



**Interreg** 

**Austria–Hungary 2014–2020**

European Union – European Regional Development Fund

# ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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Interreg V-A Austria–Hungary

Reporting period: 01.01.2019 – 31.12.2019



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## 1 IDENTIFICATION

CCI	2014TC16RFCB010
Title	Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary
Version	1.0
Reporting year	2019
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	19.6.2020

## 2 OVERVIEW

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

Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary runs a continuous call for applications in the four thematic priorities since 16.12.2015.

Prior to 2019 four project selection rounds have been concluded, with overall 82% (including TA: 83%) of the available ERDF funding committed to 36 approved projects. 28 projects were contracted until the end of 2018, accounting for 63% of the programme's ERDF resources.

25 applications were submitted and 21 compliant ones discussed by the MC in 2019 in three application rounds. 4 of them were resubmitted after a previous "postpone" decision of the MC, making 17 projects totally new to the programme, of which 13 were approved (3 in February, 6 in June and 4 in December). Until the end of 2019 altogether 49 projects were approved by the MC in the 4 thematic priorities, involving 202 partners (108 Austrian, 94 Hungarian partners). 43 projects were contracted until 31.12.2019. Further 5 projects were contracted until end of April 2020. When this AIR is being prepared, one contract is pending due to administrative reasons.

The average project has an ERDF budget of about 1.45M€, with 4.1 partners, about 350 000 € ERDF/partner. The average project length is 37 months. While all specific objectives include some projects close or above 2M€ of ERDF, in priority 3 only one project is below 1M€, the rest above 2M€, with an average of 3.3M€ ERDF. Priority 3 has also the biggest ERDF funding (9.4M€) in the project CrossBorder Rail.

At the end of 2019 the MC agreed about the next submission deadline on 19.5.2020, with decisions planned in September.

Implementation is advanced at most of the contracted projects, but reporting is often lagging behind. At the end of 2019, most submitted project reports reflected periods in 2018 or in few cases even older. A frequent reason is the delay in the verification and the consequent congestion of partner reports at some first level control bodies. MA, JS, and the Regional Coordinators make coordinated efforts to accelerate reporting and emphasize the importance of e.g. starting to write the project reports as soon as the re-



reporting period is over, not waiting for the availability of all verified partner reports. Another solution that has already worked at some projects is that FLC combines expenditure of several periods in one certificate, issued for the last report. In this case the periods before are verified as “zero reports”.

Up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> payment application, submitted in August 2019, 12.8M€ ERDF was reported to the EC, fulfilling the 2019 N+3 target. Including the 4<sup>th</sup> PA submitted to the EC on 02.03.2020, reported ERDF went up to 16.8M€ (the 2020 N+3 target being 19.8M€). Expenditure incurred and paid by the beneficiaries until 31.12.2019 has a cumulative value of approximately 20.6M€.

In 2018 the total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority was below 5% of the total funding of the programme, in 2019 this has approached 20%, while the reports of some large infrastructure projects (rail and road infrastructure and the project SEDDON II) are expected to boost in 2020/21.

Available project reports reflect the project implementation status up to mid-2019 or older (even in optimal circumstances project reports are submitted half a year after the end of the period). Considering actual achievements that are not yet included in project reports, the contribution of projects to the programme output indicators is often higher than available in the reports (see comments to OIs). It should be also noted that many outputs are reported only at project end.

Out of the 43 contracted projects 9 have finished their implementation until the end of 2019. In 2020 further 19 are scheduled to finish (although due to the COVID-19 pandemic some prolongations can be expected). It needs to be noted that the submission of the final project report to the JS can take 7 months after the end of implementation, in some cases even longer. Until that time achievements are not reflected in the monitoring system.

Notwithstanding the obvious need to accelerate reporting at partner and project level, as well as to catch up with the verification process especially at some FLCs, actual project achievements are mostly on time with the project time plans, and substantial further outputs are expected in the following years, therefore the achievement of programme targets is not in danger.

The first phase of programme evaluation about the efficiency of the programme’s structures and processes and of the communication strategy was launched in April 2018. Following the approval by the MC in November 2018, it was closed with the final report in April 2019. Based on the proposals of the evaluation an action plan was prepared which is continuously being reflected in the work of the programme, and in the meetings of the MC and the bilateral working group (BWG).

The second phase of the evaluation (efficiency, effectiveness and impact) was launched in May 2019, conducted basically in summer and autumn 2019, and the final report was validated by the evaluation steering group (ESG) and sent for examination to the MC in May 2020.

Communication work was done on the basis of the communication strategy and the related reflections of the programme evaluation as approved by the MC in November 2018.

As a result, internal communication was strengthened especially in supporting the certi-





fication process, everyday cooperation between the JS and the MA, and the involvement of RCs during the contracting process. Among others, an FLC network meeting was organised on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and a data sharing platform set up with access granted to the JS and the MA. Speeding up project contracting was further supported by the revision of procedures and deadlines, with clear improvements in 2019. For a better overview of the contracting process MA/JS introduced a contracting feedback sheet in which beneficiaries can share their experiences during the contracting phase.

Evaluation recommendations as well as the availability of project outcomes gave substantial impetus to external communication, both vis-à-vis project holders and the general public. A list of frequently asked questions was set up and published on the program-website in 2019, providing valuable information to project partners about all aspects of project development and implementation. The program newsletters' structure was finalized, its circulation routinized, and three newsletters sent during the year. A microsite training and a beneficiary seminar organised over the year should also be noted as major achievements in 2019 as acute difficulties in using microsites greatly hampered project communication.

In December 2019 a new version of the Implementation Manual was issued, including an extended chapter about project closure.

eMS is used since programme start to fulfil e-cohesion obligations, contributing to the harmonization of applications and reporting across programmes.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXES

#### 3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (TO03)	<p>7 projects are approved in the priority axis 1, of which 6 were contracted (selected) until the end of 2019. The ERDF funding of selected projects amounts to 72% of the available resources in the priority. With projects approved but not contracted yet, this goes up to 81%.</p> <p>Outputs of selected operations have already reached the OI11 target and exceeded OI12. Further contributions are expected.</p> <p>Reporting on project level is the most advanced in priority 1, total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries is above 30% of the available funding.</p> <p>3 selected projects have finished implementation in 2019, one is going to finish in 2020.</p>





ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
2	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (TO06)	<p>16 projects are approved in the priority axis 2, of which all were contracted (selected) until the end of 2019. The ERDF funding of selected projects amounts to 95% of the available resources in the priority axis (90% in SO21, 86% in SO22, 102% in SO23).</p> <p>Forecasted outputs of selected operations reach or exceed targets of all OIs except OI25 (protection measures including investments).</p> <p>With regard to the project implementation, most projects are well on their way.</p> <p>Reported achievements in SO21 have already reached the OI23 target.</p> <p>Actual achievements are ahead of reported ones, but often not visible due to pending project reports – specifically in case of CO23 (Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status) partial achievement cannot be reported. According to available time plans 10 projects are scheduled to finish implementation until the end of 2020, bringing most output indicators to reach target values. It shall be noted that some of the related reports may only be available in AIR2021. Furthermore, prolongations in some projects (esp. tourism related) are expected due to the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>In January 2020 the programme has organised a project development workshop to support new applications, with specific thematic recommendation among others on projects contributing to OI25 (Protection measures, including investments).</p>





ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
3	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures (TO07)	<p>Altogether 7 projects are approved in the priority axis 3.</p> <p>In SO31 one railway project was contracted (selected) in 2018 and four road infrastructure projects contracted in April 2019. In SO32 a transport coordination project was contracted (selected) in 2017, a second one approved in 2019 and contracted recently in 2020.</p> <p>At the end of 2019 the ERDF funding of the selected (contracted) projects amounted to 96% of the available resources in the priority axis (99% in SO31, 78% in SO32). The project that was approved but not contracted yet in 2019 raises the utilisation of the priority axis to over 99%.</p> <p>Approved operations are forecasted to reach or exceed all output indicator targets. Actual performance in CO12 was implemented to a large part (37.93 km reconstructed railway) already in 2018. Also some road constructions (contribution to CO13 and CO14) are finalised, but the finalisation of planned achievements and the related reports are expected in 2020 or later.</p> <p>In the railway project 3 studies will ensure fulfilment of OI31, two of them ready in 2019, reports are expected later.</p> <p>In SO32, outputs of the two approved projects (in 2019 one of them contracted) are forecasted to fulfil OI33 and OI32, but due to delayed reporting no achievement is included in the annual implementation report yet.</p> <p>In 2020 four projects are scheduled to finish implementation (two road constructions, the railway infrastructure, and one of the transport coordination projects). Prolongations due to COVID-19 are not known yet. Two road infrastructure projects and the other transport coordination project plan to finish implementation in 2021.</p>





ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
4	Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration (TO11)	<p>Altogether 19 projects have been approved in the priority axis 4, of which 15 projects were contracted (selected) until the end of 2019. The ERDF funding of selected projects reaches 76% of the available resources in the priority. Projects that were approved but not contracted yet in 2019 increase the utilisation of the priority axis to about 99%.</p> <p>Outputs of selected operations are forecasted to exceed the targets of CO46 and OI41, and approach OI42. Actual achievements are also approaching the targets in each indicator, although reported values (especially CO46) are still lagging behind. Approved but not yet contracted projects ensure that all OIs are reached or exceeded. Five projects have finished implementation in 2019, their final indicator values will be available in the AIR2020. Further five projects are expected to finish implementation in 2020, 2 in 2021, and 7 in 2022, but due to COVID-19 delays are expected. Please also note that final indicator achievements may be available in the AIR of the year following end of project implementation.</p>
5	Technical support to the programme implementation	<p>The TA projects that were approved in a written procedure following the 1<sup>st</sup> MC (3 regional TA projects and the Core TA project including costs for the MA, JS, CA and AA) are all contracted and in implementation. The financial implementation of the priority axis and the achievement of output indicators are according to plan. The institutions and processes of the programme are operational. For more information, see other chapters of the annual implementation report.</p>







### 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators

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

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

Automatic from SFC						ANNUAL VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
RI11	Survival rate of enterprises after 3 years	Percent	66.27%	2012	62%	66.27 %	60,78 %	57.26 %	58.32 %	60.28 %	61.37 %						(1) Status: n-2 years. (2) Since the adoption of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> CP modification by the EC on 12.03.2018 the baseline and annual values reflect Eurostat data. (3) Due to updated Eurostat figures of the Austrian NUTS3 regions about "Enterprises newly born in t-3 having survived to t" the values in the column 2018 needed minor correction compared to the data provided in the previous AIR. (4) Compared to previous year the tendency in HU has turned slightly down, in AT up, overall increasing survival rate can be seen.
RI21	Overnight stays	Number	22 809 823	2013	25 000 000	22 809 823	23 175 628	23 762 619	24 952 202	26 063 357	26 548 045						Status: n-1 year.





Automatic from SFC						ANNUAL VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
RI22	Conservation degree A (of all habitat types in the Natura 2000 sites of the programme region)	Percent	10.5	2013 (release date)	12				10,91								To be reported next time in AIR2020
RI23	Chemical and ecological condition of border water bodies classified as "good" and "very good"	Number	2 (of 9)	2013 (2009/2010 for the Danube)	4				2								To be reported next time in AIR2020
RI31	Average travel time (individual transport) to a node with TEN-T network connection	Minutes	14.08	2013	13												To be reported next time in AIR2020
RI32	Intermodal public transport nodes	Number	1 274.5	2014	1 400				1349.5								To be reported next time in AIR2020
RI41	Level of cooperation quality in the border region	Percent of highest rating	54.03%	2014	65%				58.84 %								To be reported next time in AIR2020
RI42	Institutions involved in cross-border education schemes	Number	35	2014	45				48	55	67						With one additional contracted (selected) SO42 project in 2019, 12 new actors (project partners and strategic partners) were counted who are new to cross-border education schemes.





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

	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI11	SMEs involved in cooperation projects (action 1, 2)	Number	100	0	0	0	96	122	212					Contribution of 6 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO11.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	64	100					3 of 6 projects have reported contribution to OI11. In several cases actual achievements until the end of 2019 have exceeded contracted project targets, some project reports are pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI12	Intermediate organisations involved in cooperation projects (action 3)	Number	8	0	0	0	18	23	28				Contribution of 5 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO11.	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	12	17					3 of 5 projects have reported contribution to OI12. In most cases actual achievements until the end of 2019 have reached or exceeded contracted project targets, some project reports are pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI21	Jointly developed strategies and action	Number	5	0	0	0	4	6	8				Contribution of 4 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO21.	





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		plans and capacity building measures (action 1)			0	0	0	0	1	2					1 of 4 projects has reported contribution to OI21. Actual achievement is available also at projects where report is not available, altogether approaching OI21 target value, Some project reports are pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI22	Jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites (action 1,2)	Number	5	0	0	0	4	5	7					Contribution of 5 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO21.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	1	1					1 of 5 projects has reported contribution to OI22. Most of the expected achievements are planned at later phases (available in AIR2020 or later).
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI23	Common offers (action 2,3)	Number	3	0	0	0	8	12	16					Contribution of 6 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO21.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	1	4					2 of 6 projects have reported contribution to OI23. Actual achievement exceeds reported values. Further expected achievements are planned at later phases. Some project reports are pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats	Hectares	100 000	0	0	0	102 409.24	154 731	257 090.48					Contribution of 4 projects out of a total of 4 projects contracted in SO22.





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		supported to attain a better conservation status (action 2)			0	0	0	0	0	0					Implementation is ongoing in all 4 selected projects. By the nature of the indicator partial achievement cannot be reported. Actual achievements are not expected before end of 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O124	Jointly developed protection and management plans (action 1)	Number	2	0	0	0	0	2	2					Contribution of 2 projects out of a total of 4 projects contracted in SO22.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					0 of 2 projects have reported contribution to O124. First actual achievements are expected in 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O125	Protection measures (including investments) (action 2)	Number	15	0	0	0	1	1	3					Contribution of 2 projects out of a total of 4 projects contracted in SO22.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					One project's contribution to O125 was before finalization at the end of 2019. Report about the first achievement is expected in 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O126	Joint re-research projects (action 3)	Number	3	0	0	0	1	3	3					Contribution of 3 projects out of a total of 4 projects contracted in SO22.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					0 of 3 projects have reported contribution to O126. First actual achievements are expected in 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O127	Participants in joint training schemes	Number	200	0	0	0	215	580	835.00					Contribution of 3 projects out of a total of 4 projects contracted in SO22.





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE									Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		23
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		and awareness raising programmes (action 4)			0	0	0	0	0	62					1 of 3 projects has reported contribution to OI26. Actual achievement exceeds reported values, some project reports are pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO42	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or inter-regional research projects	Organisations	5	0	0	0	3	5	5					Contribution of 2 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO23.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					0 of 2 projects have reported contribution to CO42. Actual achievements are on track, reporting is expected at project closure (AIR2020 at the earliest).
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI28	Jointly developed pilots and infrastructures	Number	2	0	0	0	1	2	2					Contribution of 2 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO23.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					0 of 2 projects have reported contribution to OI28. Some project reports are pending, actual achievement in 2019 is 1.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI29	Measures securing or improving the status of	Number	5	0	0	0	7	9	11					Contribution of 6 projects out of a total of 6 projects contracted in SO23.





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		water bodies in qualitative and			0	0	0	0	1	1					1 of 6 projects has reported contribution to OI29. Considering actual achievement that has not been reported yet, 4 measures have been implemented until the end of 2019.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO12	Railway: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway line (action 2,3)	km	10	0	0	0	0	48.66	48.66					Contribution of 1 railway project contracted in SO31.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	37.93	37.93					37.93km railway reconstruction was finished and paid by the beneficiary already in 2018. Project report is pending. Construction of further 10.73km has started in 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO13	Roads: Total length of newly built roads (action 1)	km	8	0	0	0	0	0	8.33					3 road projects of the 4 contracted in SO31 contribute to CO13.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0.00					Construction of 1.6km is finished, but no project reports were available by the end of the year. Further sections are expected in 2020 and 2021.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO14	Roads: Total length of reconstructed or up-	km	10	0	0	0	0	0	11.55				4 road projects of 4 contracted in SO31 contribute to CO14.	





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		graded roads (action 2)			0	0	0	0	0	0.00					Construction of 7.2km is finished, but no project reports were available by the end of the year. Further sections are expected in 2020 and 2021.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI31	Pre-investment studies	number	2	0	0	0	0	1	3					Contribution of 1 railway project contracted in SO31. Following a project modification approved in 2019, the project is supposed to produce 3 pre-investment studies.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					In 2019 2 of the 3 studies have been finalised, but the report about that is still pending.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI32	Jointly developed strategies, transport concepts and actions (action 1,2,3,4,5)	Number	12	0	0	0	7	7	13					Contribution of 1 large scale transport development project contracted in SO32. Following a project modification approved in 2019, the project is supposed to produce 13 various strategies, concepts and actions. One further approved project will increase contribution
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					A partial achievement of 4 was available at the end of 2019, report pending. The rest of the achievements is expected in 2020.







	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE									Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		23
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI33	Joint schemes for promoting environmentally friendly transport (action 6,7)	Number	4	0	0	0	6	6	6					Contribution of 1 project out of a total of 1 project contracted in SO32. One further approved project will increase contribution
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0					A partial achievement of 1 was available at the end of 2019, report pending. The rest of the achievements is expected in 2020.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO46	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 borders (action 5 and 6)	Persons	200	0	0	0	78	118	228					Contribution of 5 projects out of a total of 15 projects contracted in SO41 and SO42.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	13	13					1 of 5 projects has reported contribution to CO46. Some project reports are pending. Based on available information about actual achievements, project contributions have reached the programme target.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI41	Actors involved in cross-border cooperation (action	Number	250	0	0	0	155	220	322					Contribution of 15 projects out of a total of 15 projects contracted in SO41 and SO42.





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		1,2,3,4,5)			0	0	0	0	131	171					9 of 15 projects have reported contribution to OI41. Some project reports are pending. Based on available information about actual achievements, project contributions have approached the programme target.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI42	Joint cross-border cultural, educational, recreational and other type of community events and actions (“people to people”) (action 4)	Number	25	0	0	0	10	18	22					Contribution of 5 projects out of a total of 15 projects contracted in SO41 and SO42.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	8	13					3 of 5 projects have reported contribution to OI42. Some project reports are pending, actual achievement are higher than reported.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI51	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Number	16.5	0	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5					Based on CP (altogether in 4 TA projects).
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]						0	0.2	11.75	14.8	15.9	16.45				
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI52	Network of regional coordinators established	Number	1	0	1	1	1	1	1					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]						0	0	1	1	1	1				





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI53	Projects	Number	80	0	80	80	80	80	80					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	21	32	47					43 projects contracted in P1-P4 + 4 in P5 (TA)
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI54	e-Monitoring System established	Number	1	0	1	1	1	1	1					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	1	1	1	1	1					eMS effectively functioning since call opening in December 2015.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI55	Network of financial controllers established	Number	1	0	1	1	1	1	1					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	1	1	1	1					FLC Network effectively established in October 2016. The third FLC Network meeting took place in December 2019.
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	OI56	Programme evaluation plan prepared and approved by MC	Number	1	0	1	1	1	1	1					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	1	1	1	1					Evaluation plan approved in MC03. The first part of the evaluation (programme structures and processes and the implementation of the communication strategy) was conducted in 2018, the impact evaluation conducted in 2019 (being finalised in early 2020).





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O157	Programme communication plan prepared and approved by MC	Number	1	0	1	1	1	1	1					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	0	1	1	1	1					
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O158	Guiding documents addressed to applicants and beneficiaries	Number	3	0	3	3	3	3	3					Based on CP.
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]					0	2	2	5	6	6					
Cumulative value – outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	O159	Information, consultation and training measures	Number	16	0	16	16	16	16	16					Based on CP.





	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement Unit	Target Value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)		
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
Cumulative value – outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]		for applicants and beneficiaries			0	0	1	2	6	10							In 2019 2 rounds of individual contract preparation meetings for LPs of approved projects were held, and in September a seminar for beneficiaries, as well as a microsite seminar





### 3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

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

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

Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Observations (if necessary)
1	financial	FI01	Total amount of eligible expenditure for priority axis 1	Euro	2 429 177	8 211 000	0	0	0	0	1 609 021.04	2 555 364.62					Interim payment applications 1-4 to the EC (up to 02.03.2020) included eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries until 31.12.2019
1	output	OI11	SMEs involved in cooperation projects	Number	25	100	0	0	0	0	64	100					3 of 6 projects have reported contribution to OI11. In several cases actual achievements until the end of 2019 have exceeded contracted project targets, some project reports are pending.





Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Observations (if necessary)
2	financial	FI02	Total amount of eligible expenditure for priority axis 2	Euro	4 347 567	29 049 000	0	0	0	0	1 794 905.30	5 383 250.64					Interim payment applications 1-4 to the EC (up to 02.03.2020) included eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries until 31.12.2019
2	output	OI22	Jointly developed investments at cultural and natural heritage sites	Number	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	1					1 of 5 projects has reported contribution to OI22. Most of the expected achievements are planned at later phases (available in AIR2020 or later).
2	output	CO23	Nature and biodiversity: Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares	20 000	100 000	0	0	0	0	0	0					Implementation is ongoing in all 4 selected projects. By the nature of the indicator partial achievement cannot be reported. Actual achievements are not expected before end of 2020.





Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Observations (if necessary)
2	output	OI29	Measures securing or improving the status of water bodies in qualitative and quantitative terms	Number	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	1					1 of 6 projects has reported contribution to OI29. Considering actual achievement that has not been reported yet, 4 measures have been implemented until the end of 2019.
3	financial	FI03	Total amount of eligible expenditure for priority axis 3	Euro	2 030 877	27 585 000	0	0	0	0	252 691.14	5 216 634.17					Interim payment applications 1-4 to the EC (up to 02.03.2020) included eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries until 31.12.2019
3	output	CO12	Railway: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded railway line	Km	2	10	0	0	0	0	37.93	37.93					37.93km railway reconstruction was finished and paid by the beneficiary already in 2018. Project report is pending. Construction of further 10.73km has started in 2020.







Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Observations (if necessary)
3	output	OI32	Jointly developed strategies, transport concepts and actions	Number	4	12	0	0	0	0	0	0					A partial achievement of 4 was available at the end of 2019, report pending. The rest of the achievements is expected in 2020.
4	financial	FI04	Total amount of eligible expenditure for priority axis 4	Euro	3 255 548	22 351 480	0	0	0	0	2 664 712.46	5 157 993.28					Interim payment applications 1-4 to the EC (up to 02.03.2020) included eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries until 31.12.2019
4	output	OI41	Actors involved in cross-border cooperation	Number	50	250	0	0	0	0	131	171					9 of 15 projects have reported contribution to OI41. Some project reports are pending. Based on available information about actual achievements, project contributions have approached the programme target.

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





### 3.4 Financial data

Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
The financial allocation of the priority axis based on the operational programme [extracted from Table 18a of the operational programme]					Cumulative data on the financial progress of the operational programme						
Priority axis	Fund <sup>1</sup>	Basis for the calculation of Union support* (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Total funding (EUR)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%) [column 6/ column 4 × 100]	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%) [column 9/ column 4 × 100]	Number of operations selected	Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries and certified to the Commission by 31/12/2019
						<i>Calculation</i>			<i>Calculation</i>		
Priority axis 1	ERDF	total eligible	8 211 000	85.00%	5 885 143.71	71.67%	5 728 880,91	2 552 316.39	31.08%	6	2 555 364.62
Priority axis 2	ERDF	total eligible	29 049 000	85.00%	29 456 634.71	101.40	29 418 011,50	3 799 428.95	13.08%	16	5 383 250.64
Priority axis 3	ERDF	total eligible	27 585 000	85.00%	40 583 693.50	147.12%	40 583 693,50	5 018 324.30	18.19%	6	5 216 634.17
Priority axis 4	ERDF	total eligible	22 351 480	85.00%	16 964 269.90	75.90%	16 551 351,79	5 055 292.80	22.62%	15	5 157 993.28
Priority axis 5	ERDF	total eligible	8 673 847	54.54%	8 673 817.43	100.00%	8 673 817,43	2 238 434.64	25.81%	4	2 273 156.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>		<b>95 870 327</b>	<b>82.24%</b>	<b>101 563 559.25</b>	<b>105.94%</b>	<b>100 955 755,13</b>	<b>18 663 797.08</b>	<b>19.47%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>20 586 399.65</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>All Funds</b>		<b>95 870 327</b>	<b>82.24%</b>	<b>101 563 559.25</b>	<b>105.94%</b>	<b>100 955 755,13</b>	<b>18 663 797.08</b>	<b>19.47%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>20 586 399.65</b>

<sup>1</sup> In case the YEI is programmed as part of a priority axis (in accordance with point (c) of the second subparagraph of Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013), the information has to be provided separately from the other part of the priority axis.





Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention

Priority axis	Fund(*)	Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
		1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	063	01	02	07	03		17	HU221	1,999,299.96	1,977,319.96	1,108,872.48	1
1	ERDF	064	01	02	07	03		13	HU221	989,281.64	915,069.60	511,088.70	1
1	ERDF	066	01	01	07	03		13	HU221	398,940.00	365,183.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	066	01	02	07	03		13	AT221	805,077.51	798,224.01	553,407.32	1
1	ERDF	066	01	02	07	03		13	HU221	1,042,366.25	1,040,001.72	378,947.89	1
1	ERDF	066	01	02	07	03		17	AT113	650,178.35	633,082.62	0.00	1
2	ERDF	021	01	03	07	06		22	HU222	638,650.00	638,650.00	0.00	1
2	ERDF	021	01	04	07	06		18	AT221	1,932,155.16	1,932,155.16	75,741.48	1
2	ERDF	021	01	04	07	06		22	AT130	10,735,567.41	10,735,567.41	0.00	1
2	ERDF	021	01	04	07	06		22	HU221	278,000.00	278,000.00	9,231.70	1
2	ERDF	085	01	03	07	06		22	AT112	1,431,666.66	1,431,666.66	721,537.99	1
2	ERDF	085	01	03	07	06		22	HU221	2,227,905.40	2,227,905.40	861,909.82	1
2	ERDF	085	01	03	07	06		22	HU222	601,840.00	601,840.00	21,550.30	1
2	ERDF	086	01	01	07	06		01	AT130	1,379,151.32	1,379,151.32	0.00	1
2	ERDF	086	01	03	07	06		22	AT112	998,881.50	998,881.50	0.00	1
2	ERDF	086	01	03	07	06		22	HU222	1,144,175.30	1,128,066.31	104,482.39	1
2	ERDF	091	01	03	07	06		15	AT113	3,452,294.55	3,449,305.12	1,184,359.95	2
2	ERDF	094	01	03	07	06		15	AT113	983,978.37	964,453.58	135,093.80	1
2	ERDF	094	01	03	07	06		24	AT113	602,399.99	602,399.99	0.00	1
2	ERDF	095	01	03	07	06		15	AT113	1,864,129.22	1,864,129.22	612,282.34	1
2	ERDF	095	01	03	07	06		15	AT224	1,185,839.83	1,185,839.83	73,239.18	1
3	ERDF	026	01	03	07	07		12	HU221	15,945,916.42	15,945,916.42	4,646,452.97	1
3	ERDF	030	01	02	07	07		12	AT111	9,704,176.49	9,704,176.49	0.00	1
3	ERDF	030	01	03	07	07		12	HU101	3,940,826.60	3,940,826.60	0.00	1
3	ERDF	034	01	03	07	07		12	AT111	4,024,827.01	4,024,827.01	0.00	1
3	ERDF	034	01	03	07	07		12	HU101	3,875,171.58	3,875,171.58	0.00	1
3	ERDF	036	01	03	07	07		12	HU222	3,092,775.40	3,092,775.40	371,871.33	1
4	ERDF	096	01	02	07	11		24	HU222	820,097.75	820,097.75	476,296.27	1





Priority axis	Fund(*)	Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
		1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
4	ERDF	096	01	03	07	11		21	AT221	1,300,858.65	1,199,145.98	0.00	1
4	ERDF	118	01	02	07	11		13	AT221	825,433.91	774,221.61	235,999.50	1
4	ERDF	119	01	02	07	11		11	AT113	328,796.58	328,796.58	162,751.98	1
4	ERDF	119	01	02	07	11		18	AT224	1,528,566.67	1,528,566.67	116,417.67	1
4	ERDF	119	01	02	07	11		18	HU223	839,999.93	809,999.93	0.00	1
4	ERDF	119	01	03	07	11		18	AT112	822,445.16	822,445.16	610,753.00	1
4	ERDF	119	01	03	07	11		21	AT112	865,326.13	851,029.43	408,471.90	1
4	ERDF	119	01	03	07	11		21	AT224	1,349,220.11	1,284,835.68	930,870.02	1
4	ERDF	120	01	01	07	11		19	AT130	1,847,625.41	1,847,625.41	76,666.71	1
4	ERDF	120	01	01	07	11		19	HU213	904,193.39	904,193.39	456,862.83	1
4	ERDF	120	01	02	07	11		19	AT130	1,130,262.80	1,041,943.62	0.00	1
4	ERDF	120	01	02	07	11		19	HU223	1,061,354.85	1,002,990.60	61,783.02	1
4	ERDF	120	01	02	07	11		21	AT112	442,757.00	438,128.42	138,441.28	1
4	ERDF	120	01	03	07	11		19	AT123	2,897,331.56	2,897,331.56	1,379,978.62	1
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			24	AT112	6,194,235.48	6,194,235.48	1,814,625.78	3
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			24	AT221	314,323.17	314,323.17	83,390.37	0
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			24	HU101	1,430,586.44	1,430,586.44	150,823.07	1
5	ERDF	122	01	07	07			24	AT112	115,723.18	115,723.18	33,901.56	0
5	ERDF	122	01	07	07			24	AT221	5,872.31	5,872.31	1,557.93	0
5	ERDF	122	01	07	07			24	HU101	26,726.79	26,726.79	2,817.74	0
5	ERDF	123	01	07	07			24	AT112	457,478.77	457,478.77	134,020.22	0
5	ERDF	123	01	07	07			24	AT221	23,214.52	23,214.52	6,158.84	0
5	ERDF	123	01	07	07			24	HU101	105,656.77	105,656.77	11,139.12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>									<b>101,563,559.25</b>	<b>100,955,755.13</b>	<b>18,663,797.07</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Grand total</b>										<b>101,563,559.25</b>	<b>100,955,755.13</b>	<b>18,663,797.07</b>	<b>47</b>

\* Data for the YEI shall be presented separately without splitting the YEI specific allocation and the matching ESF support.





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

1 Operations	2 The amount of ERDF support(*) envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations (EUR)	3 Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)	4 Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority (EUR)	5 Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
ATHU001 BIG AT-HU	12 750.00	0.02%	5 979.73	0.01%
ATHU003 PaNaNet+	43 985.80	0.06%	14 063.93	0.02%
ATHU005 femcoop PLUS	0.00	0.00%	52.74	0.00%
ATHU007 REGIONET Competitive	27 037.74	0.03%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU009 EDLRIS	40 000.00	0.05%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU017 SMART-Pannonia	35 190.00	0.04%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU018 City Cooperation II	8 500.00	0.01%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU019 CEPI	6 800.00	0.01%	72.44	0.00%
ATHU020 alpannonia plus	25 993.00	0.03%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU026 REBE II	1 700.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU030 ConnReg AT-HU	41 225.00	0.05%	20 355.52	0.03%
ATHU050 AgriNatur AT-HU	5 389.00	0.01%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU051 Joint Ambrosia Action	0.00	0.00%	951.02	0.00%
ATHU052 SMART-UP	0.00	0.00%	149.00	0.00%
ATHU059 InnoWood	41 650.00	0.05%	19 480.13	0.02%
ATHU064 VELOREGIO	6 800.00	0.01%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU074 CODES AT-HU	14 702.87	0.02%	0.00	0.00%
ATHU106 Wrestling without borders	0.00	0.00%	10 800.00	0.01%
ATHU116 WomEn-Puls	16 320.00	0.02%	0.00	0.00%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>328 043.41</b>	<b>0.42%</b>	<b>71 904.51</b>	<b>0.09%</b>

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

(<sup>1</sup>) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.





## 4 SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

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

The first phase of programme evaluation (efficiency of the programme's structures and processes and of the communication strategy) was launched in April 2018. Following the approval by the MC in November 2018, it was closed with the final report in April 2019. The findings and proposals of this evaluation were summarised in AIR2018. Based on the proposals of the evaluation an action plan was prepared which is continuously being reflected in the work of the programme.

The second phase of the evaluation (efficiency, effectiveness and impact) was launched in May 2019, conducted basically in summer and autumn 2019, and after validation by the evaluation steering group (ESG) the final report was sent to the MC for examination in May 2020.

### **Follow up actions on the first phase of the evaluation**

The action plan prepared by the MA and JS was discussed in by the BWG and also presented in writing to the MC in December 2019. In line with the evaluation, actions are related to the programme management, the project life cycle and the communication strategy. Where possible, measures for greater efficiency are implemented in the current programme period, in some cases they are marked for implementation in the next programme.

Measures were introduced to improve the efficiency of work processes, e.g. result oriented work plan of the programme management, to-do-list of the MA and JS, definition of thematic responsibilities internally to get a better overview on processes, continued development and natural use of a standard nomenclature for documents. A data sharing platform was established where documents between the MA-JS can more easily be shared. The same platform is used since early 2020 by FLCs to store supporting documents for partner reports (primary accounting documents still being stored in eMS). The platform also serves for document exchange in the post 2020 programming process.

Several small measures have improved the performance of the monitoring system, e.g. improved messaging system, load balancing, etc.

The contracting process was further shortened, RCs closer involved and a feedback sheet was introduced.

The FLC network meeting in November supported the exchange among FLCs, and between programme and FLCs. Further exchange between FLCs is encouraged.

Relying on some savings in the TA Core budget, the capacity of the JS was raised in autumn by ½ FTE after the return of a colleague from maternity leave, with focus on the programme communication. Although in March 2020 she went again on maternity leave, she had a major role in updating the communication plan, and gave a large impetus to the communication activities in general.





A list of frequently asked questions was published on the program-website, initially in English, in autumn also in DE/HU, providing valuable information to project partners about all aspects of project development and implementation. Program newsletters' structure was finalized, its circulation routinized, and three newsletters sent during the year. The autumn microsite training helped to lift technical knowledge related bottlenecks and to improve project communication. A revision of the individual microsites regarding publication of project achievements has started, and it's emphasised that during project implementation other efficient communication tools can also be used. A beneficiary seminar (refocused to typical questions, mistakes, and main success factors) with added interactivity was welcomed by most participants and received generally positive feedback. The importance of external communication, exchange between similar projects, capitalization are further emphasised. An online feedback sheet for programme events was introduced.

The closure section of the Implementation Manual was updated. To support closure, overviews for project achievements were created and meetings to prepare projects for the closure were announced (the first ones took place in 2020).

The monitoring and enforcing reporting deadlines need continued handling in 2020.

The programme strongly supports harmonisation between Interreg programmes to reach higher efficiency; MA and JS actively take part in the HIT and MS post 2020 development processes.

Due to the advanced commitment of programme funding to projects a change in eligibility rules or reporting procedures for more simplification is not realistic in this period, but the programme works hardly on such measures for the future period.

### **Summary of the second phase of the evaluation**

The impact evaluation reflects the status September - December 2019 with 39 projects contracted, project reporting available about a very early implementation stage. It reflects on the

- effectiveness and durability of the projects,
- their impact and contribution to the result indicators,
- strategic approach of the SO and the coherence of the intervention logic,
- efficiency related to types of activities.

The programme successfully addressed the overall aims stated in the OP and the specific objectives.

Projects are mainly classified as either pilot projects or last-mile projects, though some incorporated different stages (policy agreements, strategy developments, pilot projects, and last mile projects).

Projects with a clear thematic focus have higher potential to contribute to programme objectives, especially:

- in risk management and environmental protection
- for the better cooperation of administrative bodies in environmental and risk prevention, labour market and education.

Partnerships are dominated by public administrations, interest groups and NGOs. Inter-





reg is considered time-consuming and bureaucratic by the majority of the respondents, but they were positive about being involved in an Interreg project.

The average partner- as well as the project budget have increased since the last period considerably, by about 75%.

### **SO1.1** Strengthening regional entrepreneurship

A wide range of topics are addressed, somewhat unspecified. It is questioned if in those topics Interreg is able to make a long term impact on the region's economic situation and stated that measures do not seem to reach the actual needs of SMEs (reducing administrative burdens and legal barriers). These can be better tackled on national or regional level.

### **SO2.1** Natural and cultural heritage

The wide range of activities contributing to tourism in the cross-border area 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, increase efficiency of individual activities and ensure durability.

### **SO2.2** Ecological stability and resilience of landscape and ecosystems

The need for better natural protection is a valid objective to be continued, which is clearly addressed in both projects covering tourism as well as in protection of natural sites. The results of the projects need to be better embedded in the region's strategic and regulatory framework. Better links between projects, as well as with projects in SO 2.1 and 4.1 would be of added value.

### **SO2.3** Management and protection of water bodies

The SO focuses on specific cross-border problems and triggers cross-border expert exchange. Most project activities are based on research and data collection, with a view to monitoring and creating forecast models. They contribute to risk management and to the reduction of natural risks, contribute to climate change adaptation and support preparation for its impacts. Links to the Austro-Hungarian Water Commission support future take-up.

### **SO3.1** Cross-border connectivity

The focus on individual traffic vs. overall objective of increasing sustainable traffic, and the link of small cross-border roads to the TEN-T network are seen critically by the evaluation. The roads may offer alternative routes to avoid main roads and tolls, thus increase local traffic. Accessibility of the southern part of the region was not the main concern of the only high-ranked road project. Missing public transport links (main obstacles to mobility) should be better addressed.

### **SO3.2** Sustainable mobility

The number, size and range of the tasks taken up by the single project resemble it an Interreg sub-programme. Too many different activities and loose ends may hamper the effective implementation. Different needs and different responses in the region, as well







as projects in other specific objectives may need to be better reflected.

### **SO4.1** Institutional cross-border cooperation

Focus is on cross-border cooperation between public administrations and on balancing governance capacities. Joint agreements and common standards have been already reached in some cases. Supplementary results such as tools and small-scale investments are considered as important anchor points for lasting project impact.

While general labels such as “cross-border activities” and “better cooperation” are called rather vague, the specific thematic focus of the projects is important and is acclaimed.

### **SO4.2** Intercultural capacities and labour mobility

Some projects focus on reducing language barriers across the border and support the educational system in general, others on specific topics such as robotics, animal welfare and energy. They address subjects that have little attention at national level and thus need to be continuously supported by Interreg.

## **Recommendations**

It's underlined that the topics of the current programme could be continued in the new period, especially the thematic fields

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

SME support should be addressed through more suitable instruments. Mobility and connectivity should more clearly focus on sustainability.

Two to three policy objectives are proposed with strategic approach and improved utilisation of synergies at programme and project level, for a better take-up, but the thematic focus should not be narrowed; healthcare and social inclusion projects could be added. To keep the added value of Interreg projects, high level externalisation of tasks and budget should be handled with care.

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden should be of high priority. Result indicators shall be chosen in the light of measurability but intangible results should be also acknowledged as valid results.

## **5 ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN**

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

In 2019 the programme has reached a high commitment rate – 88% of the funds contracted (43 projects), 96% approved (49 projects). Main outputs of selected





projects provide sufficient contribution to achieve most programme output indicators. The spring 2020 application round and the related project development seminar in January 2020 are supposed to contribute to the generation of projects to the missing indicators in OI25 (protection measures) and OI42 (Joint cross-border cultural, educational, recreational and other type of community events and actions). Achievements are reflected in project level reports and in the AIR with certain delay, but actual achievements seem to reassure that final programme targets are not in danger.

The efficient use of funds requires measures on several fields including project selection and various aspects of programme and project implementation. The BWG has discussed in autumn and the MC has agreed at its December 2019 meeting a set of measures for the efficient use of these potentials, including strategies related to monitoring and use of leftovers in selected operations, selection of reserve projects or flexibility measures between partner budgets within a project. Measures to accelerate reporting include the introduction of direct communication and support to all interested parties (JS, RCs, LP and its partners), and measures to decrease dependence on delayed certifications, as far as project reports and already certified expenditures of partners are concerned. The November 2019 FLCs meeting was intended to support control bodies in their certification process.

In spite of the challenges related to reporting and delays of the control procedure at some regional control bodies, the financial progress of the programme is on the right track. The 2019 N+3 target was achieved and following 4 payment applications to the EC (the last one in March 2020) also the achievement of the next N+3 target seems to be safe.

Concerning the performance framework milestones substantial progress was reached in the financial indicators since 2018. Although output indicator values have not increased in several cases, this isn't a sign of the lack of performance, as many projects that are supposed to produce those outputs are going to report their achievements when implementation is finalised. First few final reports have landed at the JS in 2020, which – for the sake of consequent reporting of project achievements in the AIR – will be only taken into account when the reports are finalised.

It needs to be noted, that although the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 are still being assessed, many projects that are supposed to finish their implementation in 2020 may postpone their closure and therefore their respective indicators will become available even later.

The imperfection of programme communication measures, reflected in the first phase of the evaluation, required targeted actions and dedicated personnel. Communication tasks therefore were taken over by a JS staff member who returned from maternity leave in autumn 2019. Together with the involvement of other JS staff, her competence and dedication has contributed to a better understanding of issues faced and concrete recommendations for the current and the next programming period. Communication efforts have become more organised and although in March 2020 she went again on maternity leave, her tasks were effectively taken over within the JS.





The targeted micro-site seminar and the follow up support to beneficiaries have contributed to improved communication of project achievements. In the meantime the programme also offers a flexible approach related to projects' web presence, emphasising that other project communication platforms can also be used for the running project work, as long as main project information and achievements are published at the central microsite.

The programme offers projects an increasing number of publication possibilities, among them the programme newsletter or Széchenyi Programme Office's (host of the JS) newsletter. Invitations from various European initiatives are regularly forwarded to the projects, which make good use of these chances.

In the internal communication of the programme more face to face meetings were introduced, paper work was reduced and more emphasis is laid on improved co-operation and information exchange between program bodies.

The programme is devoted to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries. The shared experience of some programme bodies, applicants and beneficiaries, however, that in this respect further action is needed, was confirmed in the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the evaluation. Measures described in the previous section (synthesis of the evaluations) are continuously implemented to support contracting, reporting, modifications, communication measures, etc. Feedback loops following the contracting process and events, as well as among the programme bodies (in BWG meetings) are highly appreciated in this respect.

As certain procedures cannot be changed in the framework of the current programme, the programme partners support the continued harmonization and simplification process by the programme's active participation in the Interact HIT and Monitoring System post 2020 development processes, and are devoted to introduce new simplified cost options in the 2021-2027 Interreg programme.

In terms of the technical working environment many problems that were mentioned in the previous AIR were efficiently handled in 2019. As the complexity of the current eMS does not allow structural changes, that is expected from the monitoring system of the new period. For the current monitoring system divided software maintenance and hardware hosting is still there and the system has not been relocated, but with the load balancing certain increase in the efficiency of the use of available IT environment has been achieved. Besides participation in the development of the new community monitoring system, programme bodies also support last mile developments of the current eMS together with Interact. Technical support to users is available whenever needed. The introduction of the reporting tool BIRT has improved the programme's access to data in eMS.

### *(b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS*

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

In general it can be stated that actual progress of selected operations ensures safe achievement of programme targets. Cumulated targets of approved projects in all but one case achieve or exceed the programme output indicator target val-





ues. In thematic fields where new operations are needed, the programme has called for new applications in the 2020 spring round, and a targeted project development seminar was offered to the potential applicants. Reported achievements have already reached the programme target in few cases (SO11, S21), reports in other specific objectives also show a good progress, and actual (not yet reported) achievements of operations are on an even higher level.

Continuous efforts are made to accelerate reporting by the beneficiaries, and also to shorten the control processes at all levels. Beneficiaries are encouraged to publish their achievements to the general public and to the programme bodies at an early phase, not only because it is inevitable for good communication, but also because reporting that often comes a half year or more after the end of the respective reporting period does not allow sufficient intervention if needed. In these efforts the direct contacts of Regional Coordinators to the beneficiaries are of great added value.

About the progress made towards targets, their sufficiency to ensure fulfilment of the targets section 3.1 (Overview of the implementation) includes more details. Further information about these and about the actions taken or planned, section 4 (Synthesis of the evaluations – as far as implementation of the action plan in reply to the proposals of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the evaluation is concerned) and section 5 (Issues affecting the performance of the programme and measures taken) provide more detailed information.

## 6 CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

*To be published as a separate file:*

The current report gives an overview to the broader public about the implementation of the EU-funded Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary Programme that supports cross-border co-operations since the end of 2015 in four thematic priorities.

A continuous call is open for applications that can be submitted at any time. Decision is taken by the Monitoring Committee (MC) about projects that are submitted to the Joint Secretariat (JS) 70 days before the MC meeting. Specific dates are available on the programme webpage. Application and project implementation procedures are fully implemented in our electronic monitoring system (eMS) that provides harmonised and transparent solutions developed initially by Interact and widely used by Interreg programmes throughout Europe.

Altogether 106 applications have been submitted to the programme until the end of 2019, 49 of them were approved by the MC in four thematic priorities. As a result, more than 71 million Euros of European funding will be invested in new Austrian-Hungarian initiatives, and the percentage of the ERDF budget already committed to projects has reached 96% of the available programme budget. In spring 2020 the programme expects new applications that may use the rest of the available funding. However, as sometimes contracted projects use less funding than originally budgeted, leftovers may still open space for new applications in the last phase of the programme period. If you are interested in submitting a new application, please contact the Regional Coordinators (RC) of the programme about thematic fields where funds may be available.





Applicants and beneficiaries can find information about possibilities in the programme on the programme webpage ([interreg-athu.eu](http://interreg-athu.eu)) and in hard copy from the priority axis specific thematic folders, available at the Managing Authority (MA), JS and the RCs. For contacts please see the programme webpage. Information about the application and selection process, requirements in terms of contribution to the programme targets, eligibility rules, communication and project implementation (including contracting, reporting, project modification, etc.) are available in specific manuals in the download section. JS and RCs stay at the disposal of applicants and beneficiaries with general information about programme requirements and specific project relevant advice, respectively.

The Austria-Hungary Interreg programme supports projects in a broad circle of themes such as services enhancing the involvement of women in technical activities and to support them in their jobs in public administration. SME networking, wood industry initiatives, start-up networks and digitalization are just a few topics in the broad field of enterprise development that receive funding in the programme. Sustainability is supported in natural- and nature park co-operations as well as by the development of innovative landscape conservation measures, water management and monitoring projects as well as by actions to protect the cultural heritage and to improve the region's tourism potential. Educational co-operations from kindergarten through vocational education to university, from early language training to specific topics such as robotics or poultry, projects to support the harmonisation of the labour market and various other networking initiatives are also part of the programme. Successful projects support the elderly, experiences of good governance are exchanged across the border, and we take care that allergen pollens spread to the least possible extent. The programme has also a specific focus on improving sustainable transport connections along the border. This great variety of initiatives is connected by one thing: Austrians and Hungarians in the border region act together to conquer common challenges.

The Interreg Programme Austria-Hungary is in the middle of implementation. Some supported projects have already finished, beneficiaries and programme institutions work on their administrative closure. A large number of projects are in the middle of implementation, and reports about achievements are rolling in. Until the end of last year beneficiaries have reported total expenditures of more than 20 million Euros, which is about one fifth of the total programme budget. Until December 2019 ERDF payments exceeded 14 million Euros. With the advanced implementation of projects more and more achievements become visible, partly under the programme's own homepage at the dedicated micro-sites of the projects (see <https://interreg-athu.eu/en/current-projects/>) and partly at the projects' various own communication platforms.

Concerning the contribution of the selected projects to the programme's objectives, we are on the right track to achieve the indicator targets. Few topics exist where new applications would need to be approved to secure the required outputs; the major task is to implement efficiently what has been decided. Part of this effort is to make achievements visible, on the one hand in the sense of effective communication measures to the general public, but also in the sense of reporting by the beneficiaries to the programme. With broad partnerships, the involvement of various control bodies, and several levels in the reporting and control procedure, this is a time consuming exercise, where all interested parties need to work on decreasing processing times. The good news is: actual achievements are much further ahead than what reports are able to show, and we are sure that programme targets will be reached. Where improvement is needed: more disciplined, timely and precise reporting by beneficiaries, accelerated financial control by some control bodies, and of course quick processing on the overall programme level. The MA and





JS continuously support this process with coordination between programme bodies, providing answers to the beneficiaries and continuous support in technical issues.

The programme was subject to external evaluation in two phases. The first phase reflecting on the efficiency of the programme was completed in 2018 and in reply to that the programme bodies implemented in the past year a number of measures to improve their efficiency of work. MA/JS have cut the time of contracting, offered new training on project implementation and communication measures, published frequently asked questions and work hard to decrease the time needed for reporting and payments.

The second part of the evaluation about the impacts of the programme was conducted in the course of 2019. Lessons learnt are still being processed, but we have already learnt a lot about the achievements of our projects, their status compared to the beneficiary expectations and to the programme targets. This evaluation also serves as a valuable input to the planning of a new Interreg programme AT-HU for the period 2021-2027.

It is also the shared responsibility of the programme and project holders to give visibility to the support provided by the European Regional Development Fund. Beneficiaries are invited to use their communication work packages for effective and efficient information and communication measures – to this end sometimes more innovative and tailored solutions may be needed than standard project brochures and events. We have started to build a photo library of projects and are still collecting more good images that tell the story of your projects. We regularly publish the stories of highlighted projects in our newsletter and would be glad to publish even more. The main achievements at all AT-HU Interreg projects should be available at the project microsites offered by the programme, but beneficiaries should feel free to use also other media for their day to day communication and efficient access to their specific target groups.

## 7 REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

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

Not applicable for the programme.





## 8 WHERE APPROPRIATE, PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS

### 8.1 Major projects

Not applicable for the programme.

Table 7: Major projects

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

<sup>(1)</sup> In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

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

Not applicable for the programme.

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

Not applicable for the programme.





## 8.2 Joint action plans

*Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans*

Not applicable for the programme.

**Table 8: Joint action plans**

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

*Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them*

Not applicable for the programme.







## REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEARS 2017, 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

### 11 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPEND- ING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

#### 11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where ap- propriate)

The programme pays due attention to the European Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) during implementation. Various priority areas of EUSDR are reflected in the thematic objectives of the programme, as laid down in the CP.

Applicants indicate in their application if the project contributes to the EUSDR and describe in what way. The relevant section of the application is subject to evaluation in the quality assessment criteria "The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional)". Although a contribution by the project to the macro-regional strategies is not a requirement (clear correspondence to regional and/or national strategies is sufficient to reach maximum score at this criteria), most projects indicate their contribution to EUSDR, confirmed in the majority of cases in the RC contribution to the evaluation as well as in the final consolidated assessment.

Based on that, selected ATHU projects contribute to

- Priority Area 10 (Institutional Capacity & Cooperation) in 7 cases
- Priority Areas 1B (Rail-Road-Air Mobility), 3 (Culture & Tourism) and 8 (Competitiveness of Enterprises), in 6 cases each
- Priority Area 6 (Biodiversity & Landscapes) in 4 cases
- Priority Area 4 (Water Quality), 5 (Environmental Risk), and 9 (People & Skills) in 3 cases each
- Priority Area 7 (Knowledge Society) in 3 cases
- and Priority Area 2 (Sustainable Energy) in one case

Besides most projects being in line with one or the other of the EUSDR priority areas, a specific contribution is expected by the project SEDDON II, an EUSDR Priority Area 7 flagship project DREAM (Danube River Research and Management), which was selected for funding in the first decision round. SEDDON II and two further water management related projects in the first decision round (Raab Flood 4cast and Platform) received a letter of recommendation by the Steering Group of the EUSDR Priority Area 5, stating that they contribute to the achievement of the targets and goals of the relevant actions in PA5.

The contracting of SEDDON II was long delayed as the overall financing of the project had to be ensured by several programmes, but it was finally contracted early 2018. Implementation is ongoing, and may stretch until the end of the eligibility period of the programme. Reporting has only started in early 2020 after all national financing contributions have become available.

Raab Flood 4cast and Platform were contracted in 2017. While Platform was the first





project that closed its implementation by 31.12.2018 and successfully achieved all contracted targets, it is formally not closed yet, due to some pending first level certificates. Mid 2020 Raab Floor4Cast is approaching its end of the implementation, although due to some technical exercises requiring personal contacts, delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prolongation cannot be excluded. As far as its contracted targets are concerned, expected contribution to the output indicator targets will be safely achieved.

In addition to these projects, in 2019 the project AquaPinka received a letter of recommendation by the Steering Group of the EUSDR Priority Area 4, stating that it contributes to the achievement of the targets and goals of the relevant actions in PA4. The project is currently contracted and under implementation.





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