



Interreg 

Austria-Hungary 2014-2020

European Union – European Regional Development Fund

CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

of the Annual Implementation Report 2019



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) 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.

