such as for example healthcare and social inclusion. Experience from best practices, for example in SOs 2.3 and 4.1, should be used for future project development.

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden should be of high priority in the future programming period in order to ensure better cost-effectiveness.

**Which conclusions can be drawn from the evaluation results concerning impact and the current implementation status of the programme for future funding interventions?**

Section 3 shows that projects with a **clear thematic focus have a higher potential** to achieve measurable impact than projects which cover a wide range of different partners and topics.





A second fundamental conclusion is that **projects have more to offer** than just their outputs and result indicators measures. These so-called 'other project outputs' are the ones which should be taken up and learned from when developing the new programming period. The outputs are not limited to measurable results such as joint agreements, legislative changes or investments; they also comprise intangible results such as better understanding people in other countries and an increasing interest in cross-border cooperation. The survey results reflected the fact that the majority of the projects contributed to these 'cross-border markers'.

In particular, projects in SOs 2.3, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2, and partly 2.2, have the highest potential to contribute to regional needs and address the Interreg objectives with concrete results.

**Projects with a high share of investments are difficult to manage** and require better risk management and reporting. Apart from this, the distribution of funding among partners should be distributed more equally. Current observations show that one partner, NIF Nemzeti Infrastruktúra Fejlesztő zártkörűen működő Részvénytársaság, has around 17% of the total contracted programme budget (as of September 2019) (Annex 7). In terms of numbers of projects, Land Burgenland heads the table as the lead partner in around 10% of all projects (Table 64).

**The current indicators are not suitable for measuring the real added value** of the projects. Better indicators should be chosen to be more suitable for the needs of the particular region and achievable by the limited number of projects to be incorporated.

The programme objectives contain **sectoral objectives** (transport, environment, energy, natural and cultural heritage) and **horizontal objectives** (innovation, SME, labour market, government issues). It could be possible to reduce the programme to sectoral priorities only, and to define horizontal<sup>38</sup> objectives via the sectoral topics (e.g. innovation, education).

The implementation of the programme depends to a degree on the narrative of a theme or objective. In other words, **each topic needs a sequence of different types of projects** to be successfully implemented (section 2.1.2) Thus in many cases a topic needs a political or strategic background before starting actual pilot actions and implementation measures. This should be considered when promoting and evaluating projects in the future. In many cases the currently implemented projects include aspects of political cooperation, strategy development, and pilot activities as well as last mile projects. However, the combination of different levels of cooperation, as foreseen in the project life cycle, seems to be random rather than strategic. The implementation of those thematic aspects in cross-border cooperation projects should be aimed for where adequate preconditions are met and existing networks are available.

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<sup>38</sup> In this case we are not referring to the horizontal principles of the European legislative framework.





Finally, most of the projects are at a very early stage. It remains an open question whether the programme will be able to start on time in the next programming period. However, it should be borne in mind that **impacts of the projects are only measurable at a very late stage.**





## 5 Recommendations

The previous sections contained conclusions as well as indicative recommendations directly related to these. To give a better overview, the recommendations are condensed in Table 63 below. This contains recommendations related to the following levels:

- programme level, including specific objectives,
- strategy level,
- project level,
- project budget, covering specific aspects in terms of efficiency.





Table 63: Recommendations for the future programming period

Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
Programme	<b>Focus on PO 2 and PO 4 topics in the future.</b> <i>Projects in these two topics were more successful in terms of addressing specific objectives and have a high potential to address post 2020 objectives.</i>	This approach allows for a thematic concentration in the programme and more flexibility in budget allocation during programme implementation.	x		Program ming group
Programme	<b>Reduce the expectations for tangible results and accept results that are intangible, not measurable.</b> <i>Interreg projects are primarily cooperation projects among people. This unquestionable benefit of the programme is intangible and very difficult to measure, but should be a continuous aim of the programme.</i>	Achieve a better cross-border understanding.	x	x	Program ming group
Programme PO 1	<b>The necessary SME support should be addressed through more suitable instruments than Interreg.</b> <i>The needs addressed in the border obstacle paper of the European Commission<sup>39</sup> should be addressed by institutional support rather than cross-border funding, which does not have the financial capacity to achieve a substantial contribution in this matter.</i>	More effective implementation of the programme.	x	x	Program ming group
Programme PO 2	<b>Cross-border risk management, especially in relation to environmental and climate change, should continue.</b> <i>In this respect the emphasis should be on risk management. Another aspect of cross-border cooperation could be the difference in legal and ownership frameworks and the impact of those on environmental protection.</i>	Cross-border risk management is not supported by national governments. Interreg plays an important role in filling this gap.	x		Program ming group

<sup>39</sup> European Commission DG Regio, Overcoming obstacles in border regions, April 2016



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
Programme PO 3	<p><b>If Interreg continues with transport projects, the future programme should focus on sustainable transport rather than roads.</b></p> <p><i>Interreg programmes should be used for people-to-people projects rather than pure infrastructure projects. In this respect roads, especially high-level roads, do not directly address Interreg objectives. Furthermore, when addressing future policy objectives projects should only address sustainable mobility. Projects should thus focus on public transport rather than individual transport, with the aim of reducing environmental pollution and improving direct connectivity across borders, especially in the southern part of the region.</i></p>	Keep the aim of CBC programmes.	x		Program ming group
Programme PO 3	<p><b>It is recommended to focus on direct accessibility at the border region rather than projects linking to the TEN-T network.</b></p> <p><i>Projects should focus on direct and sustainable cross-border links rather than high-level transport networks.</i></p>	Higher level of effectiveness.	x		Program ming group
Programme PO 3	<p><b>In the case of larger projects with various different activities and the character of a sub-programme (e.g. SMART-Pannonia) it is recommended to conduct a project survey.</b></p> <p><i>This should allow better reflection of the actual results of these large projects. The survey should be done after the finalisation of the project. The target group for the survey should be users of public transport, households, local enterprises, and commuters. It is assumed that the project partners are experienced in conducting such surveys and thus should build on this experience.</i></p>	Better understand the benefit of those large projects and support future planning.		x	MC
Programme PO 4	<p><b>Continue with SO 4.1 in a flexible and responsive manner.</b></p> <p><i>Priority 4 is very flexible in terms of project topics. This has allowed for a wide range of projects with different, and in some cases very valuable, results for the region.</i></p>	Potential for a variety of different topics and projects.	x	x	MC



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programming phase	Programme implementation on 2021-2027	Responsible body
	<i>The strategic approach of SO 4.1 is important to remain flexible in addressing present needs in the region. It should thus continue in the future programming period.</i>				
Programme PO 4	<b>Continue to support early years language learning.</b> <i>The programme management should reflect which actors in the education system should benefit from the next generation of education projects. Notwithstanding the need for innovation, it should be acknowledged that language barriers are the main obstacle in the border region and need to be continuously addressed in Interreg programmes. Projects that continue over several funding periods might be justified in the context of the needs of the regions.</i>	Clear focus and visible results. Balance in project partners.	x	x	MC
Programme	<b>Simplify result indicators.</b> <i>Define RIs that link directly to the programme activities and measures.</i>	Measurable indicators.	x		Programming group
Programme	<b>Distinguish between different types of projects:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agreements at political level (e.g. memoranda of understanding)</li> <li>• strategy developments and legislative achievements,</li> <li>• pilot projects,</li> <li>• last mile projects.</li> </ul> <i>For project mapping in the implementation process it is recommended to visualise different types of projects. The implementation of the programme depends to a degree on the narrative of a theme or objective. In other words, each theme needs a sequence of different types of projects to be successfully implemented. Thus in many cases a topic needs a political or strategic background before starting actual pilot actions and implementation measures. This should be considered when promoting and evaluating projects in the future.</i>	More coherent project management to achieve specific objectives. Better forecasting and argumentation when selecting projects.	x	x	Programming group
Programme	<b>Considering intangible results such as 'cultural markers' as an important parameter in project evaluation.</b>	Better cross-border understanding.		x	RC/MC





Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
	<i>However, make sure that the results are achievable and coherently described in the project application.</i>				
Programme	<b>For projects aiming for cooperation among people, a simplified approach is recommended.</b> <i>This could be in the form of a small project fund or by introducing specific simplified cost options for people-to-people projects.</i>	Better cross-border understanding.		x	Program ming group
Programme	<b>To measure the actual impact of the projects, another small-scale impact evaluation should be conducted two years after the finalisation of the programme.</b> The current evaluation is based on projects of which 75% are not finished and thus have no measurable impact. Future impact evaluations should be planned with a realistic timetable. <i>The future evaluation plan should allow for more flexibility and asks for an ex-post evaluation at the programme level. Additional evaluations should be done when needed. The efficiency of the programme implementation, on the other hand, can be evaluated earlier in the period.</i>	Better utilisation of evaluation results.		x	MC
Programme	<b>Reports of target groups reached should be more realistic.</b> <i>Reports on the target groups addressed differ widely between projects. In some cases the reported numbers are very small, whereas in others they reflect the total number of newsletters sent out. These different approaches seem to make the 'target group' indicator impractical. It should be reconsidered or replaced.</i>	A more realistic number of target groups (especially when addressing the general public) could make the indicator more valuable for future programme evaluation and policy reporting.	x		Program ming group
Strategy	<b>Projects related to cultural and natural heritage should be embedded in a strategic framework.</b> <i>The future programme proposal foresees a strategy development for projects in priority 5. This concerns, among other things, projects related to cultural and natural heritage. The current</i>	More effectiveness and efficiency for tourism projects.	x	x	Program ming group



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
	<i>projects in SO 2.1 show that a strategic umbrella would increase the added value of projects and the durability of their results. A strategic approach does not necessarily require an official strategy development between HU and AT. It could instead be based on joint agreements and better coordination among the different projects in the region.</i>				
Strategy	<b>Open up dialog with new stakeholders before programming (e.g. in the fields of security, health, and risk prevention).</b> <i>The new programming period allows more flexibility and thus greater weight for projects such as those in SO 4.1. The programme preparation phase would benefit from addressing new project areas and project partners in fields such as health, security and the circular economy.</i>	New project ideas.	x		Program ming group
Strategy	<b>The southern part of the region might need more consideration during project selection.</b> <i>Despite the aim of supporting accessibility and social and economic development in the southern part of the region, projects are still concentrated in the middle and northern part. It might therefore be helpful to focus on strategic projects in specific thematic fields. This however would need a more strategic approach combining different topics such as tourism, economy and infrastructure. Funding support should not be directed randomly to the southern part of the region without a strategic approach.</i>	Address the needs of the regions.	x	x	MA/JS
Strategy	<b>Synergies with other CBC programmes might be of advantage.</b> <i>Interreg overlaps with several other CBC programmes with sometimes different thematic concentrations. The programme might be able to benefit from more intensive cooperation with other programmes. Some topics do not focus only on the Interreg AT-HU region and might have more success when extended to other programmes. Topics such as tourism might</i>	Learning from others.	x	x	MA/JS RC



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
	<i>benefit from being embedded in a wider field, including other regions.</i>				
Project	<b>Initiate and utilise synergies between projects.</b> <i>Currently there are various synergies between projects in each SO and in different SOs. However, there is no evidence that these synergies are utilised. In particular, synergies between SOs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 4.1 should be better utilised. This requires links not only between projects but also between beneficiaries of different projects. This is most important between international and national tourism platforms.</i>	Improved efficiency and effectiveness of projects and a higher probability of take-up after project funding.	x	x	MA/JS RC
Project	<b>Reflect the heterogeneity of the region.</b> <i>Large projects covering the whole region show no specific effort to reflect the different needs in different parts of this very heterogeneous programme region. This should be a requirement when funding large projects covering the whole region.</i>	Improved effectiveness of projects and a higher probability of take-up after project funding.		x	MA/JS RC
Project	<b>Clear thematic focus leads to more successful implementation.</b> <i>Projects that aim merely to create networks are of low benefit and not sustainable. The current programme seems to focus on larger projects. From an external viewpoint one can get the impression that these large projects are in some cases less effective than their financially smaller predecessors. The budget of a project should be clearly justified, and projects should be more focused in terms of topics and achievements.</i>	Justifiable budget allocation.		x	RC JS
Project	<b>Consider life after the project.</b> <i>It is recommended to assign suitable partners to establish implementation strategies for project results after the funding ends. In this respect an efficient take-up of previous projects, especially if they are implemented from the same consortium, should be ensured. Durability of project results could be established if the project is clearly embedded in the organisations involved, but also by</i>	Increased durability of projects.		x	RC JS



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
	<i>aiming for better implementation in the strategic or legal framework of the region.</i>				
Project	<b>Better management quality of projects needs to be ensured.</b> <i>In this respect successful projects of the past could be used as best practice for future project designs. Sometimes it is better to outsource project management to let the partners focus on their key skills. However, project management costs should remain proportionate to the type of project and its activities. The share of management costs should not be a fixed percentage but should suit the actual needs of the project.</i>	Increased efficiency of projects.		x	JS LP
Project management	<b>Reporting of projects should be improved.</b> <i>Reporting needs to be simpler and its delivery from project beneficiaries improved. Some of the large infrastructure projects do not show adequate reporting discipline. This is not tolerable for projects with such large budgets.</i>	Transparency.	x		JS LP RC
Project management	<b>Projects need to be more visible.</b> <i>This applies especially to those projects which aim at a wide public. Currently they rely too much on the microsites, which do not seem to reflect the needs of the beneficiaries or are too time-consuming to use. In the case of follow-up projects, the websites of the previous projects should be adapted. It is recommended to increase the digital visibility of projects to ensure better promotion, and to allow the creation of project websites facilitated by the leading partner.</i>	Transparency.	x		MA/JS LP
Project management	<b>Push for utilisation of previous project results.</b> <i>Projects should make better use of the results of previous projects.</i>	Increased efficiency of projects.		x	JS LP
Project management	<b>Risk management should be improved.</b> <i>Projects larger than EUR 1 million should provide better risk management. Currently a lot of the projects are delayed, in</i>	Risk prevention. More efficiency.		x	JS LP



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021-2027	Respon sible body
	<i>many cases due to public procurement procedures or price deviations as construction costs change. Problems of this kind affect infrastructure projects in particular. It is therefore necessary to better plan those projects and incorporate a degree of risk planning.</i>				
Financial management	<b>Infrastructure projects should be funded only in specific cases.</b> <i>The current audit system does not allow infrastructure projects to respond flexibly to legal and market changes. Since Interreg does not foresee flexibility in payments and financial contributions, it is necessary to ensure that possible delays and cost increases are handled through the project management. Most other Interreg programmes in western Europe do not foresee large infrastructure projects.</i>	Successful implementation of projects.	x	x	Program ming group
Financial management	<b>For the purpose of assessing achievements, links between budget allocation and outputs should be improved to make them coherent.</b> <i>In some cases the budgets allocated to work packages and output indicators do not match the values of the output indicators. In some cases an output indicator was not mentioned in the programme application, but the budget allocation indicates that the output will be achieved. In other cases the application form allocated a budget to a specific output indicator, but this is not then given target value. For the purpose of evaluation, coherence between budget allocations and target values in each work package should be ensured.</i>	More transparency. Better evaluation.		x	JS LP
Financial management	<b>Key work packages in projects should not be done by external experts, in order to avoid knowledge loss after project finalisation.</b> <i>The external budget share is exceptionally high in almost all these projects. This represents a black box of expenses which at the end of the project might lead to a loss of know-how and results. Especially in relation to strategic development, research</i>	Better utilisation of project results.		x	JS LP



Level	Recommendation	Benefit	Programmi ng phase	Programme implementati on 2021- 2027	Respon sible body
	<i>or product development directly linked to the aim of the project, the involvement of external expertise should be limited.</i>				
Financial managemen t	<p><b>The allocation of project budgets between partners should be tailored along the needs of the partners in line with the type and character of the project.</b></p> <p><i>In some cases the project budget is allocated mainly to one partner, with only a limited share for others (e.g. in BIG AT-HU 77% of the ERDF funding is on the AT side; SMART-Pannonia 68% on the AT side). In some cases this means that most of the budget goes to the Austrian partner, while the Hungarian partner has only a small share. These imbalances might lead to lower future response rates on the Hungarian side. This is even more significant in light of the discussion on reducing the co-financing rate for Interreg projects.</i></p>	Increased motivation of Hungarian partners to participate.		x	JS LP
Financial managemen t	<p><b>Bureaucratic obligations on project management should be reduced where possible.</b></p> <p><i>Reducing the administrative burden would allow for more efficiency in terms of project management. This includes the development of simplified cost options for those types of projects that form the majority of the programme.</i></p>	Increased motivation of beneficiaries to apply. More efficient project implementation.	x	x	Program ming group





## Annex

### Annex 1. Network analysis

We examined the frequency of participation of all the project and lead partners (how many projects they are involved in) and the relations between the partners (what are the connection points). We illustrated the results in the diagram below. We highlighted the partners who are involved in more than through different projects.

The picture contents all the projects (indicated with project codes in light blue squares) and partners (by name). We indicated the different partner hubs with different colours.

Explanation of the pictograms:

-  : indicates the project ID-s
-  : the different colour rectangles indicate the name of project and lead partners, different hubs are indicated by different colours

The biggest partner hub is the 'Blue partner hub'. The partners of these projects concerned are somehow in relation with each other directly or indirectly (e.g. they have a common partner). The picture shows that '**Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung**' plays a central role, it is involved in 18 projects and has a lot of cooperation. It has the most active relations with the following partners (the closer they are to this organisation the stronger the relationship is):

- NIF Zrt.
- Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt.
- Észak-dunántúli Vízügyi Igazgatóság
- Széchenyi István Egyetem
- Nyugat Pannon Terület-és Gazdaságfejlesztési Szolgáltató Nkft.
- Fertőhanság Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság

'**Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH**' plays a significant role also in the blue hub, it participates in 8 projects, but it seems like its role is less centralised then the role of Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung. It has the most active relations with:

- Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt.

We have another, but much smaller hub, indicated by dark red. The partner who plays the main role in it is called: 'Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland'.

Regions with the highest number of lead partners are:

- Eisenstadt (6 LP)
- Vienna (4 LP)
- Győr (3 LP)
- Szombathely (3 LP)

The highest number of project partners is in

- Eisenstadt (35 PP)
- Szombathely (20 PP)
- Győr (18 PP)
- Vienna (17 PP)
- Sopron (10 PP)

The municipalities with the highest concentration of projects are:

- Szombathely (12 projects)





- Sopron (11 projects)
- Győr (10 projects)

Regarding the regional distribution of project implementations the following regions show an active programme contribution:

- Region around Mosonmagyaróvár
- Region around Csorna
- Border region south Burgenland

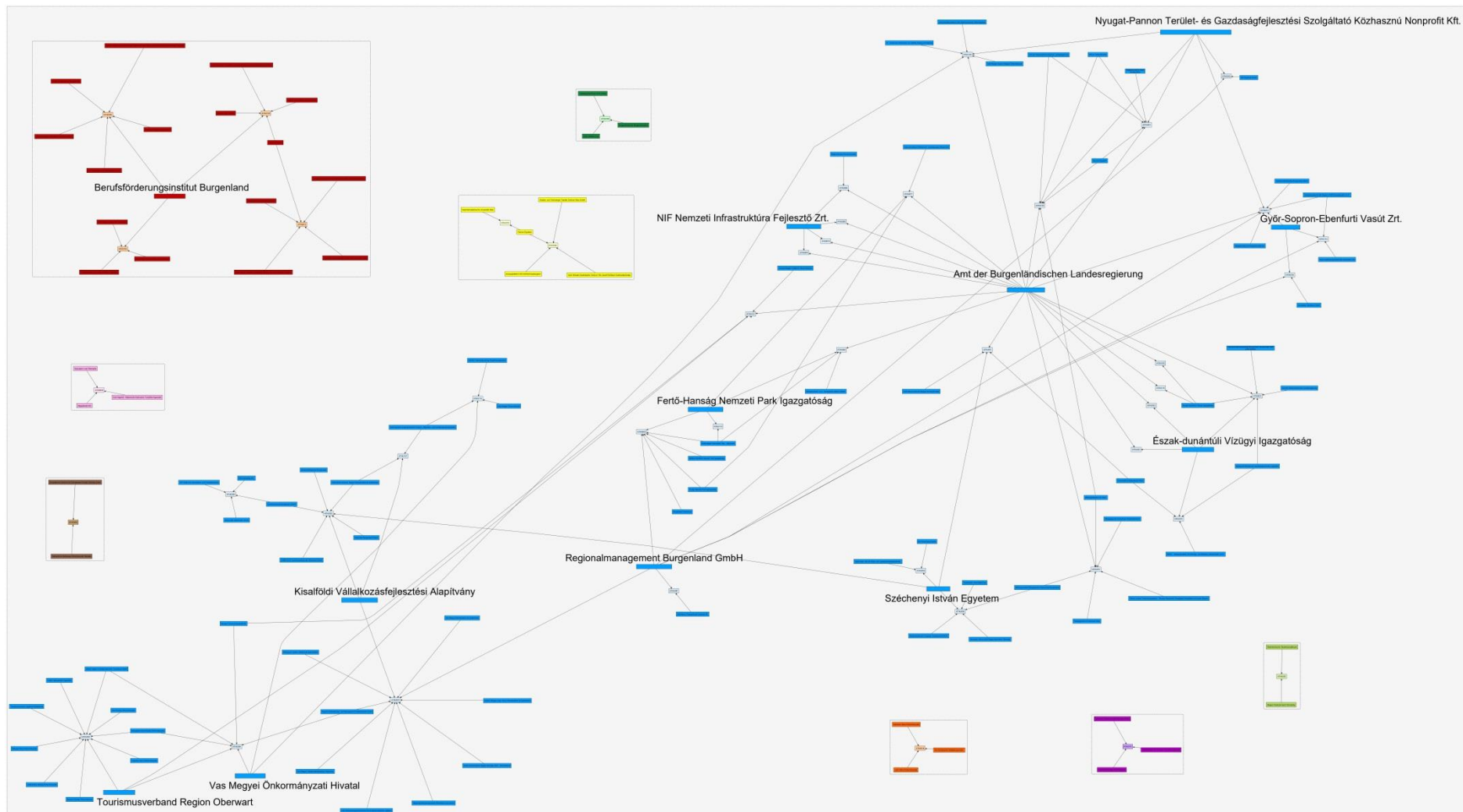
Some municipalities are quite active, while others do not show any activity or project implementation.

There are six projects which are isolated and another two projects connected to each other. Figure 11 shows the location of the project partners as well as the location of the projects.





Figure 21: Network analysis – project hubs



Source: M&E Factory et al based on the project list of the Interreg AT-HU Joint Secretariat September 2019



Table 64: Project partner and number of projects

	Name of project partners and lead partners	Number of projects
1	A Cigánységért az Európai Unióban Egyesület	1
2	A Szombathelyi Evangélikus Egyházközség Szeretetszolgálatért Alapítvány	1
3	Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung	18
4	Amt der Niederösterreichischen Landesregierung	2
5	Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung	2
6	Balaton-felvidéki Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság	1
7	Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland	3
8	Bildungsdirektion für Wien	2
9	Bio Forschung Austria	1
10	BOKU - Wasserbaulabor Errichtungs- und Betriebs-Gesellschaft m.b.H.	1
11	Bozsok Községi Önkormányzat	1
12	Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem	2
13	Burgenland Tourismus	1
14	Burgenländischer Ringsportverband	1
15	Cák Község Önkormányzata	1
16	CAMPUS 02 Fachhochschule der Wirtschaft GmbH	1
17	Chance B GmbH	2
18	Csepreg Város Önkormányzata	1
19	Csörötnek Község Önkormányzat	1
20	Dachverband burgenländischer Frauen-, Mädchen- und Familienberatungsstellen	2
21	Die Öststeirische Städtekooperation	1
22	Diözese Graz-Seckau	1
23	Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes	1
24	Effix-Marketing Kft.	1
25	Egyesített Egészségügyi és Szociális Intézmény Győr	1
26	Energieplattform NŐ-SÜD/Schneebergland	1
27	Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem - Savaria Regionális Pedagógiai Szolgáltató és Kutató Központ	1
28	Észak-dunántúli Vízügyi Igazgatóság	4
29	Europäisches Zentrum für Erneuerbare Energie Güssing GmbH	1
30	Europäisches Zentrum für Wohlfahrtspolitik und Sozialforschung	1
31	Fachhochschule Burgenland GmbH	2
32	Fertő-Hanság Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság	4
33	Győri Atlétikai Club	1
34	Győri Műszaki Szakképzési Centrum Hild József Építőipari Szakközépiskolája	1
35	Győr-Moson-Sopron Megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara	2
36	Győr-Moson-Sopron Megyei Kormányhivatal	1
37	Győr-Moson-Sopron Megyei Önkormányzat	1
38	Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt.	3



	Name of project partners and lead partners	Number of projects
39	Hegypásztör Kör	1
40	Holzcluster Steiermark GmbH	1
41	IITF Institut für Innovations- und Trendforschung	1
42	Innovation Region Styria GmbH	1
43	Írott-kő Natúrparkért Egyesület	1
44	IZ - Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung	1
45	Kisalföldi Vállalkozásfejlesztési Alapítvány	3
46	Körmend és Kistérsége Önkormányzati Társulás	1
47	Körmend Város Önkormányzata	1
48	Kőszeg és Vidéke Vállalkozók Ipartestülete	1
49	Kőszeg Város Önkormányzata	1
50	Kőszegdoroszló Község Önkormányzata	2
51	Külgazdasági és Külügyminisztérium	1
52	LAG Interessensgemeinschaft (IG) Kraftspendedörfer Joglland	1
53	Landessicherheitszentrale Burgenland Gesellschaft mbH (LSZ-GmbH)	1
54	Landessportzentrum VIVA GmbH	1
55	Lenti Város Önkormányzata	1
56	Lukácsháza Község Önkormányzata	1
57	Magyar Szakszervezeti Szövetség	1
58	MOBILIS Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.	1
59	Nationalpark Neusiedler See - Seewinkel	3
60	Naturpark in der Weinidylle	1
61	Naturschutzbund Österreich, Landesgruppe Steiermark	1
62	Neumann János Számítógép-tudományi Társaság	1
63	Neusiedler Seebahn GmbH	1
64	NIF Nemzeti Infrastruktúra Fejlesztő Zrt.	4
65	NOWA Training Beratung Projektmanagement	1
66	NÖ Forschungs- und Bildungsges. mbH	1
67	NÖ.Regional GmbH	1
68	Nyugat-dunántúli Vízügyi Igazgatóság	3
69	Nyugat-Pannon Terület- és Gazdaságfejlesztési Szolgáltató Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.	5
70	Oesterreichische Computer Gesellschaft (OCG)	1
71	Őrségi Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság	2
72	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund	1
73	Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich	1
74	Pädagogische Hochschule Wien	1
75	Pálos Károly Szociális Szolgáltató Központ és Gyermejjóléti Szolgálat	1
76	Pannon Egyetem	2
77	Pannon Novum Nyugat-dunántúli Regionális Innovációs Nonprofit Korlátolt Felelősségű Társaság	1



	Name of project partners and lead partners	Number of projects
78	Raab-Oedenburg-Ebenfurter Eisenbahn AG	1
79	Rajka Község Önkormányzata	1
80	Regionalentwicklungsverein Römerland Carnuntum	1
81	Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH	8
82	Regions Entwicklungs- und Management Oststeiermark GmbH	2
83	Savaria Megyei Hatókörű Városi Múzeum	1
84	Savaria Turizmus Nonprofit Kft.	2
85	Sopron Megyei Jogú Városi Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara	1
86	Soproni Egyetem	2
87	Soproni Evangélikus Egyházközség	1
88	Stadt Wien, MA 49 Forst- und Landwirtschaftsbetrieb der	1
89	Stadtschulrat für Wien Europa Büro	1
90	Stiftung private Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland	2
91	Studien- und Technologie Transfer Zentrum Weiz GmbH	1
92	Széchenyi István Egyetem	4
93	Széchenyi Programiroda Nonprofit Kft.	2
94	Szentgotthárd és Térsége Turisztikai Egyesület	1
95	Technische Universität Graz	1
96	Tourismusverband Joglland-Waldheimat	1
97	Tourismusverband Region Oberwart	3
98	Universität für Bodenkultur Wien	2
99	Vas Megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara	1
100	Vas Megyei Önkormányzati Hivatal	3
101	Vasi Hegyhát - Rábamente Közhasznú Turisztikai Egyesület	1
102	Verein Gemeinsame Region Bucklige Welt – Wechselland	1
103	Verein zur Förderung des Naturpark Raab	1
104	Verkehrsinfrastruktur Burgenland GmbH	1
105	Verkehrsverbund Ost-Region (VOR) Gesellschaft m.b.H.	2
106	Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien	1
107	WasserCluster Lunz - Biologische Station GmbH	1
108	Weizer Energie- Innovations- Zentrum GmbH.	1
109	Wiener Alpen in Niederösterreich Tourismus GmbH	2
110	Wiener Kinderfreunde	2
111	Wirtschaft Burgenland GmbH	1
112	Wirtschaftskammer Burgenland	1
113	Zala Megyei Cigány Civil Szervezet	1
114	Zala Megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara	1
115	Zala Megyei Önkormányzat	1
116	Zala Megyei Vállalkozásfejlesztési Alapítvány	1
117	Zalaegerszegi Gondozási Központ	1

Source: Interreg AT\_HU Joint Secretariat September 2019



## Annex 2. Impact model

The impact model shows the causal chain of each specific objective, based on the operational programme. The system causal chain is linking the following: needs → measures → direct results → long term results.

The impact model system boundary is drawn very closely around the programme without systematically include external effects. Considering external effects systematically would be out of the scope of this evaluation.

The figures merely should given an overview of the intervention logic and provide some information what kind of needs, measures, direct results and long term results are addressed by the projects contracted till September 2019. This does not show if the projects have already achieved the elements. The information is based on the description in the project application forms. Thus the model does not show whether the projects fail to achieve the results.

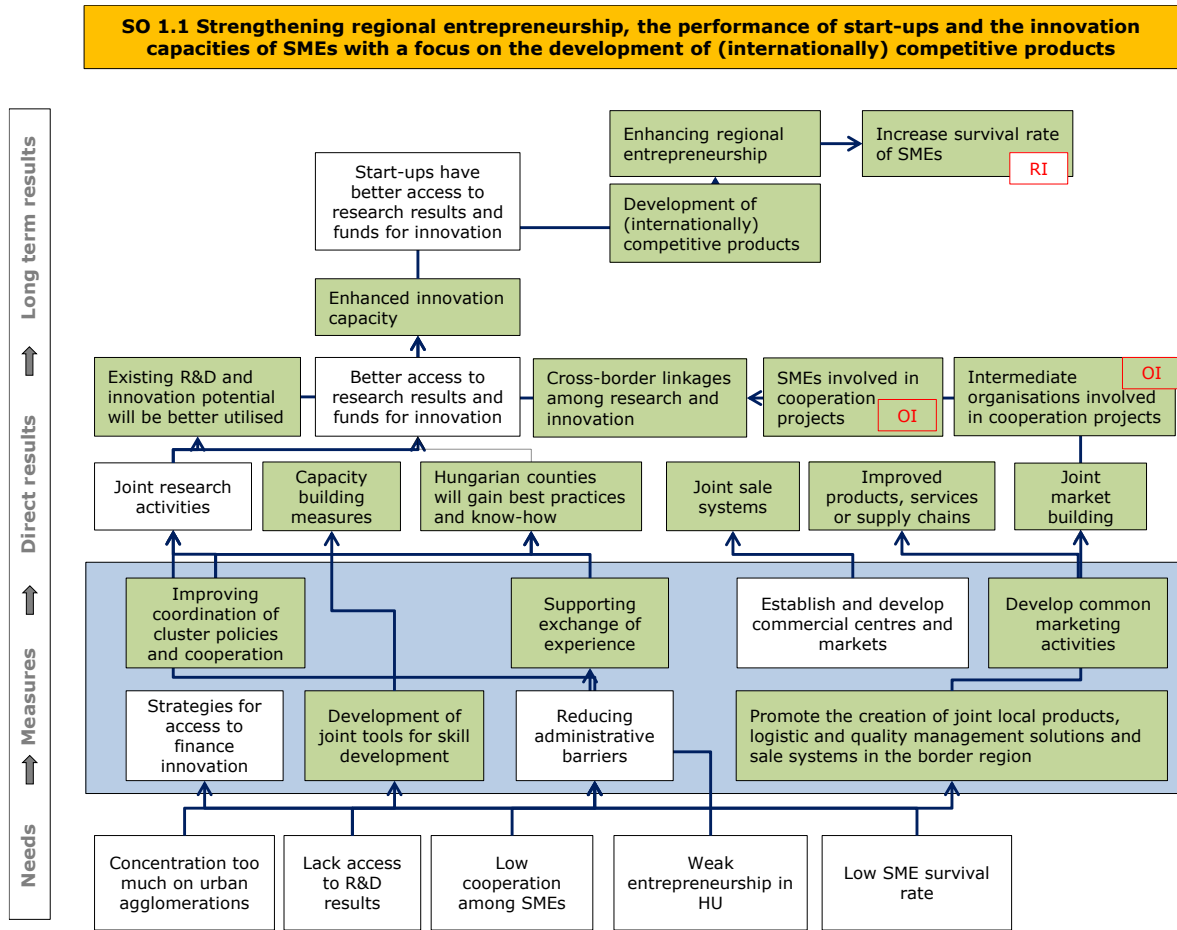
All boxes of the impact model are listed in the tables in Annex 3 to show how many and in what stage projects have achieved those impact model elements.

Legend of the impact model:

Measures or direct results which are <b>not</b> addressed by the projects contracted till September 2019	Measures or direct results which are addressed by the projects contracted till September 2019
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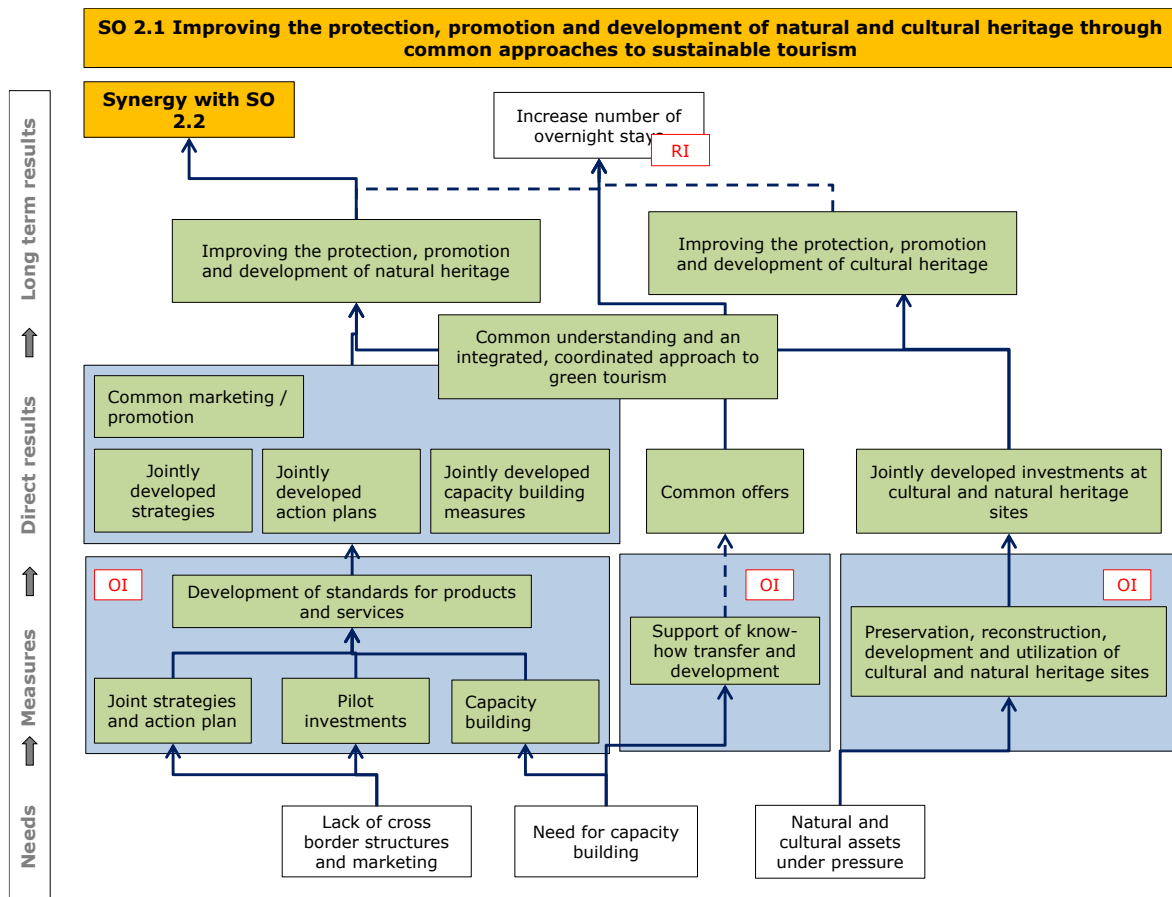
Figure 22: Impact model SO 1.1



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



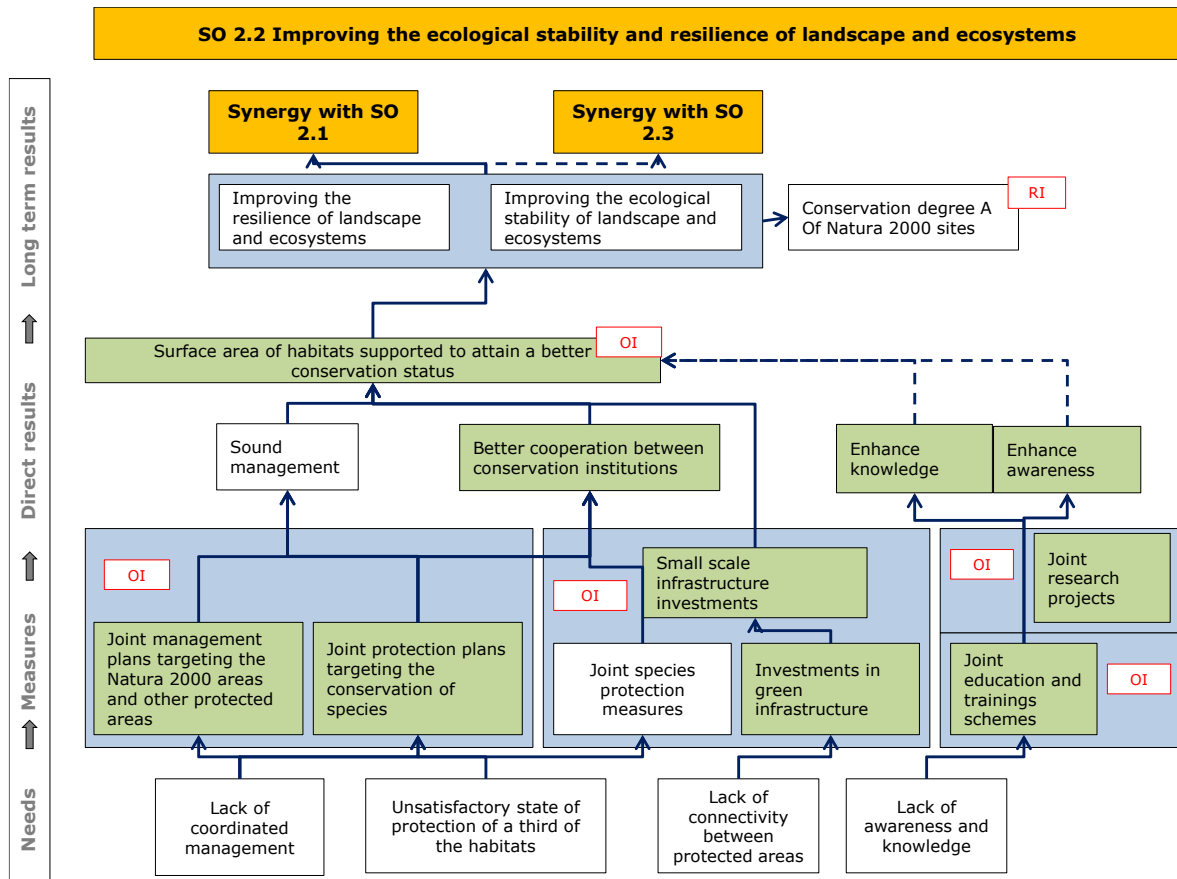
Figure 23: Impact model SO 2.1



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



Figure 24: Impact model SO 2.2

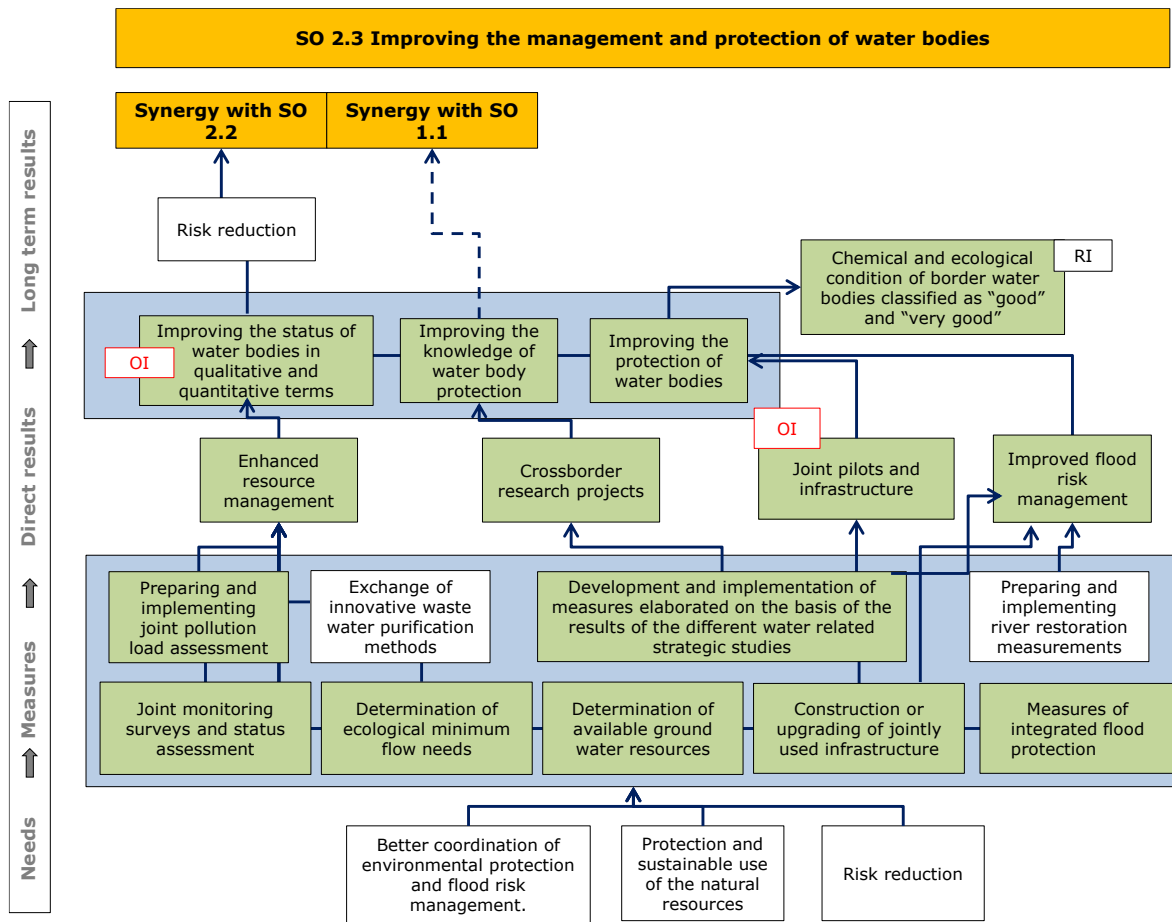


Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019





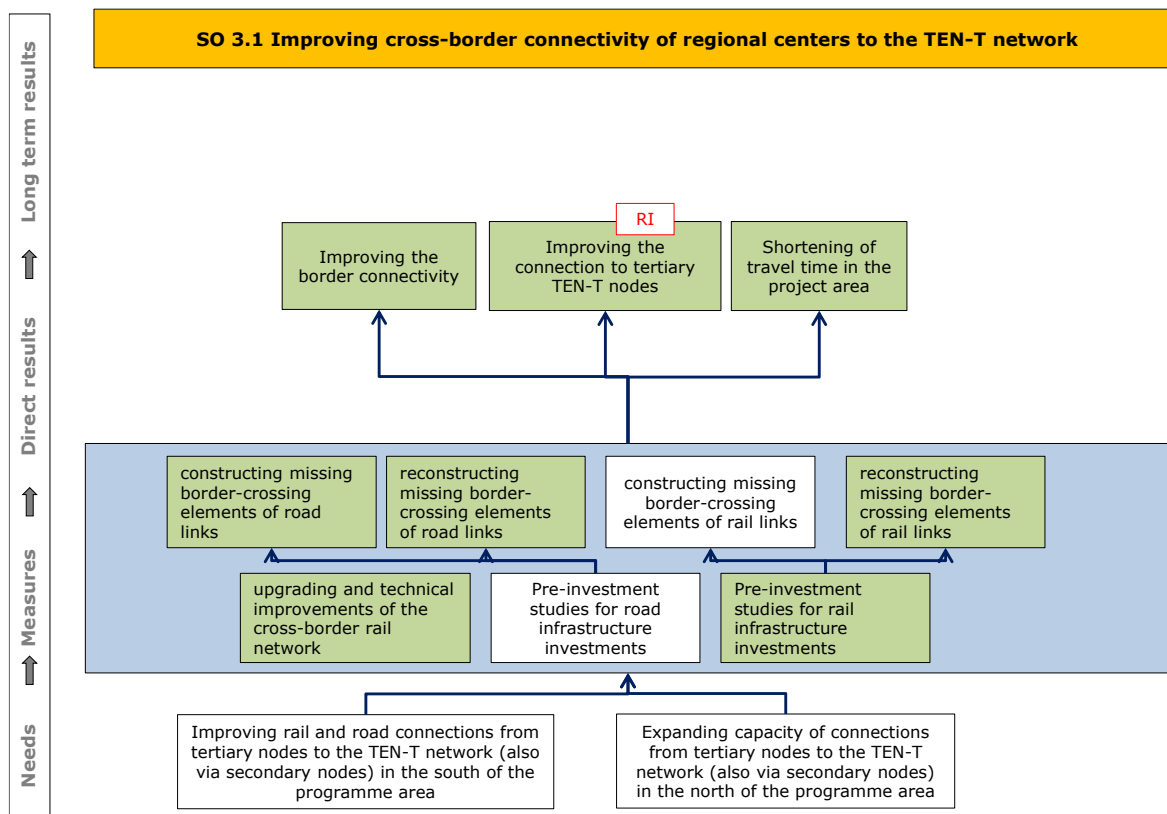
Figure 25: Impact model SO 2.3



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



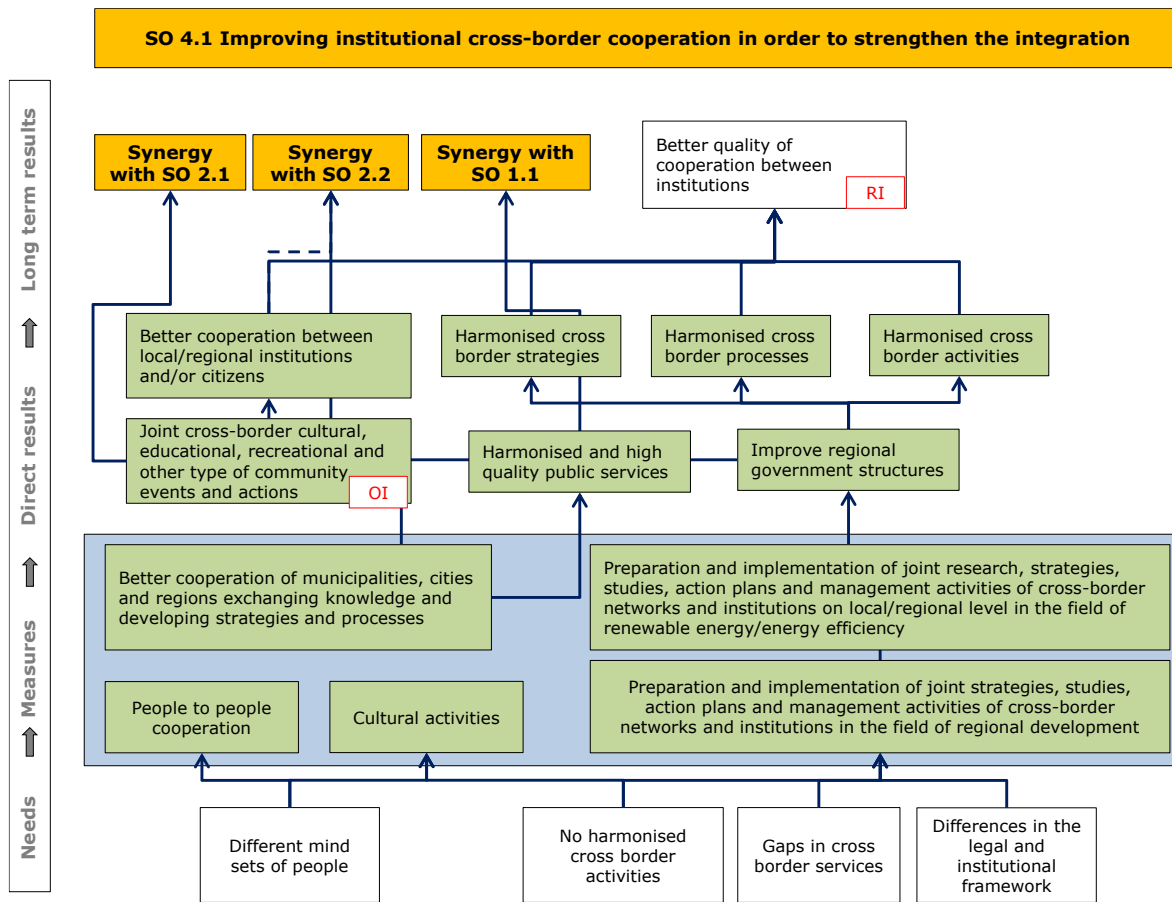
Figure 26: Impact model SO 3.1



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



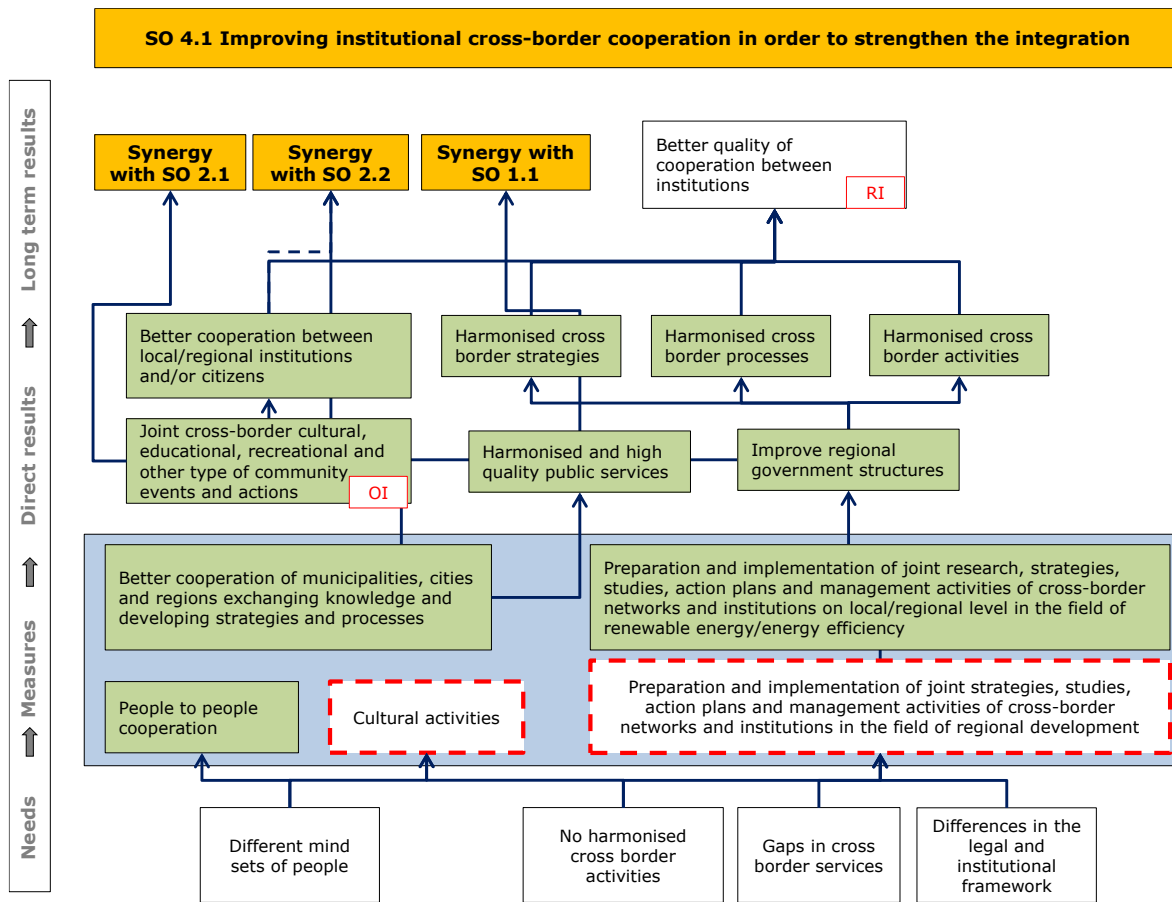
Figure 27: Impact model SO 3.2



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



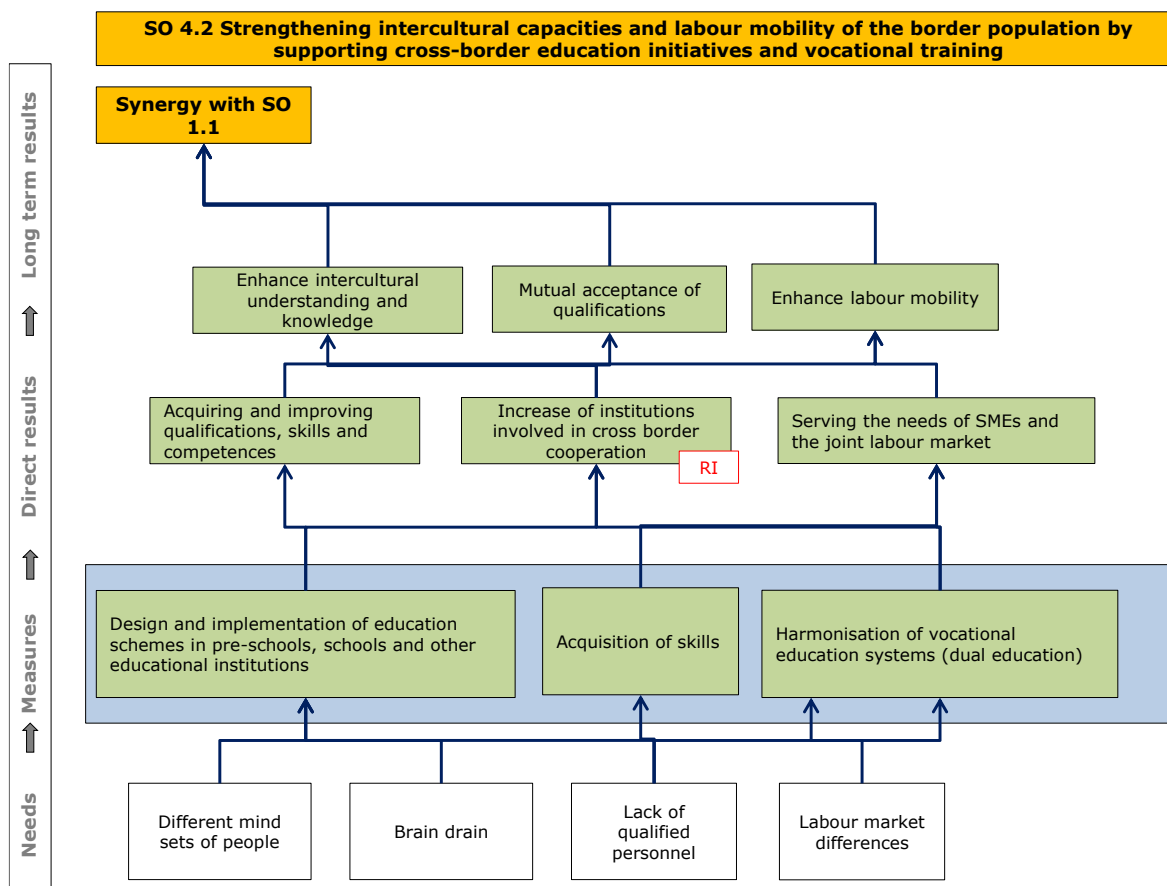
Figure 28: Impact model SO 4.1



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019



Figure 29: Impact model SO 4.2



Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms and project reports, eMS September 2019





## Annex 3. Effectiveness

### SO 1.1

**Table 65: Contribution of single projects to SO 1.1**

Project contribution to the CBC programme	femcoop PLUS	REGIONET Competitive	SMART-UP	InnoWood
Joint research activities				
Capacity building measures				
Hungarian counties gain best practices and know-how				
Joint sale systems				
Improved products, services or supply chains				
Joint market building				
Existing R&D and innovation potential will be better utilised				
Better access to research results and funds for innovation				
Cross-border linkages among research and innovation				
SMEs involved in cooperation projects				
Intermediate organisations involved in cooperation projects				
Enhanced innovation capacity and cross sectoral cooperation				
Enhancing regional entrepreneurship				

 Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: Application forms eMS September 2019

**Table 66: Target groups addressed in SO 1.1**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
SME	910	4060	446%
Other	150	170	113%
Higher education and research	41	132	322%
Business support org.	29	86	297%
Education/training centre and school	56	73	130%
Sectoral agency	9	39	433%
Enterprise, exc. SME	6	0	0%
National public authority	1	0	0%
Regional public authority	1	0	0%

Source: Project reports 31.12.2018 (excel sheet: target groups 2014-20)

### SO 2.1

**Table 67: Contribution of single projects to SO 2.1**

Project contribution to the CBC programme	PaNaNat+	alpannonia plus	Weinidylle AT-HU	VELOREGIO	3 Határlos	ArcheON
Standards for products and services						
Know-how transfer and development						



Project contribution to the CBC programme	PaNaNat+	alpannonia plus	Weinidylle AT-HU	VELOREGIO	3 Határlos	ArcheON
Jointly developed strategies						
Jointly developed action plans						
Jointly developed capacity building measures						
Common marketing / promotion						
Common offers						
Preservation, reconstruction, development and utilisation of cultural and natural heritage sites						
Jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites						
Common understanding and an integrated, coordinated approach to green tourism						
Improving the protection, promotion and development of natural heritage						
Improving the protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage						

Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms eMS September 2019

**Table 68: Target groups addressed in SO 2.1**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
General public	465500	4814334	1034%
Other	152	252	166%
SME	150	44	29%
Local public authority	50	27	54%
Infrastructure and public service provider	35	10	29%
Education/training centre and school	30	87	323%
International groups including NGOs	10	10	100%
Sectoral agency	10	2	20%
Regional public authority	6	2	33%

Source: Project reports 31.12.2018



SO 2.2

Table 69: Contribution of single projects to SO 2.2

Project contribution to the CBC programme	Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	AgriNatur AT-HU	NEduNET	WeCon
Joint management plans targeting the Natura 2000 areas and other protected areas				
Joint protection plans targeting the conservation of species				
Joint species protection measures				
Investments in green infrastructure				
Joint education and trainings schemes				
Joint research projects				
Small scale infrastructure investments				
Enhance knowledge				
Enhance awareness				
Sound management				
Better cooperation between conservation institutions				

Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms eMS September 2019

Table 70: Target groups addressed in SO 2.2

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
General public	65400	350	0%
Education/training centre and school	390	0	1%
Other	50	0	26%
Higher education and research	19	5	0%
Local public authority	3	0	0%
National public authority	2	0	0%
Regional public authority	8	0	0%
Interest groups including NGOs	7	0	0%

Source: Project reports 31.12.2018 (contains no data from NEduNET)

SO 2.3

Table 71: Contribution of single projects to SO 2.3

Project contribution to the CBC programme	SEDDON II	PLATFORM	Raab Flood 4cast	REBEN	RaabSTAT
Joint monitoring surveys and status assessment					
Determination of ecological minimum flow needs					
Determination of available ground water resources					
Construction or upgrading of jointly used infrastructure					





Project contribution to the CBC programme	SEDDON II	PLATFORM	Raab Flood 4cast	REBEN	RaabSTAT
Measures of integrated flood protection					
Preparing and implementing joint pollution load assessment					
Exchange of innovative waste water purification methods					
Development of measures elaborated on strategic studies					
Preparing and implementing river restoration measurements					
Enhanced resource management					
Crossborder research projects					
Joint pilots and infrastructure					
Improved flood risk management					

Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms eMS September 2019

**Table 72: Target groups addressed in SO 2.3**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
National public authority	6	29	483%
Regional public authority	13	37	285%
Local public authority	42	35	83%
Sectoral agency	1	-	0%
Infrastructure and public service provider	23	7	30%
int. org. EEIG under nat.law	4	41	1025%
International groups inc. NGOs	26	75	289%
Enterprise, exc. SME	2	-	0%
SME	50	1	2%
Higher education and research	7	2	29%
Education/training centre and school	5	8	160%
General public	50.000	90.143	180%

Source: Project reports 31.12.2018



**SO 3.1**

**Table 73: Contribution of single projects to SO 3.1**

Project contribution to the CBC programme	CrossBorder Road	CrossBorder Rail	Várbalog-Halbturn	St.Margarethen-Fertőrákos	Rajka – Deutsch Jahndorf
Upgrading and technical improvements of the cross-border rail network					



Project contribution to the CBC programme	CrossBorder Road	CrossBorder Rail	Várbalog-Halbtorn	St.Margarethen-Fertőrákos	Rajka – Deutsch Jahndorf
Pre-investment studies for road infrastructure investments					
Pre-investment studies for rail infrastructure investments					
Constructing missing border-crossing elements of road links					
Reconstructing missing border-crossing elements of road links					
Constructing missing border-crossing elements of rail links					
Reconstructing missing border-crossing elements of rail links					
Improving the border connectivity					
Improving the connection to tertiary TEN-T nodes					
Shortening of travel time in the project area					

 Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: Source: eMS September 2019, M&E Factory et al



**Table 74: Target groups addressed in SO 3.1**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
General public	700,000	97.020	14%
Local public authority	16	8	50%

Source: Project reports 31.12.2018

**SO 3.2**

**Table 75: Target groups addressed in SO 3.2**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
Local public authority	500	385	77%
Regional public authority	3	4	133%
National public authority	2	3	150%
Infrastructure and public service provider	5	8	160%
Int. groups incl. NGOs	4	7	175%
Education/training centre and school	190	52	27%
General public	640,000	90.432	14%

Source: eMS Project reports September 2019

**SO 4.1**

**Table 76: Contribution of single projects to SO 4.1**

Project contribution to the CBC programme	Ökoachse	Age-friendly Region	City Cooperation II	ConnReg AT-HU	Fair-work	Joint Ambrosia Action	Wrestling without borders	WomEN-Puls
Joint cross-border, cultural, recreational and other type of community events and actions								
Harmonised and high-quality public services								
Improved regional government structures								
Better cooperation between local/regional institutions and/or citizens								
Harmonised cross-border strategies								



Project contribution to the CBC programme	Ökoachse	Age-friendly Region	City Cooperation II	ConnReg AT-HU	Fair-work	Joint Ambrosia Action	Wrestling without borders	WomEN-Puls
Harmonised cross-border processes								
Harmonised cross-border activities								

Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms eMS September 2019

**Table 77: Target groups addressed in SO 4.1**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
Local authority	155	269	174%
Regional authority	37	83	224%
National authority	14	7	50%
Infrastructure and public service provider	5	6	120%
Business support organisation	7	3	43%
Sectoral agency	21	20	95%
Enterprises excluding SMEs	5	4	80%
SMEs	65	59	91%
Higher education and research	6	57	950%
Education/training centre, school	12	21	175%
Interest groups including NGOs	42	204	486%
General public	37.000	32.547	88%

Source: eMS September 2019, Project reports 31.12.2018

### SO 4.2

**Table 78: Contribution of single projects to SO 4.2**

Project contribution to the CBC programme	BIG AT-HU	EDLRIS	CEPI	REBE II	CODES AT-HU
Acquiring and improving qualifications, skills and competencies					
Increase of institutions involved in cross-border cooperation					
Serving the needs of SMEs and the joint labour market					
Enhance intercultural understanding and knowledge					
Mutual acceptance of qualifications					
Enhance labour mobility					

Refers to results delivered according to available information  
 Refers to intended results which up to now have not been delivered

Source: M&E Factory et al based on application forms eMS September 2019

Source: eMS September 2019, project applications and progress reports

**Table 79: Target groups addressed in SO 4.2**

Target groups	Planned	Achieved	Level of achievement
Local authority	36	25	69%
Regional authority	26	27	104%
National authority	7	7	100%
Infrastructure and public service provider	0	0	n/a
Business support organisation	0	0	n/a
Sectoral agency	0	0	n/a
Enterprises excluding SMEs	13	23	177%
SMEs	43915	440	9.980%
Higher education and research	185	423	228%
Education/training centre, school	916	672	136%
Interest groups including NGOs	0	0	n/a
General public	8.000	13.742	171%
Other	850	973	114%

Source: Interreg AT-HU Joint secretariat September 2019

## Annex 4. Project tables

**Table 80: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 1.1**

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU059	InnoWood	Developing an environment for promoting innovation by creating a network of wood and furniture industry companies in the border region	to a large degree
ATHU059	InnoWood	Development of innovative furniture and wood architecture plans based on new consumer demands and trends through joint product development	fully achieved
ATHU059	InnoWood	Testing and deploying new sales methods and channels through a multilingual online multi-vendor sales platform	to a large degree
ATHU005	femcoop PLUS	Increasing the proportion of women in technical occupations	to a minor degree
ATHU005	femcoop PLUS	Reduction of the shortage of skilled workers	to a minor degree
ATHU005	femcoop PLUS	Intensifying the networking of SMEs / intermediaries / educational institutions (learning partnerships)	to a large degree
ATHU007	REGIONET Competitive	Establishment of the long-term strategic cooperation of REGIONET Competitive bilateral consortia for economic development	to a large degree
ATHU007	REGIONET Competitive	Creation of industry-specific, concrete bilateral cooperation of SMEs in four strategic Austro-Hungarian sectors	to a large degree
ATHU052	SMART-UP	To increase the knowledge of young innovative SMEs about business and innovation so that they have better market opportunities	to a minor degree
ATHU052	SMART-UP	The selection of marketable innovative ideas and targeted support should help start-ups to found the company and lay the foundation for strengthening their market position	to a minor degree
ATHU052	SMART-UP	Establishment and operation of cross-border start-up community	to a minor degree

Source: eMS September 2019



Table 81: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 2.1

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU003	PaNaNet+	Harmonising a <b>common understanding</b> of sustainable nature tourism through strategies, concepts, criteria and skills-building measures	to a large degree
ATHU003	PaNaNet+	Communicating the contribution of the protected areas to the quality of life in the region through target group-specific measures	to a large degree
ATHU003	PaNaNet+	Optimisation of three joint lead products / offers of PaNaNet protected areas	to a large degree
ATHU020	alpannonia plus	Development of a uniform <b>hiking destination</b> through optimisation	to a minor degree
ATHU020	alpannonia plus	Increased <b>awareness</b> of the target groups	to a large degree
ATHU020	alpannonia plus	Attractiveness via <b>infrastructure measures</b>	to a minor degree
ATHU064	VELOREGIO	<b>Awareness</b> of the natural and cultural heritage	to a minor degree
ATHU064	VELOREGIO	Intensification of <b>cross-border cooperation</b> in cycling tourism	no achievement
ATHU064	VELOREGIO	Increasing the <b>interest of guests</b> in cross-border offers	no achievement
ATHU049	Weinidylle AT-HU	Increase in the number of <b>rentable wine cellars</b>	to a minor degree
ATHU049	Weinidylle AT-HU	Improvement of the provision of information and <b>booking system</b>	to a minor degree
ATHU101	3 Határlos	<b>Increase attractiveness</b> of the three-country region on the basis of the three main themes Cistercians, cycling and pleasure hiking	NA
ATHU101	3 Határlos	Increasing the <b>advisory skills</b> of tourist businesses and the relevant players.	NA
ATHU121	ArcheON	<b>Scientific processing</b> of archaeological finds by carrying out excavations with a common method	NA
ATHU121	ArcheON	<b>Touristic valorisation</b> of historical and archaeological values through the development of a common cross-border package of experiences	NA
ATHU121	ArcheON	Increasing <b>awareness</b> of the common historical and archaeological values of the border region through the implementation of targeted measures	NA

Source: eMS September 2019

Table 82: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 2.2

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU002	Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	Coordinate the <b>research and monitoring</b> programs of the Natura 2000 border areas and target species	to a minor degree
ATHU002	Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	<b>Promoting awareness</b> of conservation issues with direct involvement of local communities.	to a minor degree
ATHU002	Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2	Further development of the <b>bird watching infrastructure</b> to reduce the pressure of visitors on the bird nesting sites.	to a minor degree



Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU050	AgriNatur AT-HU	Develop and implement common AgriNatur <b>strategy</b>	
ATHU050	AgriNatur AT-HU	Implement measures to <b>raise awareness</b> in AT and HU	
ATHU050	AgriNatur AT-HU	Research innovative biodiversity-based <b>management methods</b>	
ATHU113	NEduNET	Establishment of a sustainable cross-border environmental education network in the Fertő-Hanság National Park / Neusiedler See - Seewinkel National Park	
ATHU113	NEduNET	Creation of the framework conditions for joint area management and their introduction in the cross-border national park	
ATHU113	NEduNET	Promoting awareness on nature conservation with direct involvement of local children, adolescents, educators and individual guests	
ATHU077	WeCon	Survey of Natura 2000 species and wetlands as well as invasive species in Western Pannonian waters	to a minor degree
ATHU077	WeCon	Evaluation of the effects of human impacts in the Western Pannonian waters	not achieved
ATHU077	WeCon	Conduct awareness-raising programs to increase the environmental value of wetland habitats in western Pannonia	not achieved

Source: Progress reports eMS September 2019

**Table 83: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 2.3**

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU010	SEDDON II	Modern <b>hydraulic engineering laboratory</b> for cross-border use	not achieved
ATHU010	SEDDON II	Joint <b>monitoring and modelling system</b> to support cross-border measures	not achieved
ATHU010	SEDDON II	Cross-border development of measures as a basis for <b>integrated river management</b>	not achieved
ATHU033	PLATFORM	Support for <b>sustainable water management</b>	fully achieved
ATHU033	PLATFORM	<b>Support for the decisions</b> of the Austrian Hungarian Water Commission	fully achieved
ATHU033	PLATFORM	<b>Increase awareness</b> in the region	fully achieved
ATHU031	Raab Flood 4cast	<b>Software update</b> and <b>update of the hydrodynamic and hydrological models</b> in the forecasting system	to a minor degree
ATHU031	Raab Flood 4cast	<b>Development of a warning tool</b> to support the operational planning of flood risk management organisations involved in flood and disaster control	to a minor degree
ATHU031	Raab Flood 4cast	Cross-border <b>application of the warning tool</b> in trial operation by cooperation of the organisations responsible for flood and civil protection	–
ATHU053	REBEN	<b>Improved knowledge of water quality factors</b> in hydrology, physics chemistry, pollutants, reed structure and sediment	to a minor degree



Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU100	RaabSTAT	<b>Evaluation of the chemical and ecological status of the Raab</b> on the whole river route. Evaluation of the results to create an action plan	–

Source: eMS September 2019

**Table 84: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 3.1**

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU016	CrossBorder Rail	Reduction of travel time between the stations Neusiedl am See, Pamhagen and Fertöszentmiklos	to a minor degree
ATHU016	CrossBorder Rail	Improvement of <b>multimodality, attractiveness and accessibility</b> at stations	to a minor degree
ATHU016	CrossBorder Rail	Creation of a <b>decision-making basis for the electrification</b> of the cross-border railway connection Szentgotthard - Jennersdorf	to a minor degree
ATHU079	Várbalog-Halbtorn	Qualitative <b>improvement of cross-border road connections</b> near the border	Project progress report, report 01, period 0: not achieved
ATHU094	Rajka – Deutsch Jahrndorf	Development of <b>new border crossings</b>	Project progress report, report 01, period 0: not achieved
ATHU015	CrossBorder Road	Construction of <b>new, direct border crossing</b> points	Project progress report, report 01, period 0: not achieved
ATHU093	St.Margarethen-Fertőrákos	Improvement of <b>existing cross-border road links</b>	Project progress report, report 01, period 0: not achieved

Source: eMS September 2019

**Table 85: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 3.2**

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement
ATHU017	SMART-Pannonia	Cross-border traffic cooperation among transport providers	to a minor degree
ATHU017	SMART-Pannonia	Development of innovative joint offers strengthening intermodality	to a minor degree

Source: eMS September 2019





Table 86: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 4.1

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement <sup>40</sup>
ATHU004	Ökoachse	Development of a cross-border system for waste collection and transfer of materials to recycling system (method and approach) as well as developing efficient institutional cooperation in the field of micro-regional energy management.	To a minor extent
ATHU012	Age-friendly Region	Improvement of cooperation between Hungarian and Austrian actors in the field of care for elderly people as well as building their capacities to raise the quality of life for elderly, their relatives as well as those working as nurses or carers for elderly.	To a large extent
ATHU018	City Cooperation II	Strengthening the network of cities and towns in order to support polycentric and growth oriented development in the trilateral region HU-AT-SI: development of thematic networks and supporting the increase of regional purchasing power.	To a minor extent
ATHU030	ConnReg AT-HU	Developing a shared knowledge base and an institutional and operational network based on strategy development in selected areas, targeted capacity building, intercultural learning, support and animation for networking and people-to-people activities.	To a large extent
ATHU035	Fairwork	Sustainable cooperation and improved communication between labour market authorities and institutions, interest groupings and cross-border workers for better proceedings and integration.	To a minor extent
ATHU051	Joint Ambrosia Action	Sustainable institutional cooperation between relevant Austrian and Hungarian actors developing a shared approach to contain the spread of ragweed, based on a cross-border monitoring and reporting system.	To a large extent
ATHU106	Wrestling without borders	Developing a sustainable cross-border cooperation between key actors in wrestling.	To a large extent
ATHU116	WomEN-Puls	Improvement of the labour market situation and equal opportunities for women in public sector as well as in relevant private firms in Styria: development and implementation of a training programme to raise capacities and strengthened cooperation of relevant institutions.	n/a – start in March 2019

Source: eMS September 2019

<sup>40</sup> Based on information according to latest reports at project level which have been accepted; thus information status represents usually either achievements until end 2018 or mid 2019



Table 87: Specific objectives of the projects in SO 4.2

Project no.	Acronym	Project specific objective	Level of achievement <sup>41</sup>
ATHU001	BIG AT-HU	Education fostering multilingual and intercultural competencies in kindergarten and schools; raising quality focussing on interfaces between administration, education institutions, schools and kindergartens in the region. Increasing the visibility of offers among parents, administration and policymakers.	To a large extent
ATHU009	EDLRIS	Skills development in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) thus developing a regional pool of skilled persons.	To a minor extent
ATHU019	CEPI	Sustainable cooperation in education and research on poultry between the two universities aiming at strengthened links to the economy, improved products, efficient production and high food safety standards.	To a large extent
ATHU026	REBE II	Skills development and vocational training in the field of renewable energy and sustainable energy systems closely linked to the actual skills requirements of firms and service providers: a cross-border network of education centres should implement a pilot course.	To a minor extent
ATHU074	CODES AT-HU	Establishment of sustainable cross-border networks of education institutions developing key competencies (literacy, MINT) at primary school level. As shared result a set of innovative teaching resources will be developed.	n/a – start-up phase

Source: eMS September 2019

Scale:

Fully achieved = all major outputs completed; related results can be expected to be met or are met

To a large extent = more than half of major quantitative targets respectively outputs have been achieved

To a minor extent = less than half of quantitative targets respectively outputs achieved despite the fact that project is in implementation for a considerable period

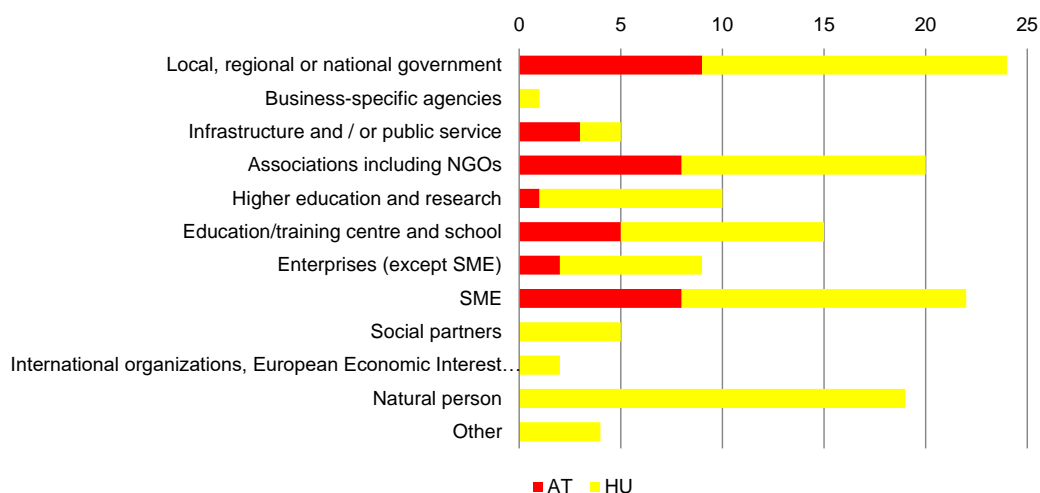
<sup>41</sup> Based on information according to latest reports at project level which have been accepted; thus information status represents usually either achievements until end 2018 or mid 2019



## Annex 5. Online survey

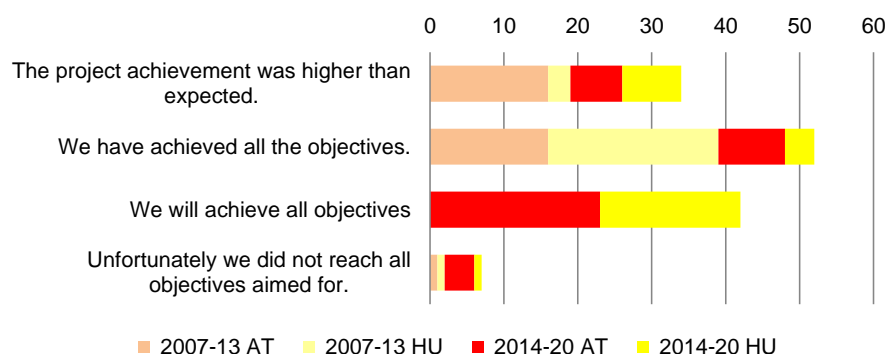
### 5.1.1 General questions

**Figure 30: Final beneficiary of projects, 2014-2020**



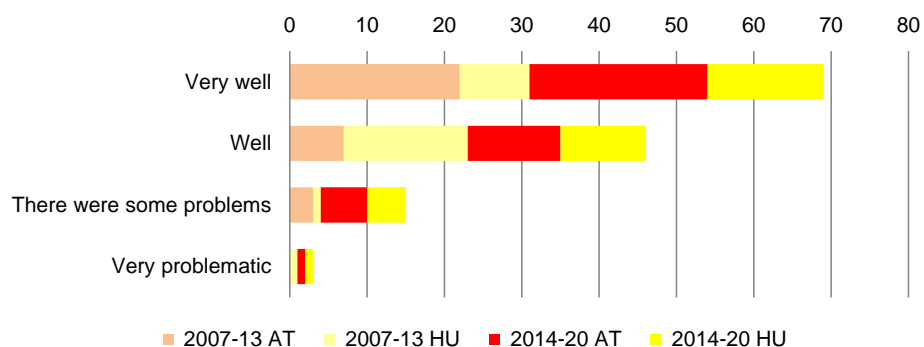
Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 17 AT responses, 47 HU responses

**Figure 31: Achievements of project objectives**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 67 AT responses, 59 HU responses

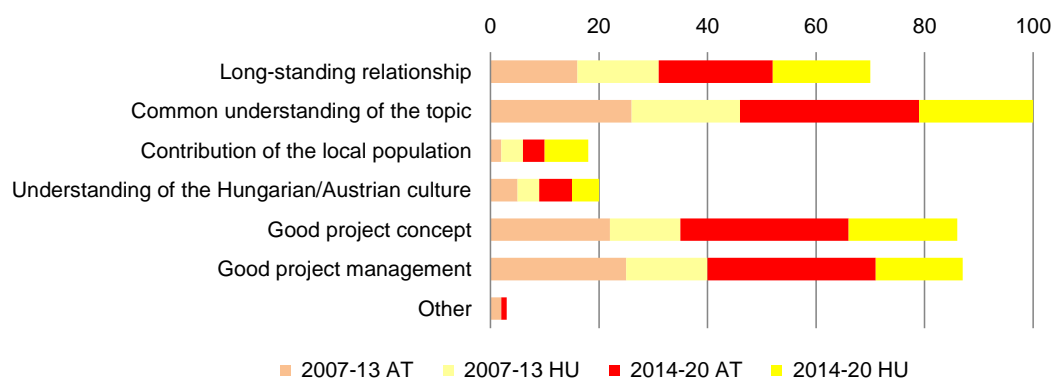
**Figure 32: Perceived cooperation quality**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 74 AT responses, 59 HU responses

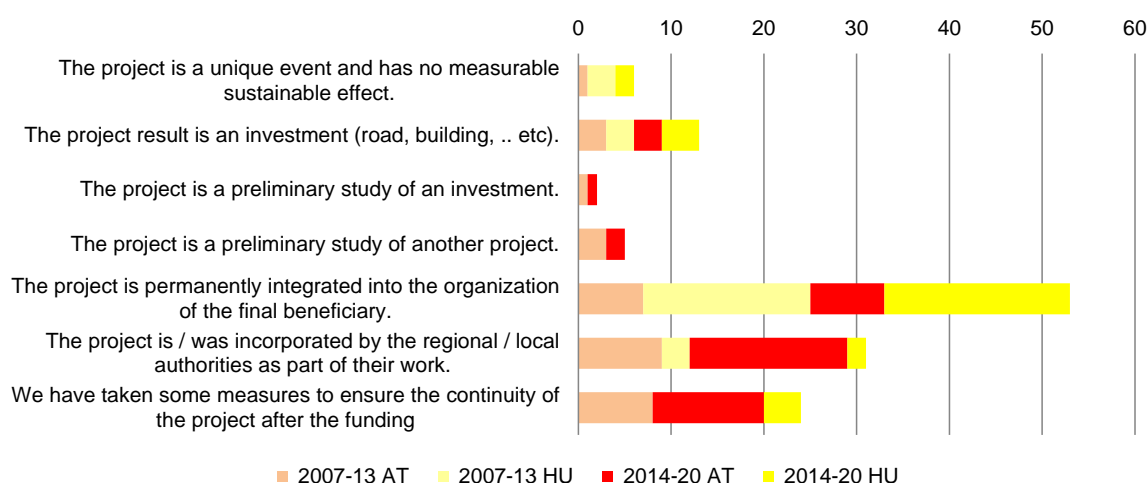


**Figure 33: Success factors of cooperation**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 225 AT responses, 159 HU responses

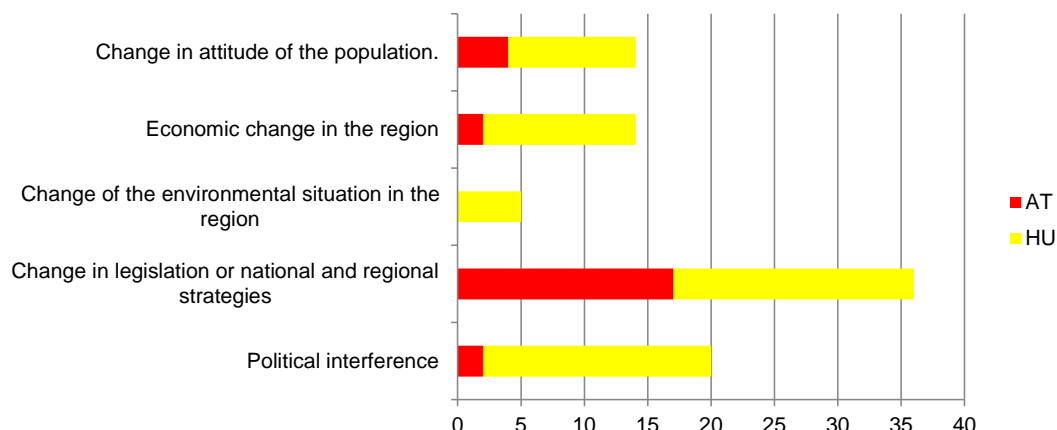
**Figure 34: Continuation of the project after funding**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 75 AT responses, 59 HU responses

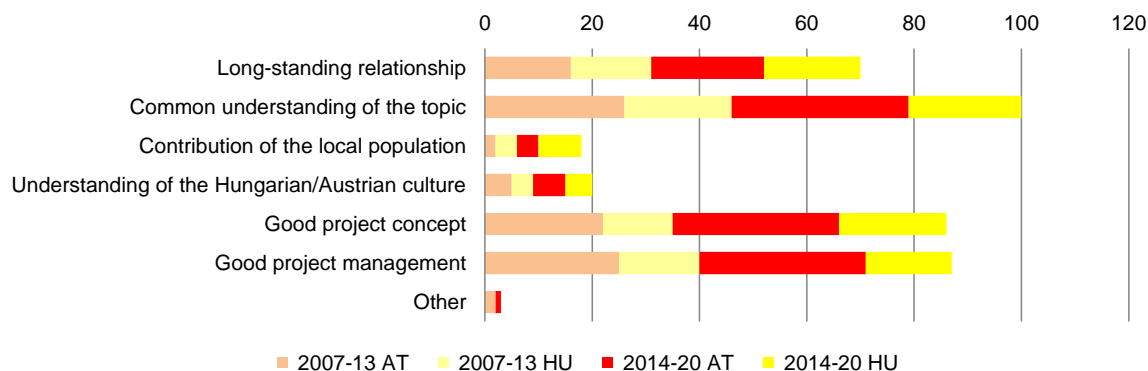


**Figure 35: External influences on project implementation, 2014-2020**



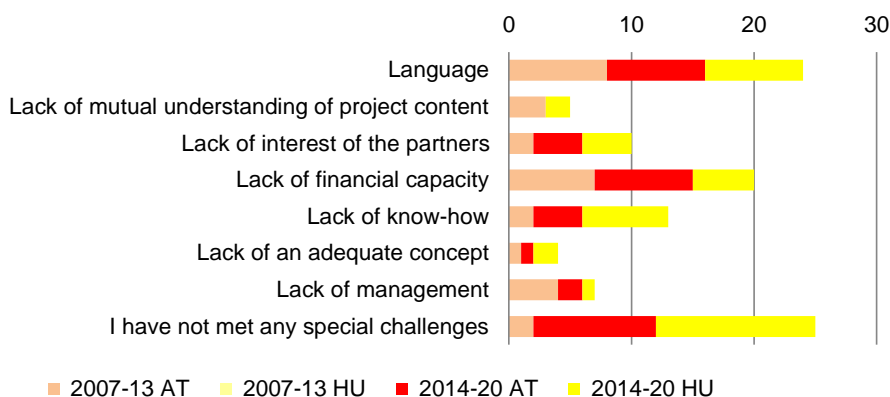
Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 17 AT responses, 57 HU responses

**Figure 36: Success factors of a successful partnership**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 225 AT responses, 159 HU responses

**Figure 37: Obstacles in cooperation**

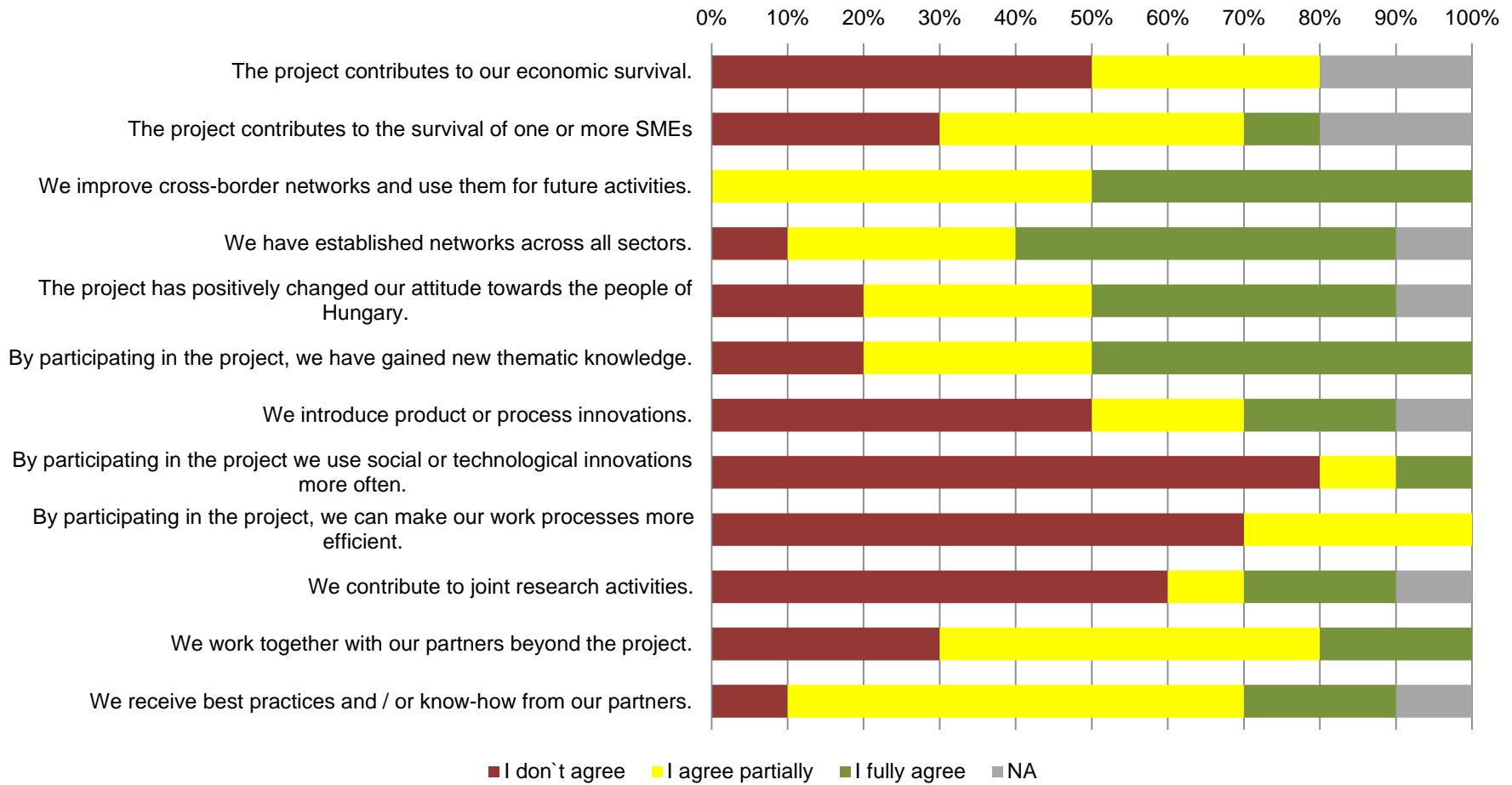


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 50 AT responses, 34 HU responses

### 5.1.2 Specific objective 1.1



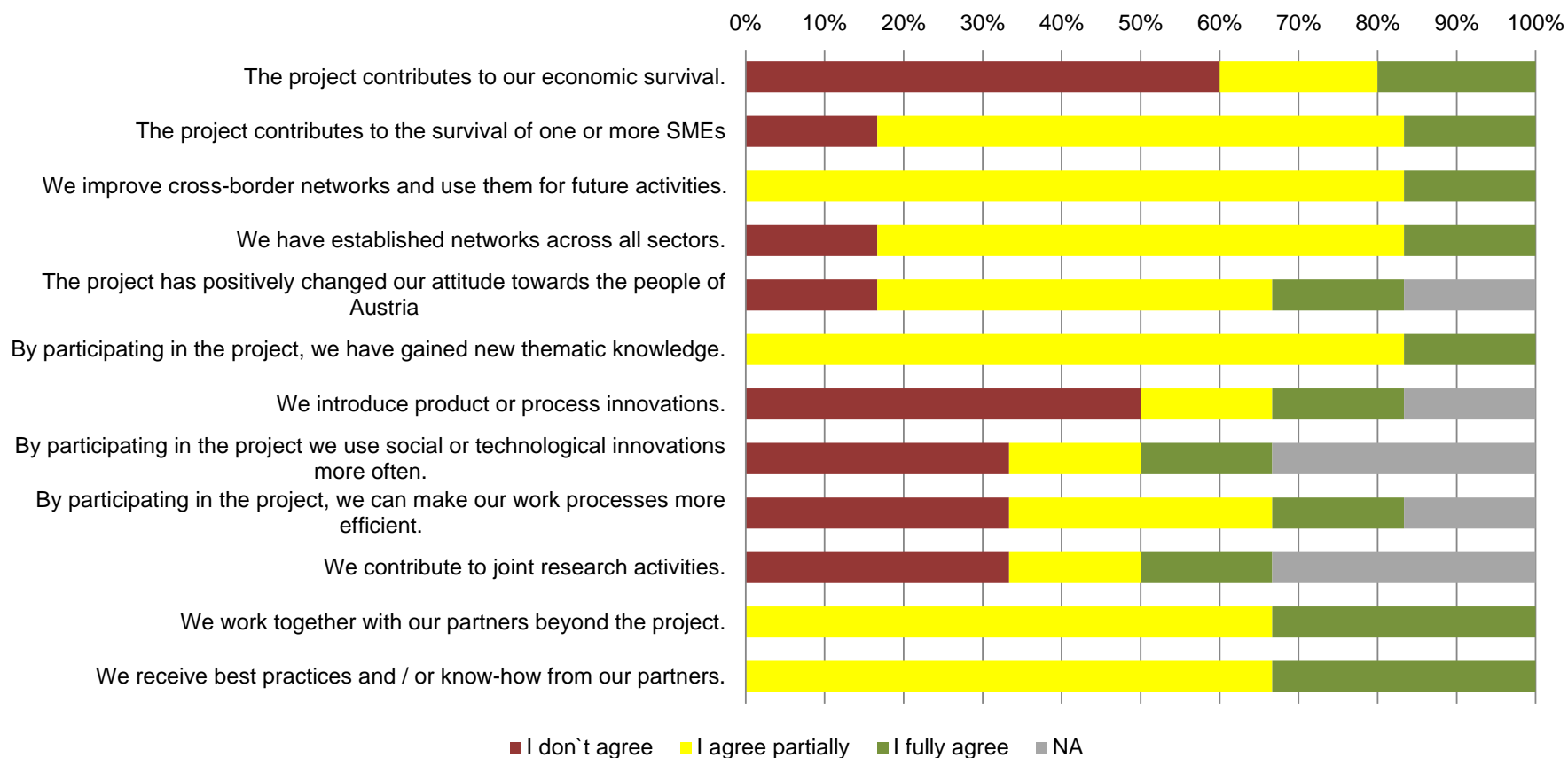
Figure 38: Online survey result SO 1.1 2014-2020, AT responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 10 responses



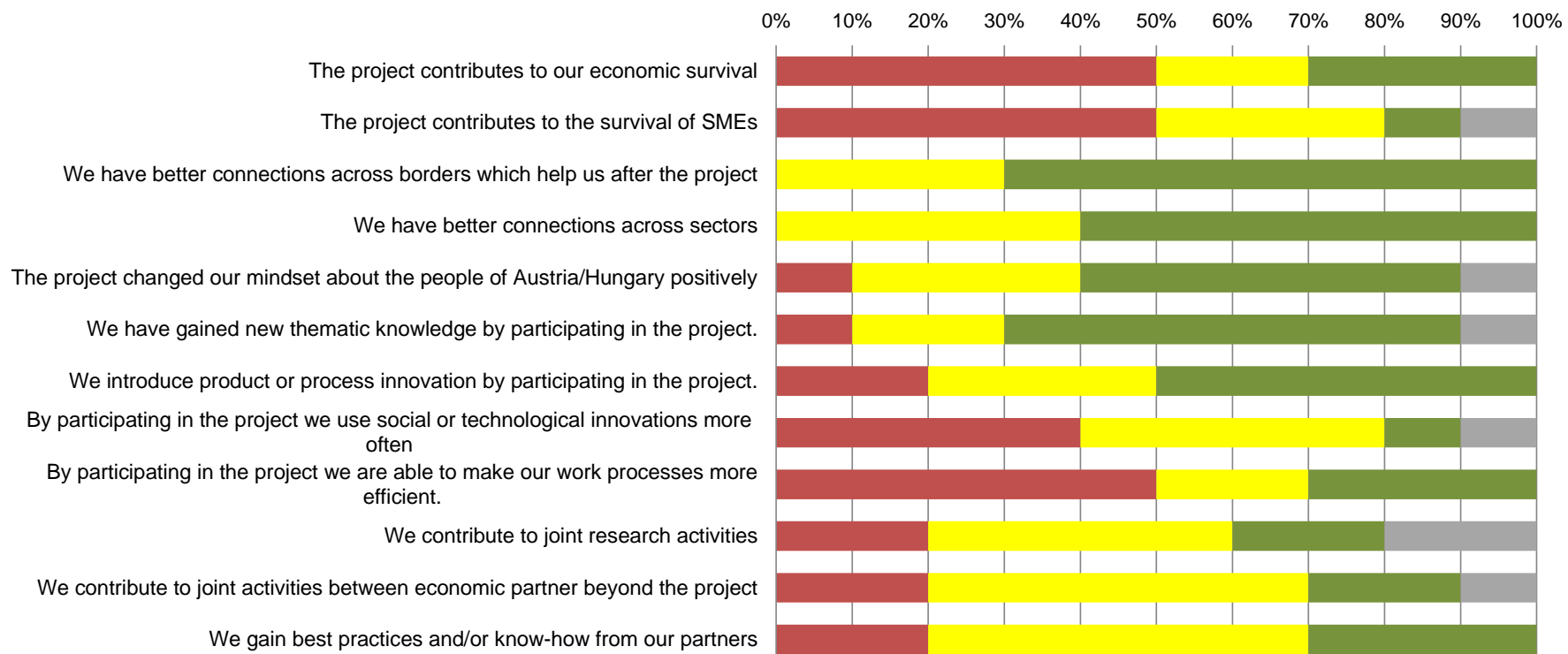
Figure 39: Online survey results SO 1.1 2014-2020, HU responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 5 responses



Figure 40: Online survey result AF 1.1 2007-2013, AT responses

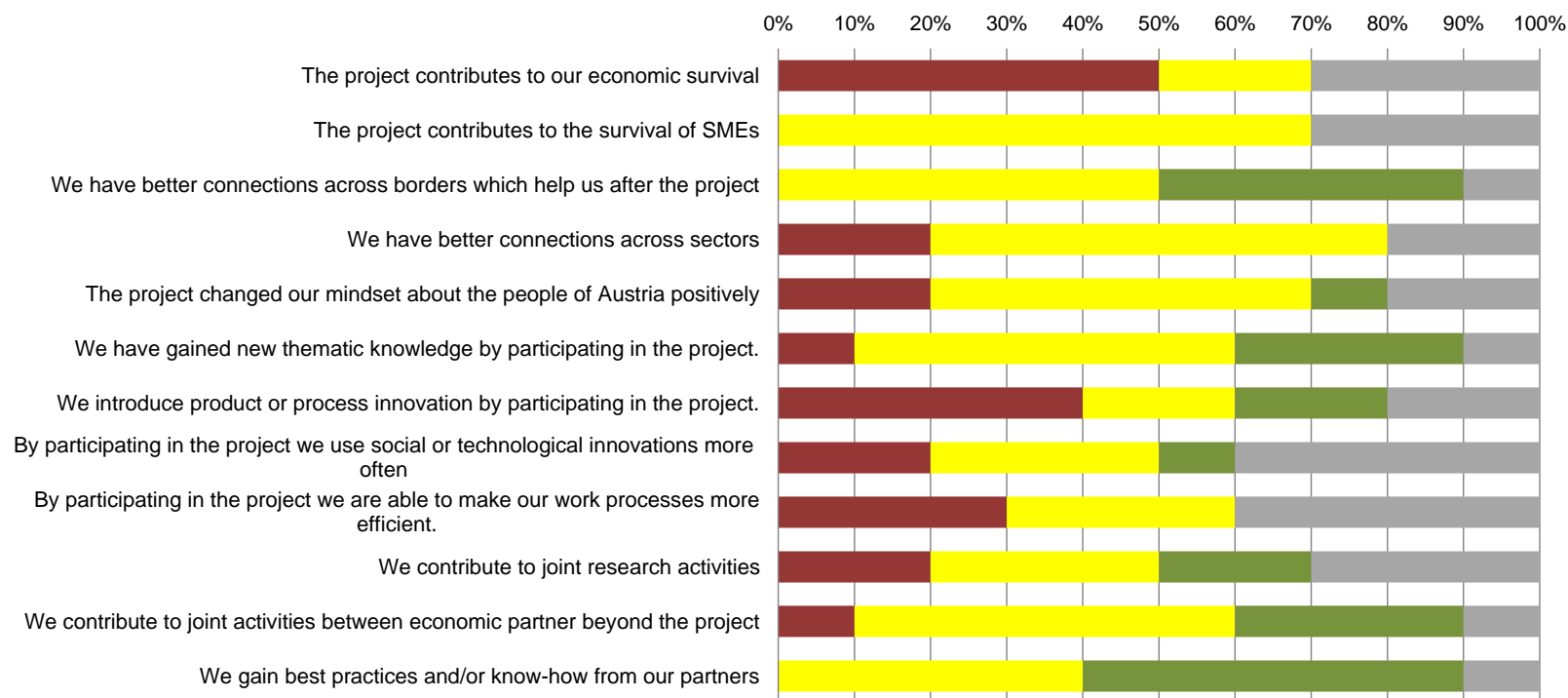


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 10 responses





Figure 41: Online survey result AF 1.1 2007-2013, HU responses

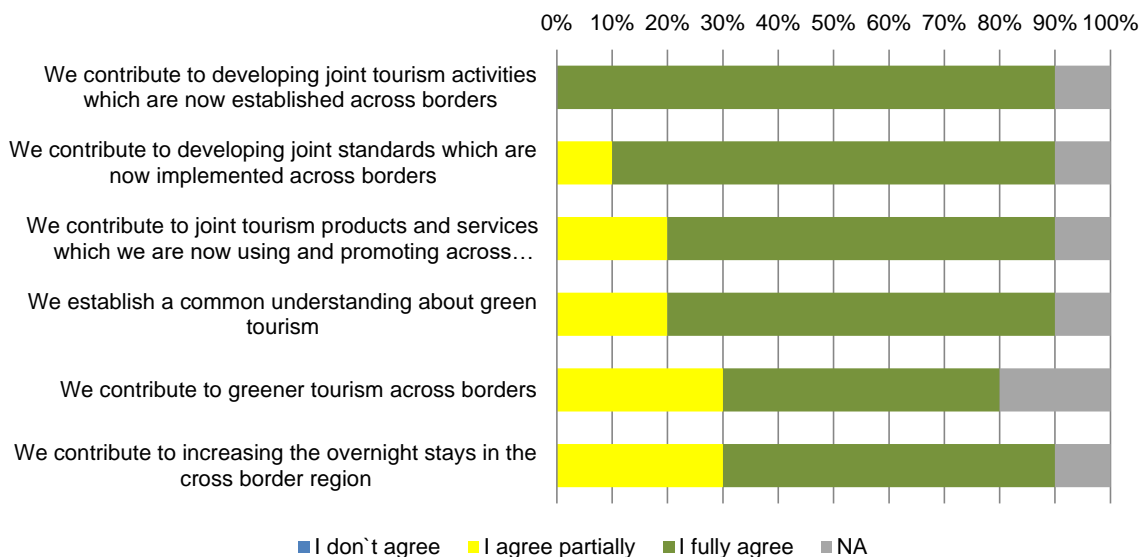


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 10 responses



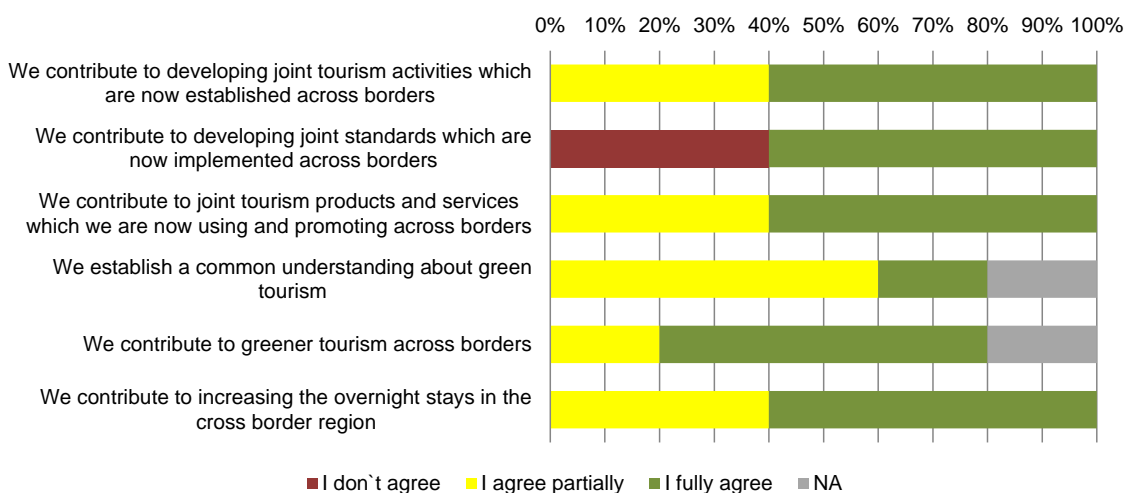
### 5.1.3 Specific objective 2.1

**Figure 42: Online survey results SO 2.1 2014-2020, AT responses**



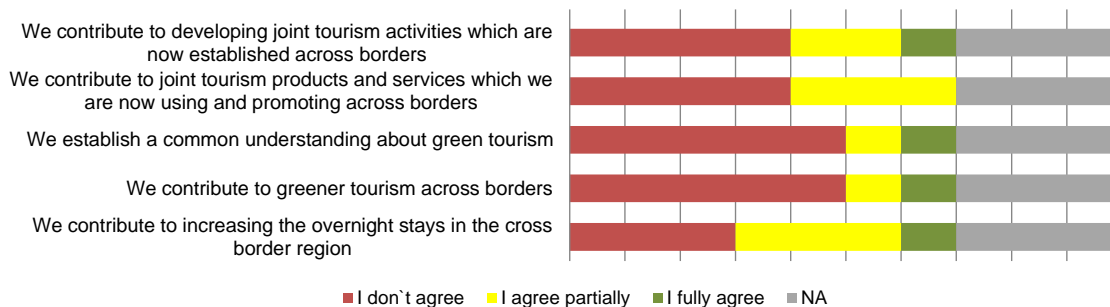
Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 9 responses

**Figure 43: Online survey results SO 2.1 2014-2020, HU responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 5 responses

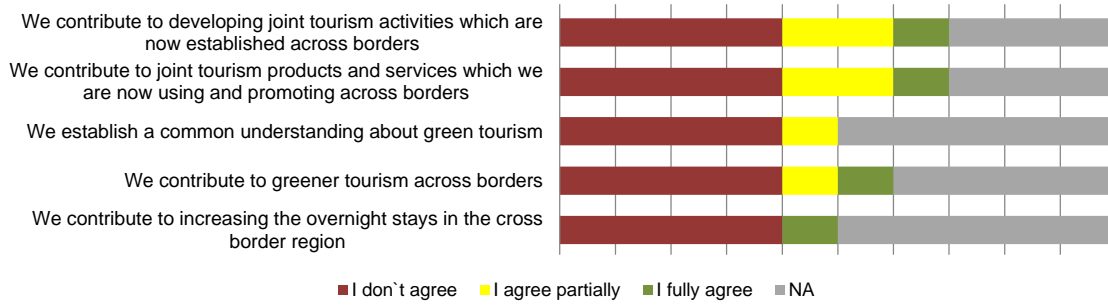
**Figure 44: Online survey results AF 1.1 2007-2013, AT responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 10 responses



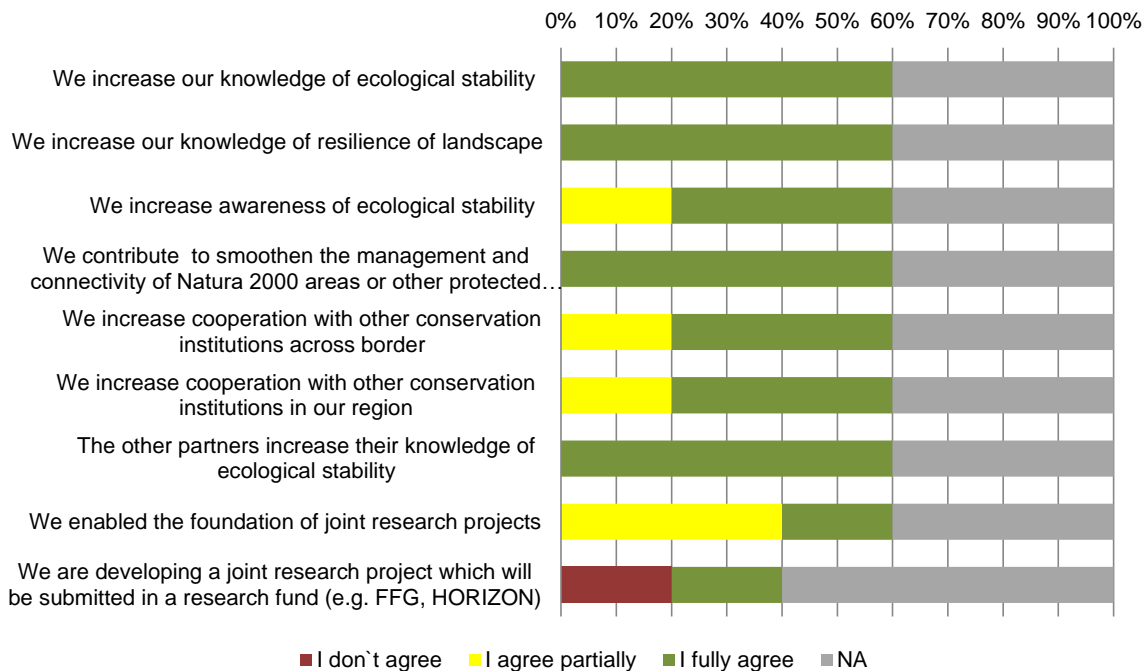
**Figure 45: Online survey results AF 1.1 2007-2013, HU responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 7 responses

### 5.1.4 Specific objective 2.2

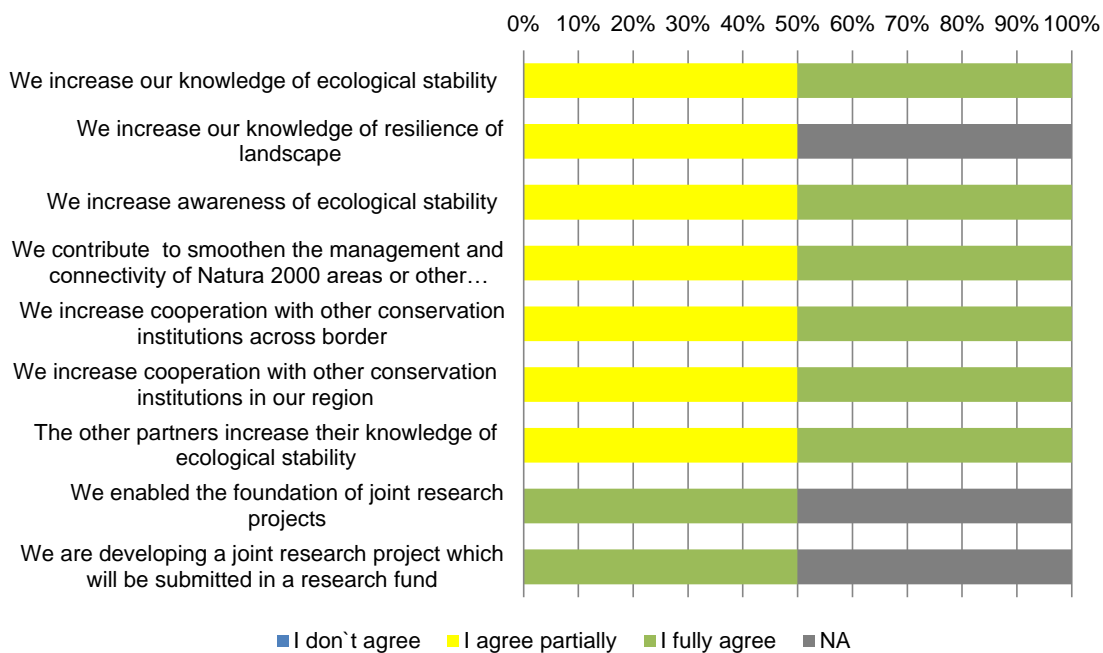
**Figure 46: Online survey results SO 2.2 2014-2020, AT responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses

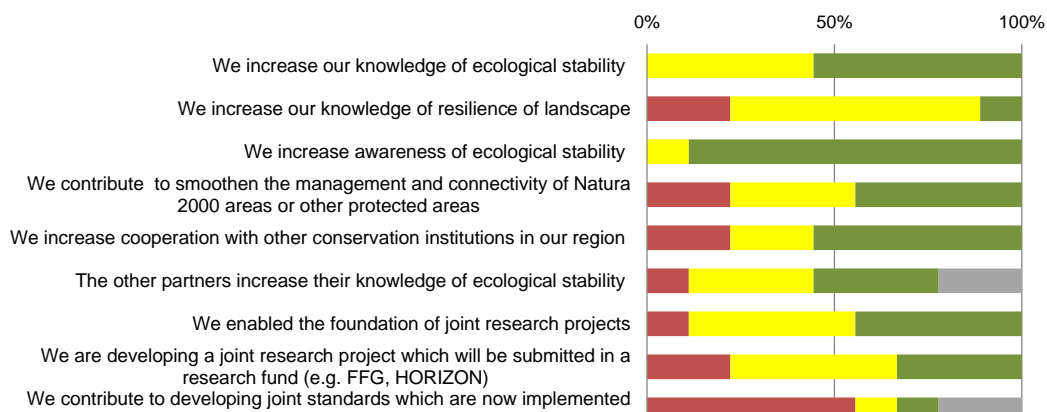


**Figure 47: Online survey results SO 2.2 2014-2020, HU responses**



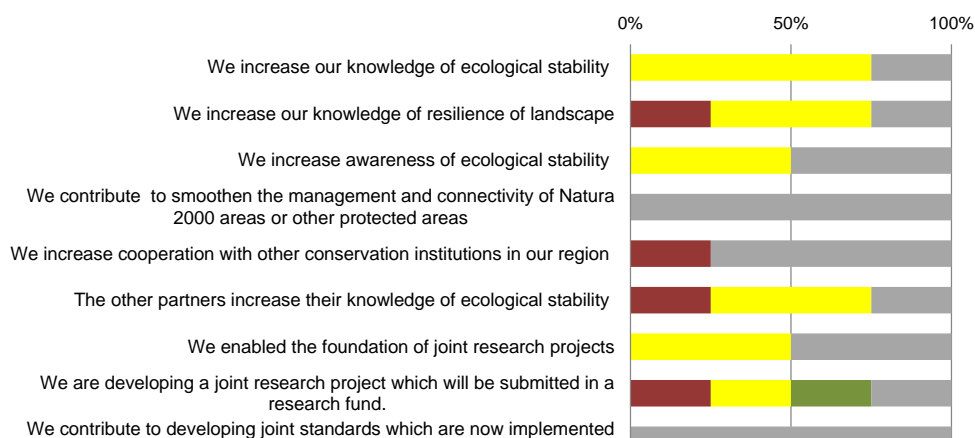
Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 2 responses

**Figure 48: Online survey result AF 2.3 2007-2013, AT responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 9 responses

**Figure 49: Online survey result AF 2.3 2007-2013, HU responses**

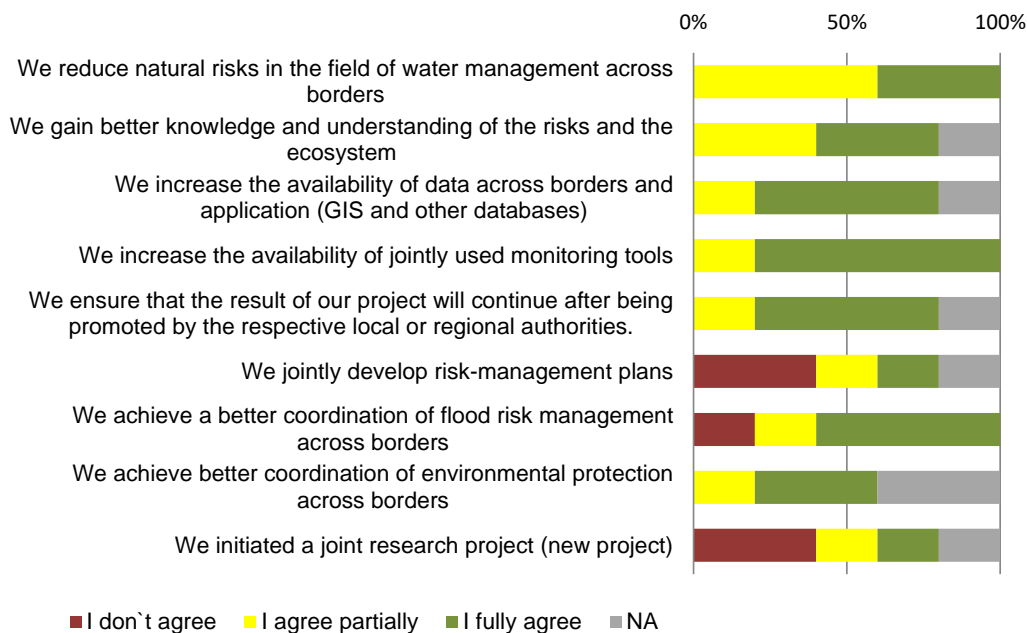


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 4 responses



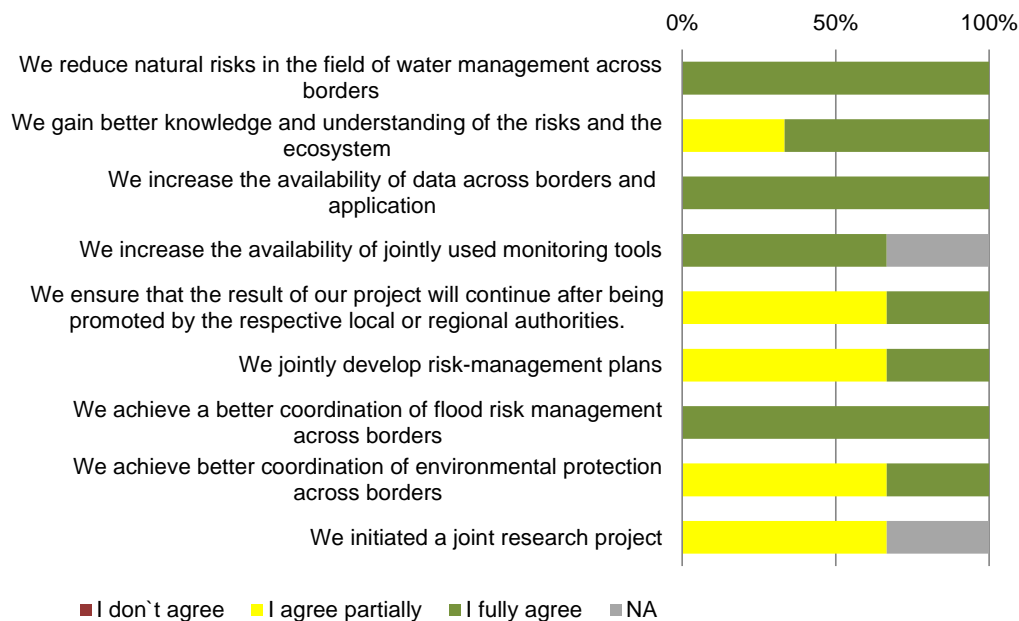
### 5.1.5 Specific objective 2.3

Figure 50: Online survey result SO 2.3 2014-2020, AT responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 5 responses

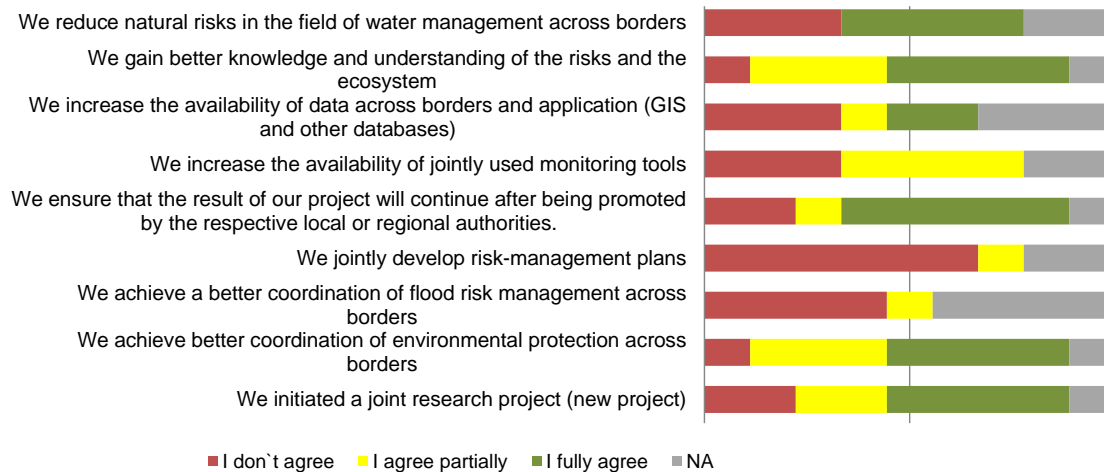
Figure 51: Online survey result SO 2.3 2014-2020, HU responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses

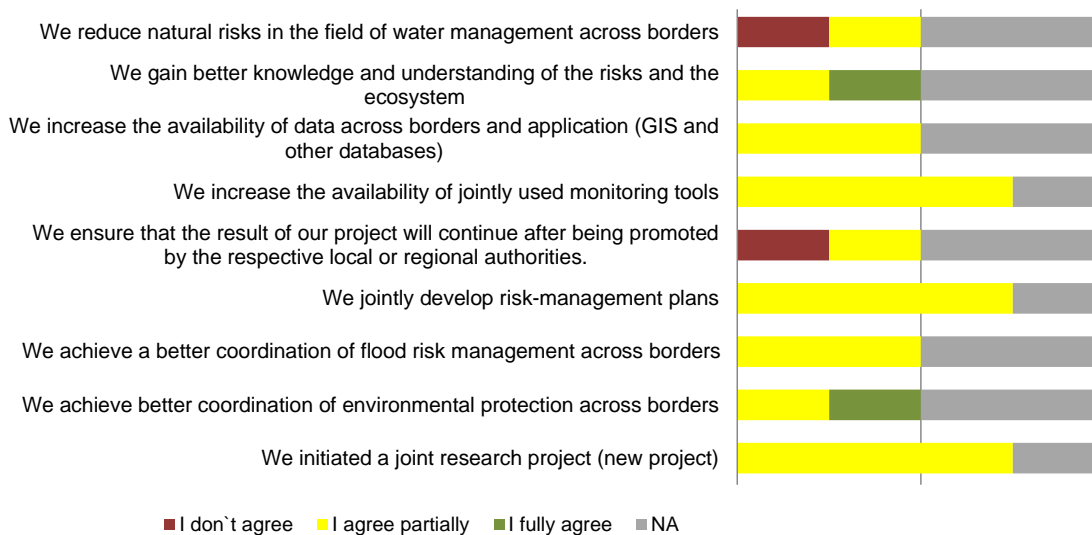


**Figure 52: Online survey result AF 2.3 2007-2013, AT responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 9 responses

**Figure 53: Online survey result AF 2.3 2007-2013, HU responses**

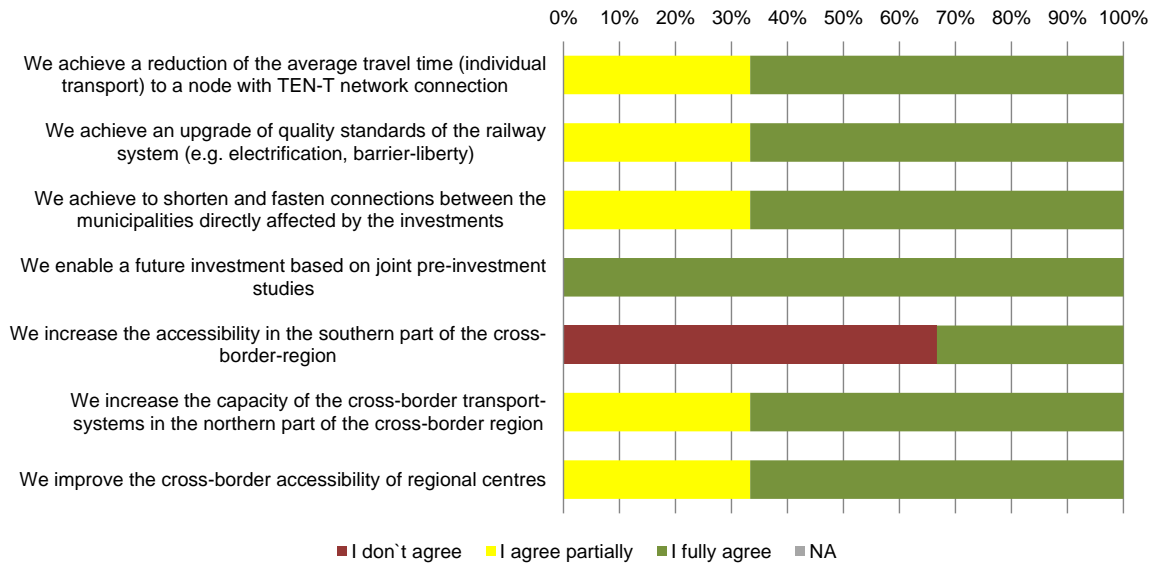


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 4 responses



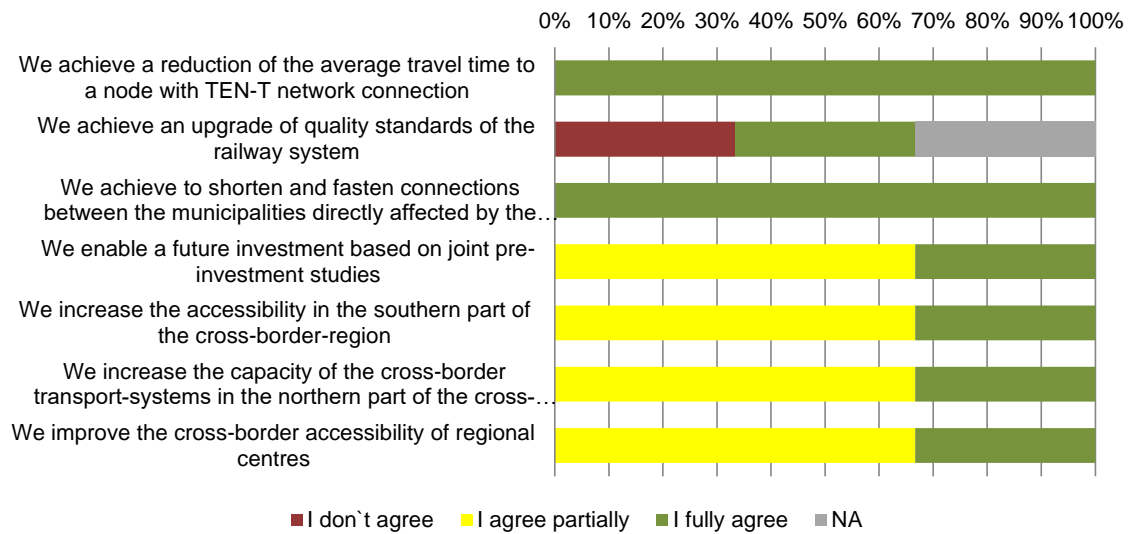
### 5.1.6 Specific objective 3.1

Figure 54: Online survey result SO 3.1 2014-2020, AT responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses

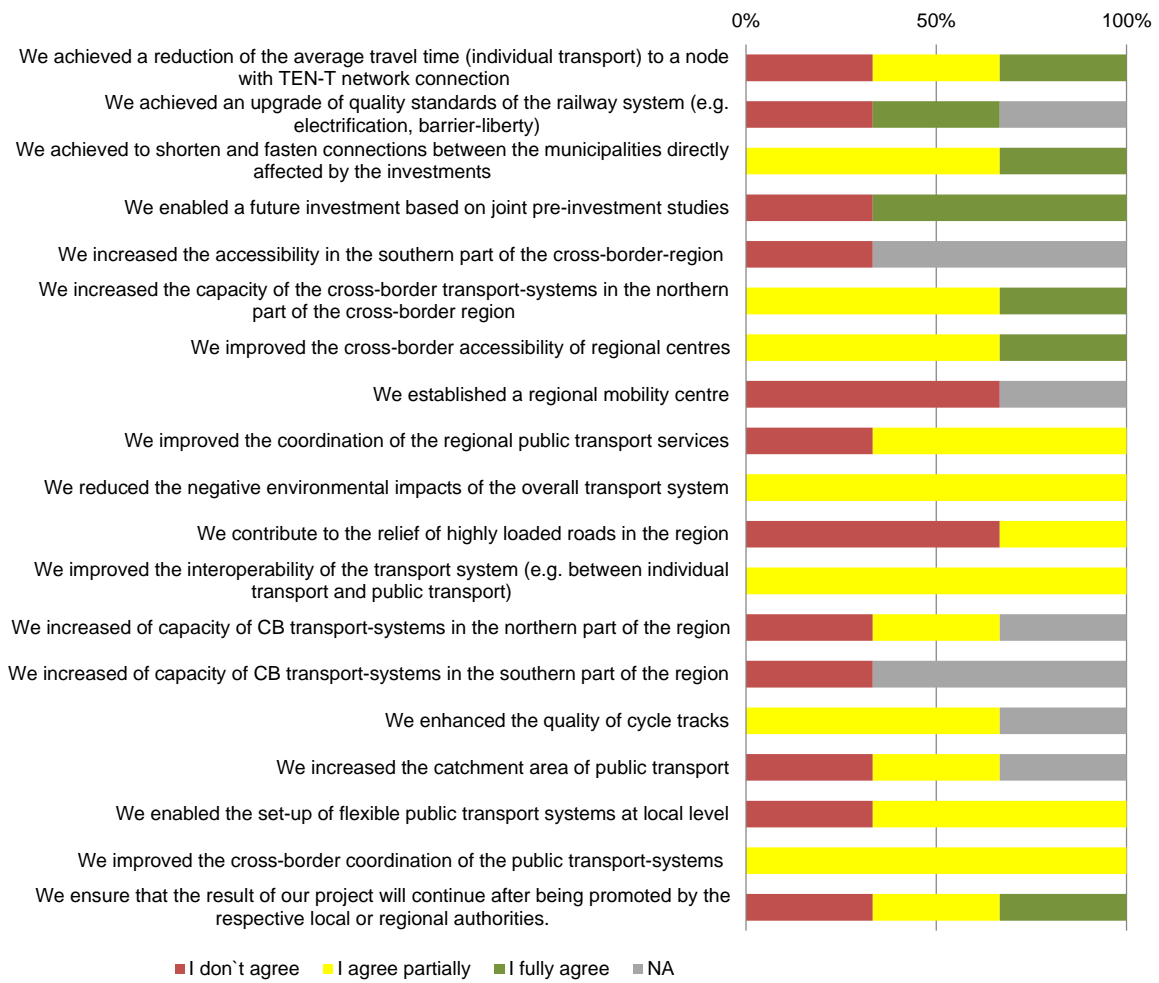
Figure 55: Online survey result SO 3.1 2014-2020, HU responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses



Figure 56: Online survey result AF 2.1 2007-2013, AT responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses





Figure 57: Online survey result AF 2.1 2007-2013, HU responses

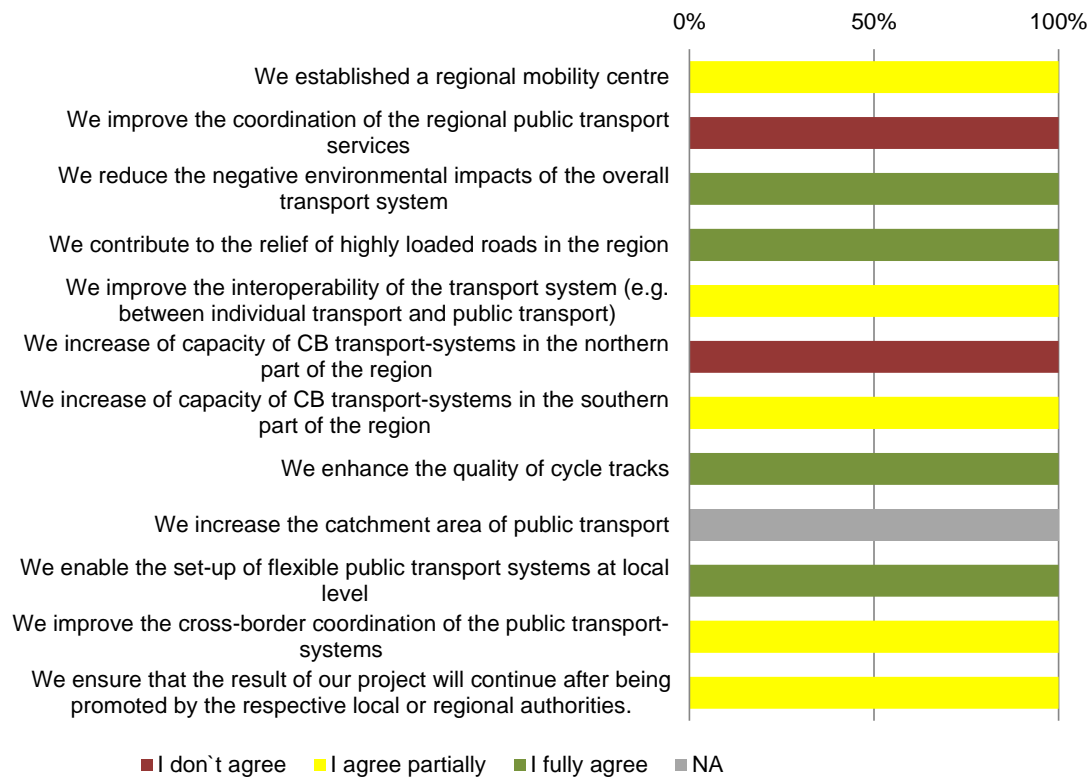


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 4 responses



### 5.1.7 Specific objective 3.2

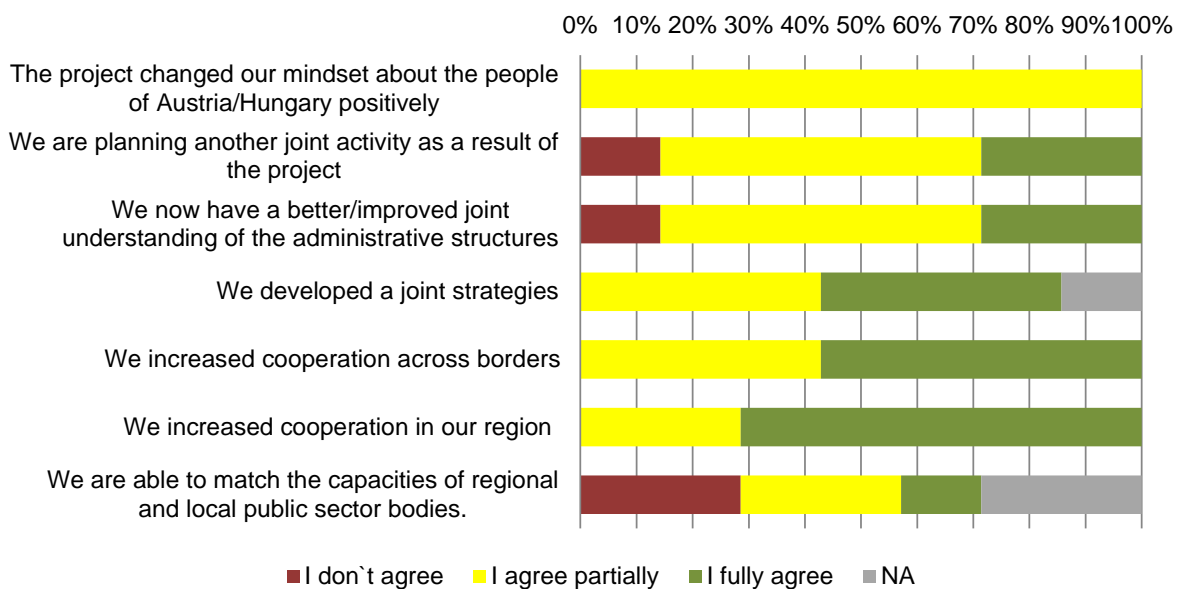
Figure 58: Online survey result SO 3.2 2014-2020, AT responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 1 response

No responses for Hungary

Figure 59: Online survey result SO 4.1 2014-2020, AT responses

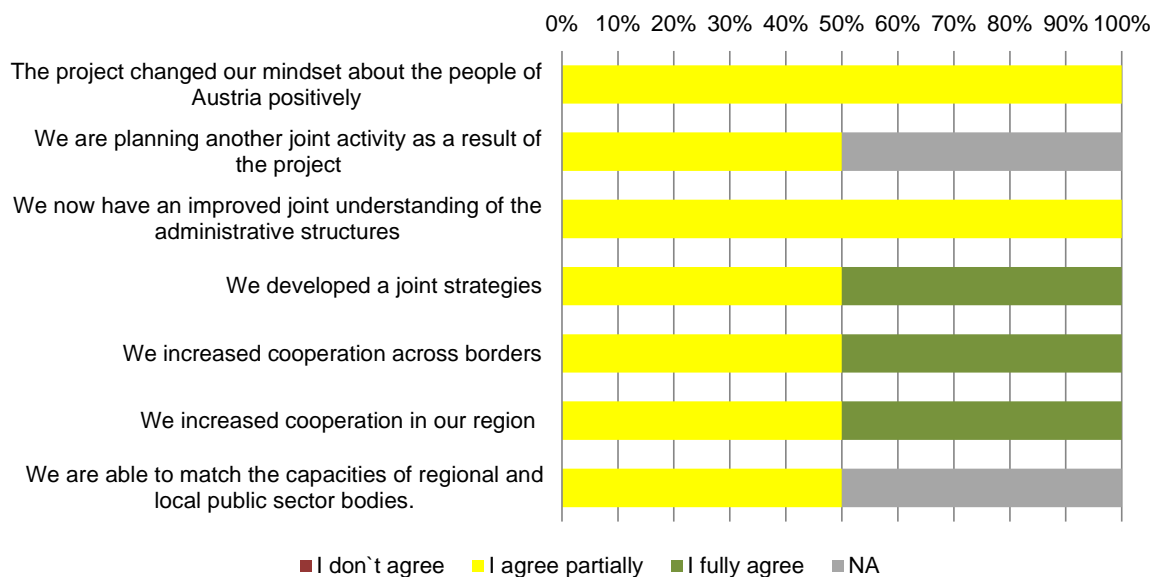


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 7 responses



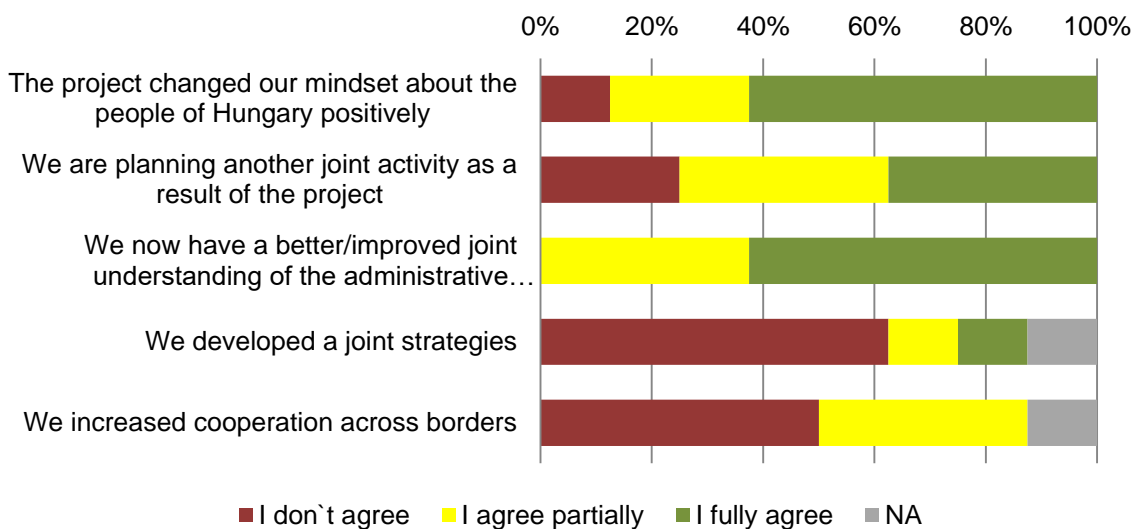
### 5.1.8 Specific objective 4.1

**Figure 60: Online survey result SO 4.1 2014-2020, HU responses**



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 2 responses

**Figure 61: Online survey result SO 4.2 2014-2020, AT responses**

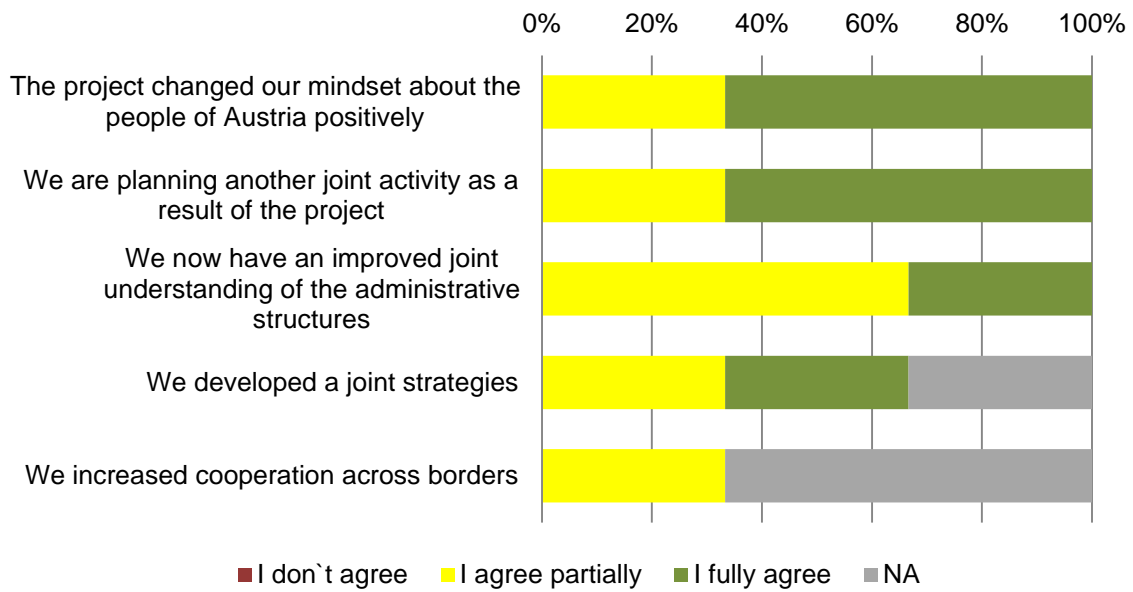


Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 9 responses



### 5.1.9 Specific objective 4.2

Figure 62: Online survey result SO 4.2 2014-2020, HU responses



Source: Online survey evaluation team September 2019 – 3 responses



## Annex 6. Comparison of Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 with policy objectives post 2020

Table 88: policy objectives post 2020 compared to Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020

Policy objectives 2021-2027 Article 4 CPR COM(2018) 375 final	Specific objectives 2021-2027 Article 2 ERDF-Proposal COM(2018) 372 final	Specific objective 2021-2027 Article 14 ETC-VO COM(2018) 374 final	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Investment priorities	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Relevant projects contracted 08.2019
PO 1 - a smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation'	i) enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies			• SEDDON II
	ii) reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments			
	iii) enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs;		3 d Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation process	• femcoop PLUS • REGIONET Competitive • InnoWood • SMART-UP
	iv) developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship;		IP 11 (a) iv Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions;	• EDLRIS • REBE II • CEPI
PO 2 a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management	i) promoting energy efficiency measures;			
	ii) promoting renewable energy			
	iii) developing smart energy systems, grids and storage at local level			
	iv) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience			• PLATFORM • Raab Flood 4cast
	v) promoting sustainable water management		6f Promoting innovative technologies to improve	• RaabSTAT



Policy objectives 2021-2027 Article 4 CPR COM(2018) 375 final	Specific objectives 2021-2027 Article 2 ERDF-Proposal COM(2018) 372 final	Specific objective 2021-2027 Article 14 ETC-VO COM(2018) 374 final	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Investment priorities	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Relevant projects contracted 08.2019
			environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REBEN</li> </ul>
	vi) promoting the transition to a circular economy			
	vii) enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution		6d Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vogelwarte Madárvárta 2</li> <li>• AgriNatur AT-HU</li> <li>• WeCon</li> <li>• NEduNET</li> </ul>
PO 3 a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity'	i) enhancing digital connectivity;			
	ii) developing a sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent, secure and intermodal TEN-T;			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (CrossBorder Road)</li> </ul>
	iii) developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility		7b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Várbalog-Halbtorn</li> <li>• Rajka – Deutsch Jahrndorf</li> <li>• CrossBorder Road)</li> <li>• St.Margarethen-Fertőrákos</li> <li>• CrossBorder Rail</li> </ul>
	iv) promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility		7c Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low- carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMART-Pannonia</li> </ul>



Policy objectives 2021-2027 Article 4 CPR COM(2018) 375 final	Specific objectives 2021-2027 Article 2 ERDF-Proposal COM(2018) 372 final	Specific objective 2021-2027 Article 14 ETC-VO COM(2018) 374 final	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Investment priorities	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Relevant projects contracted 08.2019
			transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	
PO 4 a more social Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	i) enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social innovation and infrastructure;	3a) enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and improving access to quality employment across-borders;		
	ii) improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing infrastructure;	3b) improving access to and the quality of education, training and lifelong learning across-borders with a view to increasing the educational attainment and skills levels thereof as to be recognised across-borders;		
	iii) increasing the socioeconomic integration of marginalised communities, migrants and disadvantaged groups, through integrated measures including housing and social services;	3c) enhancing the equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable healthcare services across-borders;		
	iv) ensuring equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care;	3d) improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services across-borders;		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-friendly Region</li> </ul>
		3e) promoting social inclusion and tackling poverty, including by enhancing equal opportunities and combating discrimination across-borders.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• femcoop PLUS</li> <li>• ROMABIZ</li> </ul>
PO 5 A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and	i) fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban areas			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>



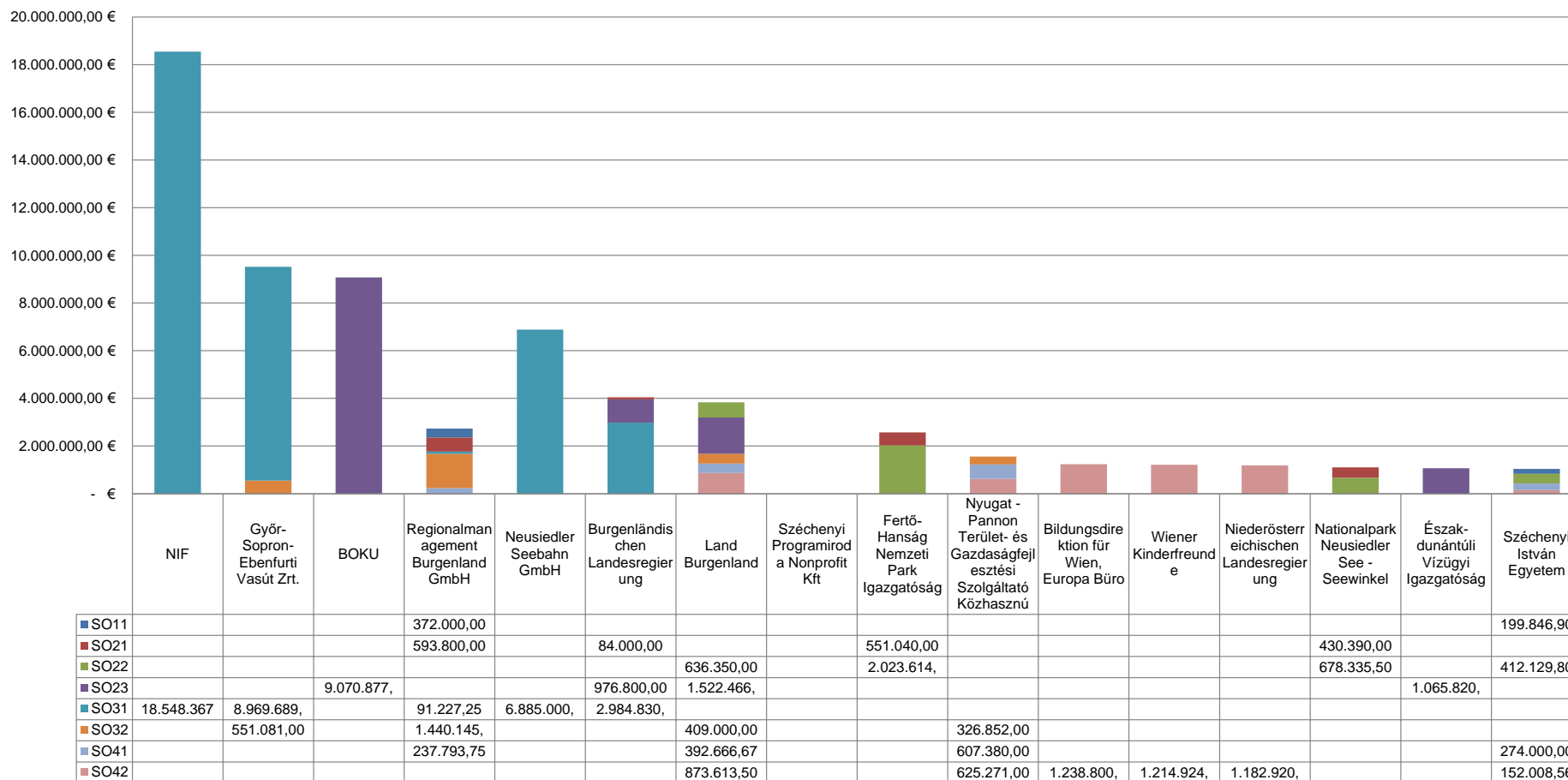
Policy objectives 2021-2027 Article 4 CPR COM(2018) 375 final	Specific objectives 2021-2027 Article 2 ERDF-Proposal COM(2018) 372 final	Specific objective 2021-2027 Article 14 ETC-VO COM(2018) 374 final	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Investment priorities	Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020 Relevant projects contracted 08.2019
integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives'	ii) fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental local development, cultural heritage and security, including for rural and coastal areas also through community-led local development.		6c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VELOREGIO</li> <li>• Weindylle AT-HU</li> <li>• PaNaNet+</li> <li>• 3 Határlos</li> <li>• ArcheON</li> <li>• alpannonia plus</li> <li>• Wrestling without borders</li> </ul>
Better Interreg governance		4 a)i) enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ConnReg</li> </ul>
		4 a)ii enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions	IP 11 (a) iv Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairwork</li> <li>• Joint Ambrosia Action</li> <li>• Ökoachse</li> </ul>
		4 b) enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies		

Source: COM(2018) 372 final, 2018/0197 (COD); COM(2018) 374 final, 2018/0199 (COD) Strasbourg, 29.5.2018





### Annex 7. Comparison of partner budget



Source: eMS September 2019