



Interreg 

Austria-Hungary 2014-2020

European Union – European Regional Development Fund

CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

of the Annual Implementation Report 2018



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 opening of the call in December 2015 in four thematic priorities.

A continuous call is open for applications that can be submitted at any time – in order to be proposed for evaluation at the next Monitoring Committee (MC) meeting project proposals must be presented to the Joint Secretariat (JS) at latest by noon, 70 days before the MC meeting. Specific dates are available on the programme webpage. Projects are handled via eMS (electronic Monitoring System), the programme's online tool to provide harmonised and transparent solutions in the application and project implementation procedures, developed initially by Interact and widely used by many Interreg programmes throughout Europe. eMS provides convenient on-line editing platform for all users. Programme bodies are devoted to continuously develop eMS together with Interact and provide technical support to users whenever needed.

Altogether 89 applications have been submitted to the programme and until the end of 2018 36 of them were approved by the MC in four thematic priorities. As a result, more than 60 million Euros of European funding will be invested in new Austrian-Hungarian initiatives, and the percentage of the ERDF budget already committed to projects is already about 83%. Those who wish to submit new project applications may get more information from the Regional Coordinators (RC) of the programme about thematic fields where funds are available.

Applicants and beneficiaries can find information about possibilities in the programme on the programme webpage (interreg-athu.eu) and in hard copy from the priority 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 of the programme webpage. JS and RCs stay at the disposal of applicants and beneficiaries with general information about programme requirements and specific project relevant advice, respectively.

Selected projects up to now cover a broad circle of themes such as services enhancing the involvement of women in technical activities and to support them in their jobs in the public administration, SME networking, wood industry initiatives, natural- and nature park co-operations as well as the development of innovative landscape conservation measures, water management and monitoring projects and actions 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. The programme has also a specific focus on improving sustainable transport connections along the border. What connects these projects is that all of them act on common problems of the Austrian-Hungarian border region, and involve partners from both sides of the border who want to be actively involved in conquering those challenges.

After the implementation of the first selected projects has started and the technical framework has become available on the programme side, control bodies have started the validation of progress reports. Until the end of 2018 more than 6 million Euros of eligible





expenditure occurred at beneficiaries in the four thematic priorities that were certified by the programme to the European commission.

2018 was the year for the first major self-reflection of the programme related to its structures and processes, as well as related to the implementation of the communication strategy. This first part of the programme evaluation (the second one comes in 2019) was implemented in the second half of 2018, and the summary of its results, including recommendations for improvement are published on the programme website. Programme bodies take this feedback seriously and work hard on improvements, for the best achievement of programme targets, and for the best support of applicants and beneficiaries.

Concerning the contribution of the selected projects to the programme's objectives, we are on the right track to achieve most of the indicator targets. However, as the evaluation has pointed out, implementation and reporting is in delay compared to the own time plan of the selected operations, and the milestone values of the indicators are below the 2018 forecast. It is a joint responsibility of the programme and its project holders to accelerate reporting, and to that end beneficiaries should be more disciplined in timely and precise reporting, whereby also the financial control needs to be accelerated at some control bodies. Programme level bodies (JS and MA) intend to support this process with clarification of rules, providing answers on frequently asked questions, and continuous support in technical issues.

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. The programme welcomes involvement in the communication efforts of beneficiaries and reports about project achievements: the programme's main page gives space to important project news and the project microsites offer one place for all ATHU Interreg related project information.

