

Second extensive Evaluation Report

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Foreword

This document represents a further step of the overall evaluation process in the responsibility of the External Evaluation embracing the period 21.12.2016 - 31.12.2023. This Second Extensive Evaluation Report (hereinafter referred as Report) is therefore developed in the framework established by the public procurement documents, the technical offer and the Contract according to the requirements set in the Evaluation Plan.

This Report covers the implementation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 in the period from August 2017 to December 2018.

According to the Methodological Note, this Second Evaluation Report provides an assessment of the progress of Programme implementation from different perspectives: procedures and results of the calls for standard and strategic projects, integrated Territorial Investments implementation and the system of indicators. In particular, the Second extensive Evaluation Report broad content is summarized in the following table 1.

Table 1 - Second extensive Evaluation Report (efficiency and effectiveness evaluations)

| Product | Second extensive Evaluation Report |
|-----------------|--|
| Legal reference | EU Regulation No 1303/2013 Article 50(5) |
| Content | 2 nd extensive Evaluation Report |
| Main topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy description of the I.T.I. assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources |
| Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> desk-research analysis of indicators |
| Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> data from monitoring system qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme consultation with beneficiaries |
| Timeline | By 30 May 2019 |

In order to provide a reliable assessment, the Second Extensive Evaluation Report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme takes into consideration current and

previous analysis and experiences, along with the results of a dedicated survey targeting the beneficiaries of the Programme.

Topics, Evaluation questions and Methodologies are outlined in the attached Methodological Note.

Methodological Note¹

1. Objective and scope

The overall goal of the Second extensive Evaluation Report is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme management and implementation, focusing on implementation progress in the period August 2017 - May 2019 and providing a closer overview of the selection procedures undertaken. According to the Evaluation Plan, the on-going evaluations shall be performed through a series of evaluation exercises aiming at providing constant supervision of Programme implementation.

These can be divided into:

- evaluations designed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the activities funded by the Programme;
- evaluations designed to check how the funds allocated to the Programme contributed to the objectives of each Priority;
- in-depth evaluations of all strategic and implementing aspects affecting the Programme.

Based on this approach, the evaluations planned for 2014-2020 are:

- Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme (products: Evaluation Reports);
- Strategic Impact Evaluations of each Priority axis specific objectives of the Programme (products: Thematic Reports).

In particular, the Second extensive Evaluation Report is meant to focus on the following specific issues: a summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals and the contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy, a description of the I.T.I. included in the Programme, the assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources.

¹ This version of the Methodological Note has been approved by the Managing Authority with note prot. PROTUR-GEN 22898/P on August 1st, 2018.

The following table (Evaluation Plan, table 4, §3.5. "Evaluation products and timeframe") sums up the framework of the Report:

Table 1 - Second extensive Evaluation Report (efficiency and effectiveness evaluations)

| Product | Second extensive Evaluation Report |
|------------------------|--|
| Legal reference | EU Regulation No 1303/2013 Article 50(5) |
| Content | 2 nd extensive Evaluation Report |
| Main topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of assessments and contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives/Intervention Plan goals • contribution of the Programme to the 2020 EU Strategy • description of the I.T.I. • assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources |
| Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-research - analysis of indicators |
| Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data from monitoring system - qualitative information on the implementation of the Programme - consultation with beneficiaries |
| Timeline | By 30 May 2019 |

2. Topics and Evaluation questions

According to the above mentioned objectives, the topics and the evaluation questions of the Second extensive Evaluation Report are detailed as follows:

- contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives and on the contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy,
- assessment of the integrated use of ERDF resources,
- follow up of implementation of ITI projects and of the first standard calls, on the strategic projects assessment procedure and projects implementation, on the project assessment procedure of final call for standard projects and on the fulfillment of indicators, even in terms of gap-analysis.

Table 2 - Second extensive Evaluation Report Sections and Evaluation Questions

| SECTIONS | EVALUATION QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| 1. Summary, conclusions and recommendations | How the Programme is being implemented? |
| 2. Programme implementation | |
| 2.1 Contributions to the achievement | How Programme implementation contributed to the |

| | |
|---|--|
| of the Thematic Objectives, contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy and integrated use of ERDF resources | achievement of the Thematic Objectives and to the EU 2020 Strategy overall objectives? Which level of integrated use of ERDF resources reached the Programme? |
| 2.2 Follow up of the implementation of the first calls for standard projects | How effective proved the calls for project procedures? Which are the main results of the projects implementation related to the system of indicators? |
| 2.3 Calls for strategic projects assessment procedure and projects implementation | How effective proved the calls for project procedures? Which are the main results of the projects implementation? |
| 2.4 Final calls for standard projects assessment procedure | How effective proved the calls for project procedures? |
| 2.5 The system of indicators | How is the level of fulfillment of indicators? Which are the existing/relevant gaps? |
| 3. Follow up of implementation of ITI projects | How ITI implementation supported the achievement of the Programme's overall objectives? |

3. Methodologies

In order to provide a reliable assessment on several strategic features of the Programme, the Second extensive Evaluation Report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme collects current and previous analysis and experiences. The main objective is to develop specific focuses on the strategic drivers of the Programme implementation supporting the achievement of its goals.

According to the Evaluation Plan and to the European Commission guidelines, the evaluation aims at combining the assessment of projects selection and implementation with a broader impact evaluation. Therefore, the Report - coherently with the other evaluative activities implemented in the Programme - is developed around the following methodological approaches:

- evaluation methodologies focused on the assessment of coherence among

- strategic objectives, specific objectives, operational/implementing strategies;
- evaluation methodologies qualitative-oriented following the theory based evaluation (interviews);
- evaluation methodologies involving different statistical methods (data analysis, statistical analysis) and evidence-based benchmarking (cluster analysis).

In particular, the Report aims at integrating a fundamental and consistent desk analysis with an on field data collection, either through interviews with beneficiaries and/or with Programme partners and management bodies, thus providing the Managing Authority, the European Commission, relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries at large, with quality information. SI programme authority was not contacted.

Depending on the overall number, interviews are implemented through a computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) software.

Table 3 - Second extensive Evaluation Report Evaluation Questions and Methodologies

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS | METHODOLOGIES |
|--|--|
| How the Programme is being implemented? | |
| How Programme implementation contributed to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives and to the EU 2020 Strategy overall objectives? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) Qualitative approach (interviews) |
| Which level of integrated use of ERDF resources reached the Programme? | |
| How effective proved the calls for project procedures? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) |
| Which are the main results of the projects implementation related to the system of indicators? | Qualitative approach (interviews) |
| How effective proved the calls for project procedures? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) |
| Which are the main results of the projects | Qualitative approach (interviews) |

| | |
|--|--|
| implementation? | |
| How effective proved the calls for project procedures? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) Qualitative approach (interviews) |
| What is the level of fulfillment of indicators? Which are the existing/relevant gaps? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) |
| How ITI implementation supported the achievement of the Programme's overall objectives? | Integrated quantitative approach (coherence, statistical, evidence-based) Qualitative approach (interviews) |

The selection of beneficiaries to be interviewed, takes into consideration the key elements of a sampling methodology, in order to guarantee actual representation of the following strategic features:

- typology of beneficiaries (e.g. public, private)
- typology of actions (e.g. priority axis)
- geographical distribution
- resources allocated

4. Timeline

The implementation timeline of the Second extensive Evaluation Report is described in the following table:

Table 4 - Second extensive Evaluation Report Timeline

| Period/deadline | Task |
|-------------------------|---|
| July-August 2018 | Implementation of the methodological note |
| September-December 2018 | Data collection/interviews and analysis |
| February 2019 | Submission of a first draft report |
| May 2019 | Submission of the report |

It is worth pointing out that the delivery of a first draft of the report in February 2019 implies a deadline for data collection at the end of December 2018.

1. Summary

In the period covered by this Report (August 2017 - December 2018), Programme implementation has been characterised by preparation, approval and launching of two calls for strategic projects (call n. 5/2018 and call n.6/2018), and preparation and approval of the last call for standard projects (call n. 7/2019). In the process of preparation and adoption of the last call for standard projects, a specific effort has been made on indicators, in the light of reducing gaps with final targets.

Resources allocation and expenditure progress proved to be in line with the planned financial breakdown, matching expenditure target values for the period and avoiding decommitment risks. In particular, the 2018 expenditure certification target has been reached.

Technical Assistance projects (hereinafter referred as TA projects) have also been approved to back those implementation progresses.

A total of 5 MC meetings (in October and November 2017, May, October, December 2018) and 11 Written procedures have been implemented in the period of the scope of this Report. The Written procedures are described in details in the following table 2.

Table 2 - MC meetings and written procedure performed in the period August 2017-December 2108

| WP/MC n. | WP Object/MC Agenda | Timing |
|----------|--|------------------------|
| VI MC | Update on Programme/projects activities Revision ranking list - Call 03/2016, Axis 3 Discussion/approval Call for strategic projects and Application Package n. 05/2018 | Gorizia, 19-20/10/2017 |
| 9 | Approval of the Manual on Eligibility of expenditure for the call No 05/2018 for strategic projects. | 6-20/11/2017 |
| 10 | Approval of standard projects requests of modifications: 2-4e - ENERGY CARE and 4-11cte - MEMORI-net. | 9-20/11/2017 |
| VII MC | Update on Programme/projects activities. Discussion/approval Call for strategic projects and Application Package n. 05/2018 ITI projects, information on state of the art. | Gorizia, 29-30/11/2017 |
| 11 | Approval of Call and Application package no. 05/2018 for strategic projects. | 22/12/2017-26/01/2018 |
| 12 | Approval of the bilingual versions - Italian and Slovene - of the Call and its Application Package concerning strategic projects no. 05/2018 | 1-7/02/2018 |
| 13 | Approval of the Rules of procedure of the Complaint Panel | 13-27/03/2018 |
| 14 | Approval of modifications referring to the standard project | 27/03-11/04/2018 |

| | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| | with acronym ARTE | |
| VIII MC | Update on Programme/projects activities Call for Strategic projects 05/2018 Outcomes of A-B check Approval of Technical Assistance projects Approval AIR 2017 Last call for standard projects. Overview on residual funds, indicators, type of call, projects dimension/focus/duration, approval of the framework/timeline | Bled, 07-08/05/2018 |
| 15 | Approval of the list of eligible/ineligible project proposals to be admitted to the assessment of the quality - Strategic Call 05/2018 | 03-17/05/2018 |
| 16 | Approval of modifications referring to the standard projects with acronym INTERBIKE 2, CAB, HARMO_DATA | 24/05-07/06/2018 |
| 17 | Approval of the Call for strategic projects no. 06/2018 and its Application Package | 20-28/06/2018 |
| 18 | Approval of the proposal of ranking lists for each strategic theme related to the call for strategic project proposals n. 05/2018 | 10-25/07/2018 |
| 19 | Approval of the list of eligible/ineligible project proposals to be admitted to the assessment of the quality Call for strategic projects no. 06/2018 | 03-06/09/2018 |
| 20 | Approval of modification referring to the standard project with acronym LIGHTING SOLUTIONS | 09-15/10/2018 |
| IX MC | Update on Programme/projects activities Call for Strategic projects n. 6/2018. Approval outcomes of the quality check. Last call for standard projects. Approval of the Call and Application Package. Update of the on-going standard projects and requests for modifications. Rules of procedures of the MC - Proposal of amendments Post 2020 - MC acknowledgment of the future of ECT Programme | Portoroz, 24-25/10/2018 |
| X MC | Update on Programme/projects activities Rules of procedures of the MC - proposal of amendments Call for Strategic projects n. 6/2018, IP 6c: outcomes of the requests of clarifications on the quality assessments. Allocation of residual funds Axis 2 and WPO standard projects. Approval targeted Call for standard projects n. 07/2019 and Application Package o.a.b. Roadmap, POST 2020 | Ljubljana, 18-19/12/2018 |

The IT system is still representing the main issue to be managed by the Programme, affecting the reporting of standard projects, the first level control system, in general the timely delivery of services and information. FLC from both countries tested the functionalities of the system during the period covered by this Report and the feedback was reported to the JS and the company in charge of the system. MA/JS reported a remarkable effort devoted to the fine-tuning and implementation of the informatics system, resulting in a considerably time-consuming activity. Furthermore, also both FLCs

tested systems' functions during the revision of the Report's first round, reporting critical issues.

Every specific information and further detail are described in the following dedicated sections of the Report.

Table 3 Overview of approved projects

| | | | |
|------------|------|----------------------|--------------------|
| standard | PA 1 | 1b | TRANS-GLIOMA |
| | | 1b | FISH-AGRO TECH CBC |
| | | 1b | SUSGRAPE |
| | | 1b | ARTE |
| | | 1b | NUVOLAK2 |
| | | 1b | BioApp |
| | | 1b | CAB |
| | | 1b | TRAIN |
| | PA 2 | 4e | MUSE |
| | | 4e | INTER BIKE II |
| | | 4e | LightingSolutions |
| | | 4e | MobiTour |
| | | 4e | ENERGY CARE |
| | PA 3 | 6c | MEDS GARDEN |
| | | 6c | tARTini |
| | | 6c | AGROTUR II |
| | | 6d | CONA |
| | | 6d | NAT2CARE |
| | | 6f | BLUEGRASS |
| | | 6f | RETRACKING |
| | PA 4 | 11cte | EDUKA2 |
| | | 11cte | MEMORI-net |
| | | 11cte | SECNET |
| | | 11cte | CB_WBL |
| | | 11cte | HARMO-DATA |
| | | 11cte | CrossCare |
| | | 11cte | INTEGRA |
| ITI | PA 3 | 6c | ISONZO - SOČA |
| | PA 4 | 11cte | SALUTE - ZDRAVSTVO |
| strategici | PA 1 | 1b - Theme 1 | NanoRegion |
| | | 1b - Theme 2 (call6) | DIVA |
| | PA 2 | 4e - Theme 3 | SECAP |
| | | 4e - Theme 4 | CROSSMOBY |
| | PA 3 | 6c - Theme 6 | WALK OF PEACE |
| | | 6c - Theme 7 | PRIMIS |
| | | 6c - Theme 5 (call6) | MerlinCV |
| | | 6d - Theme 8 | GREVSLIN |
| | | 6f - Theme 9 | VISFRIM |
| | PA 4 | 11cte - Theme 10 | CROSSIT SAFER |

2. Programme implementation

Evaluation question: *How the Programme is being implemented?*

2.1 General overview

2.1.1 Preparation, approval and publication of calls

The preparation of the call for strategic projects started already in 2017 with the definition of the main topics to be addressed by the targeted call. The 10 strategic themes have been negotiated and finally approved by the Monitoring Committee in February 2017. Following the approval of the themes, MA and JS, supported by the Working Group established by the MC, prepared the final Call and its Application Package.

The call for strategic projects n. 5/2018 has been launched on February, 7th, 2018 and closed on March, 28th. Eleven proposals have been received out of which three proposals have been rejected as ineligible.

On July, 4th, 2018, the call for strategic projects n. 6/2018 has been launched and closed on August, 3rd, 2018. The call has been opened addressing only the theme 2 - Creative Industry and theme 5 - Excellence in tourism, which were not funded under the call n. 5/2018. A total of four proposals have been received: all of them were eligible for funding, only two were financed. More details are provided in next paragraph 2.3.

Following the decision taken by the 8th MC in May to launch the last call for standard projects targeted to lagging-behind Programme output indicators according to a gap-analysis, a bilateral technical group (which includes representatives of the two Member States' delegations and MA/JS, not formally appointed) met twice (July 12 and September 6, 2018) for shaping the call and its application package. The 10th MC in December approved the targeted call n.07/2019 for standard projects, and its Application Package.

2.1.2 Financial allocation and spending

Concerning the financial allocation, there was a strong focus on following the financial plans and avoiding the risk of de-commitment. There was a significant improvement in the spending, given the fact that the standard projects started running.

Table 4. 2018 Allocated Funds - figures are referred to total funds (strategic, standard, I.T.I. and TA projects)

| PA | Programme Financial Plan | Committed funds | % of commitment |
|------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 22.003.752,00 | 16.809.988,77 | 76,40% |
| 2 | 13.752.345,00 | 13.720.526,76** | 99,77% |
| 3 | 32.088.805,00 | 27.377.118,82 | 85,32% |
| 4 | 18.336.460,00 | 14.650.416,73 | 79,90% |
| 5 | 6.406.820,00 | 6.776.820,00* | 105,78% |
| Tot | 92.588.182,00 | 79.334.871,08 | 85,69% |

* AT allocated funds include also € 370.000, 00 of overbooking by the Regional Administration of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

** The figure includes also the funds committed by the MC (May 2019) through the approval of outcomes of the EoI procedure for the allocation of residual funds in PA 2.

Table 5. Progress of spending in 2018 (standard, I.T.I. TA projects)

| P A | A. Cumulative of Payment claims | | B. Total validated by FLCs | C. State aid validated not claimed | D. Sept-Dec 2018 | E. Total 31/12/2018 | F. Milestones 2018 | G. Difference | H. %Fulfilment of incurred expenditure | I. %Fulfilment of validated expenditure | L. %Fulfilment of claims |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| | A.1. TOTAL | A.2. ERDF | | (B-A) | (incurred not validated) | B+D | | (E-F) | (E/F) | (B/F) | (A1/F) |
| 1 | 1.849.455,30 | 1.572.037,04 | 2.047.199,62 | 197.744,32 | 1.177.373,23 | 3.224.572,85 | 2.594.680,41 | 629.892,44 | 124,28% | 78,90% | 71,28% |
| 2 | 862.258,51 | 732.919,76 | 862.258,51 | 0,00 | 480.149,82 | 1.342.408,33 | 1.356.696,35 | -14.288,02 | 98,95% | 63,56% | 63,56% |
| 3 | 2.281.152,21 | 1.887.377,73 | 2.302.106,64 | 20.954,43 | 1.057.433,05 | 3.359.539,69 | 3.342.732,47 | 16.807,22 | 100,50% | 68,87% | 68,24% |
| 4 | 3.119.712,72 | 2.578.512,49 | 3.119.712,72 | 0,00 | 1.912.421,13 | 5.032.133,85 | 2.456.351,35 | 2.575.782,50 | 204,86% | 127,01% | 127,01% |
| 5 | 259.458,07 | 220.539,36 | 259.458,07 | 0,00 | 734.514,21 | 993.972,28 | | | | | |
| T o t | 8.237.734,28 | 6.991.386,38 | 8.590.735,56 | 218.698,75 | 5.361.891,44 | 13.952.627,00 | | | | | |

Table 6. Progress of validated expenditure in 2018 according to each NUTSIII (standard, I.T.I. TA projects, NO STRATEGIC PROJECTS)

| NUTSIII area | NUTSIII code | Total validated spending | Allocated amount |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------------|---------------|
| VEN | ITH35 | 648.124,97 | 3.198.823,99 |
| PN | ITH41 | 432.052,07 | 1.758.128,50 |
| UD | ITH42 | 462.072,27 | 2.411.735,65 |
| GO | ITH43 | 1.397.589,69 | 11.755.083,92 |
| TS | ITH44 | 2.318.595,09 | 11.679.041,44 |
| Primorsko-Notranjska | SI038 | 42.646,29 | 94.620,00 |
| Osrednjeslovenska | SI041 | 1.503.460,96 | 8.384.461,85 |
| Gorenjska | SI042 | 46.999,06 | 250.338,00 |
| Goriška | SI043 | 467.796,25 | 2.245.619,50 |
| Obalno-kraška | SI044 | 1.238.572,31 | 5.257.725,90 |
| PD | other | 32.826,60 | 86.925,00 |
| Total | | 8.590.735,56 | 47.122.503,75 |

However, delays occurred due to the setting up of the informatics monitoring system. The latter proved to have some functionalities that needed improvement, especially concerning the reporting and certification of incurred costs. Still concerning the financial allocation and spending, a specific effort has been provided towards Technical Assistance budget and ITI projects. The five proposed TA projects involving all Programme partners were set up (MA/JS -TA1, SVRK -TA2, SLO-MF -TA3, Italy-FVG-TA4, Italy-VEN-TA5) and approved by the MC in May 2018.

Initial guidance to ITI projects has been activated and, even due to investments to be made, Programme implementation reported difficulties related to lengthy procedures caused by recent changes in public procurement laws and regulations in Italy. Given the innovative aspects of the ITI projects, there were several procedural and technical issues that required initial investment of work and time. More details in section 3.

In the second half of 2018 a careful consideration targeted residuals funds. Apart from the ERDF funds still available for the last call for standard projects to be set up for Axis 1, Axis 3 and Axis 4, there was a residual amount on Axis 2 not allocated in the first calls in 2016 (axis 2 has then been excluded by the last standard call as the whole amount was dedicated to the first calls). Residuals deriving from the first calls were not enough to finance additional projects. Therefore, a specific strategy for Axis 2 has been developed targeting the existing 5 standard projects (MUSE, INTERBIKE2, LightingSolutions, MobiTour, Energy Care) and pursuing potential CAP&COM activities

(intended as *tailored communication activities targeting on the visibility of results in different contexts. This approach should permit to **improve** communication and **dissemination** activities at Programme level and, furthermore, to promote and experiment **new approaches to capitalization***) and small-scale investments needed for an upgrade of the lagging-behind indicator 2.1.1.. Each project could benefit of approximately additional 60.000 EUR to carry out new activities with clear additionally over those already approved and implemented in the previous period. Developing common communication activities that would better promote Programme results on the Axis 2, might be the added value of the CAP&COM activities for the projects participating to this kind of “extension of activities”.

In the period considered by this Report the procedure was still under construction with the support of INTERACT and should be launched and closed in the first half of 2019.

2.1.3 Assistance to Programme beneficiaries

In order to avoid delays, lengthy reporting and any misunderstandings, the Programme granted a specific guidance to project partners by organising one-to-one meetings right after approval, at the start of the project implementation. Nevertheless, in a few cases the projects requested project changes a few months after the starting date of project implementation, which was very time-consuming in terms of management of the modifications in the IT system.

Given the importance of indicators for the correct implementation of the projects and Programme and for the proper reporting to the European Commission, a specific guidance was given to the projects on how to report on those during the meetings.

There was also a lot of guidance and time devoted to “problem solving” in the phase of project application and on project reporting on the on-line-system. The Joint Secretariat met many times with the company in charge of the on-line system, INSIEL, tried to collect, present and tackle the problems encountered by project beneficiaries and FLC. FLC staff also had specific meetings with INSIEL and other actors involved, in order to

present to INSIEL all the difficulties and technical issues related to the problems of on-line system.

Dedicated workshops on the use of the on line reporting system were organized, targeting the beneficiaries. The first workshop for the beneficiaries was not completely satisfying the expectations of the participants, but further editions were organized to describe the implemented improvements and to clarify the still open procedural issues.

With the entry into force of the new legislation on privacy in May 2018 (GDPR), a dedicated workshop has been organized to present and explain the novelty introduced by the legislation with a specific focus on possible impacts on the running projects.

Due to lack of operational clearness of IT system, further support to the project beneficiaries, a new set of “Side meetings” for the running standard projects has been proposed at the 10th Monitoring Committee meeting in December 2018. The objective of those meetings is triple: firstly, to check the target indicators; secondly, to verify the respect of the financial plan; finally, to spot any other possible obstacle to the good and correct project implementation. These meetings will be organised between the Joint Secretariat and the Lead partners of running projects in the first half of the year 2019.

Workshops organized for the beneficiaries are summarized in the table below:

Table 7. Workshops organised in 2018

| Workshop | Date | Place | No. attendees |
|--|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Presentation of the on line system for submitting project proposals under Call No. 05/2018 for Italian potential beneficiaries | 26/02/2018 | Trieste (ITA) | 22 |
| Presentation of the on line system for submitting project proposals under Call No. 05/2018 for Slovene potential beneficiaries | 28/02/2018 | Portorož (SLO) | 17 |
| FEG for reporting | 15/03/2018 | Gorizia (ITA) | 168 |
| New privacy legislation | 25/05/2018 | Gorizia (ITA) | 62 |
| Communication | 26/09/2018 | Nova Gorica (SLO) | 97 |
| Financial management | 12/10/2018 | Udine (ITA) | 155 |

2.1.4 Communication and promotion of the Programme

The Programme carried out several Info days for the beneficiaries, so to cover evenly the Programme area and give a proper assistance to the beneficiaries interested in the calls. There was a good participation of the public, covering different authorities and target groups in the cross-border area.

In the period covered by this Report, there was also an event organized by the ESPON Programme to valorise the ITI projects. It was held in May 2018 and the IB and Programme MA participated. It was an interesting, spatial planning oriented approach.

In order to promote the Programme and the projects, a specific Programme Annual event was organized by the Slovene Info Point in Štanjel in May 2018 in cooperation with MA/JS with more than 140 participants, who asked for further similar events. The Programme also organized a presentation of the project results, at a specific event in Nova Gorica to celebrate the European Commission Day (held overall the EU) in September 2018.

The events are summarized in the table below:

Table 8. Main events in 2018

| Description | Period | Place | No. attendees |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Infoday | February 19 th , 2018 | Trieste (FVG - ITA) | 126 |
| Annual event | May 30 th , 2018 | Stanjel (SLO) | 144 |
| EC day | September 27 th , 2018 | Nova Gorica (SLO) | 90 |

Compared to the Annual Plan for year 2017 and 2018, the communication (after the preparation, launching and initial consolidation in years 2015 and 2016) have further matured in 2017 and 2018 with a review - improvement - adjustment process in year 2018, as foreseen in the Programme Communication Strategy. The details of the overall process are described in the table below, stemming from the Annex to the Programme Communication Strategy.

Annex 1 to the Programme Communication Strategy.

Annex 1 - Evolution of communication

| YEAR | PHASE | FOCUS ON | GENERAL DESCRIPTION | SPECIFIC TOOLS |
|------|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 2015 | Preparation | Communication needs Development of information | Elaboration of Programme documents Set up of a communication structure Assessment of communication needs Development of the Communication Strategy Tender calls for the website | Programme documents |
| 2016 | Launching | Raising awareness Promoting Mobilising stakeholders Distribution and accessibility of information | Communication structure in place Communication activities begin Major information and promotional materials and communication tools developed Launch of the Programme Communication has a general, informative character | Website and social media development Development of information materials (flyer, communication toolkit, Programme and project brand manual) |
| 2016 | Consolidation | Project communication Presenting the priorities | Developing the communication network All communication tools are available and fully functional Increased interactivity between management and target groups Communication becomes more specialized | Events: seminars, meetings, workshops, project communication events Networking |
| 2017 | Review | Feedback Improving information | Assessing the efficiency and relevance of communication activities and tools | Evaluation questionnaires Reports |
| 2018 | Improvement | Adequacy of information Fine tuning | Establishing best practices Improvement of communication tools, following received feedback | Best practices Project catalogues |
| 2019 | Adjustment | Quality information | Adjustment and specialisation of communication according to specific needs | |
| 2022 | Focus | Specialisation Tailored information | More targeted, specific communication | Thematic and capitalisation events |
| 2023 | Evaluation and Dissemination | Dissemination of results Evaluation of communication Lessons learnt | Define, disseminate and communicate the achievements of the Programme (projects, results) Evaluate the communication Prepare for the next programming period | Evaluation questionnaires Reports Best practices Project catalogue / Results brochure Thematic and capitalisation events |

Source: Programme Communication Strategy.

In the period taken into consideration by the current Report, more focused communication with target groups and specialized communication activities were foreseen. In addition to that a review and adjustment process, due to the mature phase of the Programme was foreseen.

In this sense, the Programme organised, as already described above, 6 workshops and 3 main Programme events. All these events were publicised through various channels: the

Programme website, the Programme partners institutional websites, twitter and also deliverables were prepared.

Compared to findings from the previous Report, there was a positive step forward in the sense that the shift from the preparation phase to the mature phase was successfully obtained. The number of events for the stakeholders increased, the events were more focused on the stakeholders' needs (workshops and deliverables).

According to the Communication Strategy, in fact, the communication is structured around some fundamental features, which are described here below:

Integrated, as it envisages integration in several aspects:

- Institutional partnership (Programme partners);
- Social and economic partnership, to increase the diagnosis capacity of the implicit or explicit informative needs of specific groups, to foster a more targeted dissemination of information in order to multiply its extent;
- Communication activities of other Interreg programmes to ensure an overview of the EU role within the ETC development strategy, but also a complementarity among communication activities;
- Institutional bodies and their communication activities on the Programme-area;

Accessible, as it will communicate with a clear language, friendly tones and always ensuring transparency regarding information;

Personalised, as its activities will be adapted to the different interests of the related target groups;

Engaging, as it is based on the active involvement of the beneficiaries and their associations and networks.

Steps forward have been made in accessibility, personalization and engagement. There is still some potential for communication integration. With the approaching closure of the first projects, there is a possibility to proceed with targeted dissemination of their results in order to achieve a multiplier effect. Apart from the capitalisation activities recently undertaken with the support of Interact, there is still a lot of potential for common activities with other Interreg Programmes or for specific thematic events. In ESPON studies on the intensity of cooperation, the area covered by the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme is mentioned as the area with the quite intense ongoing

cooperation on transnational level, hence, there is potential to capitalise on this aspect.² This would bring added value in terms of the additionality of the innovative projects. There are still potentials in either sectoral or cross-sectoral communication and capitalization activities. A good phase to test how far the projects reached, could be an assessment on sectoral and cross-sectoral integration within the final report of each project.

The communication competencies and responsibilities are shared among different actors (the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat, OIB EGTC GO Implementing body, the Monitoring Committee, the Slovene Info Point, the Regional Offices and projects), most of them are forming a specific WG on Communication, established by the MC, which worked mainly via email in 2017 and met in February 2018.

Compared to the previous Report where the focus was on the set up of the communication in the framework of the new Programming period, the issues to tackle in the current report is to assess the catching up of the initial delays and the relation between an efficient organizational framework and an effective communication strategy. Stemming from the information provided and available to general public, the Programme managed to catch up the initial delay. As to the assessment of the relation between an efficient organizational framework and effective communication strategy there are still potentials for improvement, as time-consuming issues related to the management of the e-system will hopefully no longer take away time from communication activities.

This calls for a lot of coordination. As mentioned in the previous Report, the communication strategy 2007-13 identified as major weaknesses the

- coordination among Programme bodies and structures
- coordination between the Managing Authority and institutional bodies

Due to the long-lasting common work and in the view of the fact that this difficulty occurred, an intensified effort should be made in focusing on better visibility and identification of projects, better image of the Programme and more focused information

² 2013, “ETC as a Factor of Growth Jobs and Quality of life”, ESPON

for different target groups. A lot of work has been already done and the results of the projects are a good means to showcase what has been achieved.

The recommendation is to further work in this sense and to capitalize on the results of the standard projects in a first phase. Later on, a more integrated approach (taking into account also the results of strategic projects) will be possible.

Concerning the involvement of specific target groups, there is still potential in targeted promotion for the young public and for the general public. The European Commission, striving to bring the projects and their results closer to the public, requested the publication of generic information about the project and Programme achievements in a citizen's summary and bringing pieces of information about the projects to people that might be potential users of project results. In this sense the Programme has already proceeded to publish on the Programme website the specific information on each financed project (projects websites are included in the Programme site using the same visual identity) and will update each project sheet with the projects achievements and results.

2.2 Contributions to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives, contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy and integrated use of ERDF resources

Evaluation questions:

- *How Programme implementation contributed to the achievement of the Thematic Objectives and to the EU 2020 Strategy overall objectives?*
- *Which level of integrated use of ERDF resources reached the Programme?*

The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasises smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in order to improve Europe's competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy. To reach this objective, the EU has adopted targets to be reached by 2020 in five areas: Employment, Research & Development, Climate change & energy, Education and Poverty and social exclusion. The Programme implementation is about to contribute to the

achievement of these overall objectives by approving projects that tackle all of these aspects. The others were tackled already in an early phase with the first calls. To give some examples: employment is tackled by the standard project CB_WBL, research and development has been tackled by the standard projects TRANSGLIOMA, SUSGRAPE, ARTE, BIOApp, TRAIN, NANO REGION; energy efficiency and climate change by strategic project SECAP, education by standard project EDUKA2; poverty and social inclusion by standard projects INTEGRA and CROSS Care.

More in details, the Programme supported the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination through the implementation of several actions in different Axis.

Priority Axis 1 supports competitiveness and new jobs opportunities based on a non-discriminatory growth, impacting on the principle of non-discrimination and of equal opportunities through the promotion of women participation to R&I. Women in the TRANSGLIOMA project play a crucial role: on a total of six partners, four are represented by women who coordinate research and innovation activities. The BIOAPP project promotes working practices and flexible hours to reconcile private and professional life according to the lifestyles and needs of individuals. The NUVOLAK2 project is based on a web platform and the information is accessible and free to socially disadvantaged people.

Priority Axis 4 enhances harmonization of vocational education systems and joint labour market considering specific needs to enable equal opportunities. Moreover, Axis 4 backed specific actions promoting an easier access to social and health services, conciliation between professional and family activities, gender opportunities in the context of labour market and equal participation for both women and men in all spheres of public and political life. In particular, CROSSCARE project devotes actions to guarantee equal opportunities for the elderly at risk of social exclusion due to their health conditions. Women have an active and decisive role in the implementation of the EDUKA2 project. The INTEGRA project addresses the problem of traditional cultural practices and restrictions detrimental to women's freedom and health, defining health care protocols and offering empowerment to migrant women. The MEMORI-net project

shows special attention to gender medicine, which especially in the cerebrovascular field and in pain sensitivity is still particularly lacking in risk markers for women.

The combination among actions under Priority Axis 2 and Priority Axis 3 aims at promoting a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities, investing in better mobility services and IT Systems, improving the accessibility to natural and cultural sites and to other touristic destinations, promoting access of remote and mountain areas to functional urban services. Within ENERGYCARE project, which through the actions of gender planning and training on the domestic budget aims at saving resources, women are the main target. Furthermore, the electric vehicles and innovative services of the MOBITOUR project are adapted for people with reduced mobility, senior citizens, young people and mothers with pushchairs. The TARTINI project guarantees access to the physical space for disabled people and a better use of the natural and cultural heritage as well as different tourist destinations, mainly by implementing and using digital technologies.

Regarding sustainable development and climate change, the contribution from the Programme proved to be coherent and consistent with the EU framework.

The Programme strengthens principles of sustainable development in all its calls for proposals by defining a specific criterion assessing project compatibility with and/or contribution to sustainable development, being green public procurement a good example. Furthermore, the Programme defines specific criteria in each axis according to sustainable development and environmental principles.

Therefore, there is a clear Programme mainstream encouraging potential beneficiaries to submit project proposals with a positive impact on sustainable development.

In this perspective, the recommendations of the SEA and EIA documents were taken into consideration in the drafting of all calls for proposals, including assessment criteria and providing / requiring specific mitigation measures for the 4 Priority Axes and different types of projects. Priority Axis 2 and Priority Axis 3 have a direct impact on sustainable development in the area, as well as Priority Axis 1 and Priority Axis 4 may have on expected results and envisaged actions.

An effort in reducing the impact of climate change and global warming is horizontally present in the Programme and in the cofinanced projects. That effort is put in projects in different sectors: energy, transport, water management, soil consumption, forest management and natural risks prevention, even in a long-term perspective.

In the current period, several projects contribute to those principles. From the ENERGY CARE project supporting decrease of CO₂ production, energy use and energy poverty through the design, implementation and replication of participatory, innovative, integrated and cross-border strategies and actions, to the MUSE project, which integrates energy efficiency and a reduction of CO₂ emissions within the urban and extra-urban mobility strategies. Moreover, the BLUEGRASS project, developing aquaponics for a sustainable production according to the principles of green growth and circular economy, the CONA project, protecting the aquatic ecosystem and biodiversity for sustainable development, and the CAB project, promoting the development of innovative environmental technologies in the field of renewable energy sources in order to improve environmental protection and efficiency of resources.

Again, MOBITOUR project promoting a joint design of sustainable multimodal urban mobility models in the tourist areas of the cross-border area to increase the use of alternative means of transport and the tourist attractiveness of the area and at the same time reduce pollution. The INTERBIKE II project, fostering the use of sustainable types of transport along the Adriabike cycling path. LIGHTINGSOLUTIONS project, which improves the efficiency and energy management of public lighting, contributing to the implementation of ‘smart-city’ criteria, and the project RETRACKING that develops a competitive management model in compliance with European regulations for the recycling of CFR waste to move from a linear economy to a circular economy.

It is hard to assess the integrated use of ERDF resources because of its vast scope. Given the fact that the geographic area covered by the Programme, is included in two macro-regional strategies, below it is given an overview on the correspondence between the projects of the Interreg Italy-Slovenia programme and the topics tackled by the macro-regional strategies. Further on, in order to reflect on the first project and programme results, a future-oriented perspective is drafted, taken into account the

potential features of the post-2020 programming. Concerning the correspondence with the EUSAIR objectives, all Pillars are covered, the majority of projects being dedicated to sustainable tourism as follows:

- one project covering the Pillar 1 “Blue Growth” FishAgroTech;
- two projects covering Pillar 2 “Connecting the Region”: SecNet and CrossMoby;
- three projects covering Pillar 3 “Environmental Quality”: Cona, Grevislin and VisPrim ;
- eight projects covering Pillar 4 “Sustainable Tourism”: InterBike2, MobiTour, AgroTour2, MedsGarden, TARTINI, WalkOfPeace, Merlin CV and B3 and CONNECTED

Checking the correspondence of projects to EUSALP, it can be observed that the majority of projects covers AG1, in particular:

- 7 projects are covering the AG1 “Research and Innovation”; these are : ARTE, BioApp, CAB, Susgrape, Train, Transglioma, the ITI project “SALUTE-ZDRAVSTVO”
- 1 project is covering AG2 “Economic development”, Nuvolak 2
- 4 projects are covering AG3 “Labour market, education and training”, namely : CB_WBL, CrossCare, Eduka2, INTEGRA
- 4 projects are covering AG4 “Mobility”, concretely : CrossMoby, InterBike2, MobiTour and SecNet
- 2 projects are covering AG6 “Ressources”, CONA and Grevislin
- 1 project is covering AG7 “Green Infrastructure”, ISONZO-SOCA
- 2 projects are covering AG8 ”Risk governance”, Grevislin and VisPrim
- 4 projects are covering AG9 “Energy”, these are : EnergyCare, LightingSolutions, MUSE and Secap

Not all the topics are covered, the AG5 “Accessibility” has not been tackled and the AG2 remains marginal with only 1 project. AG7, even though covered by 1 project, it is well covered due to the dimension of the works foreseen under the ITI project ISONZO-SOCA.. Finally, though EUSDR covering only a part of Slovenia, in regard with this Strategy marginally it can be observed that:

- 4 projects are covering PA2 “Sustainable energy”, these are : EnergyCare, LightingSolutions, MUSE and Secap
- 3 projects are covering PA3 “Culture and tourism”, namely : TARTINI, MerlivCV, B3 and connected

- 2 projects are covering PA5 “Environmental risks”, concretely : Grevislin, VISPRIM
- 3 projects are covering PA7 “Knowledge society”, are the following : CB_WBL, EDUKA2, INTEGRA
- 3 projects are covering PA9 “People and skills”, similar to PA7, are: EDUKA2, INTEGRA, PRISME
- 2 projects are focusing on PA10 “Institutional capacity and cooperation”, these are : “ISONZO-SOCA and SALUTE-ZDRAVSTVO”
- 1 project is dedicated to PA11 « Security » CrossITSafer.

Not all the topics are covered, there are no projects fitting under PA1A “Waterway mobility”, PA 1B “Rail-road-air mobility“, none neither on PA4 “water quality” nor on PA6 “Biodiversity and landscapes”. No project seems to be dedicated specifically to PA8 “Competitiveness of enterprises”.

All in all, it can be concluded that the Interreg Italy-Slovenia projects well cover innovation and sustainable tourism topics, important for both EUSALP and EUSAIR macro-regional strategies.

Concerning the orientation towards the future, with almost all the funds committed, it seems interesting to give a first overview on the correspondence between the approved projects and the post-2020 programming, as presented in ESPON publication on the post-2020 programming.³

The ESPON study divides the topics for post-2020 programming as follows:

- Smart development
- Application of green and low-carbon solutions
- Connectivity
- Improved social services

All of these topics have been tackled by the approved projects up to a certain extent.

Concerning **smart development**, the approved projects are focusing on enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies; there are activities reaping the benefits of digitization for citizens, companies and governments and those enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs. The projects have tackled

³ ESPON contributions to post-2020 programming of European Structural and Investment Funds

also the improvement of skills for smart specialization but have not focused so far to an important extent on the industrial transition and entrepreneurship. It is interesting to note that there is a strong focus on innovation in the health sector (ITI project and other projects on different pathologies) whereas other sectors have not been strongly tackled so far.

Concerning **application of green and low-carbon solutions** (energy efficiency measures, renewable energy, climate change adaptation-risk prevention and disaster resilience), projects have focused on the transition to circular economy and on enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure and reducing pollution.

For climate change adaptation-risk prevention and disaster resilience topics, more will be hopefully done by projects approved in the final fall 2018 and 2019.

Concerning **connectivity**, projects have focused mainly on sustainable and inter-modal connectivity and mobility. Digital connectivity and cross-border mobility could still be tackled more in depth.

Concerning **social services**, the focus should be on promoting services of general interest on their quality, sustainability and affordability; promoting social and economic integration of marginalized communities and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Concerning trainings and employment policies, though in the Programme being not the main objectives but crosscutting issues: there is still a potential on improving access to employment, for in particular youth, long-term unemployed, inactive people, and promoting self-employment and the social economy. Another still potential topic, could be career transitions and promotion of professional crossborder mobility.

Therefrom the above-listed considerations, there seems to be still possibilities for cooperation in topics such as:

- industrial transition and entrepreneurship
- innovation in sectors different from the health sector
- digital connectivity and cross-border mobility
- promotion of self-employment and the social economy

- trainings and education: flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities
- labour and work related issues : career transitions and promotion of professional mobility.

The focus on training activities could also contribute to reaching the foreseen objectives in the Programme indicators.

2.3 Follow up of the implementation of the first calls for standard projects

Evaluation questions:

- *How effective proved the calls for project procedures?*
- *Which are the main results of the projects implementation related to the system of indicators?*

Projects cofinanced under the calls for standard projects started their activities and organized their kick-off meetings in the last quarter of 2017. The MA and JS participated in most of those meetings.

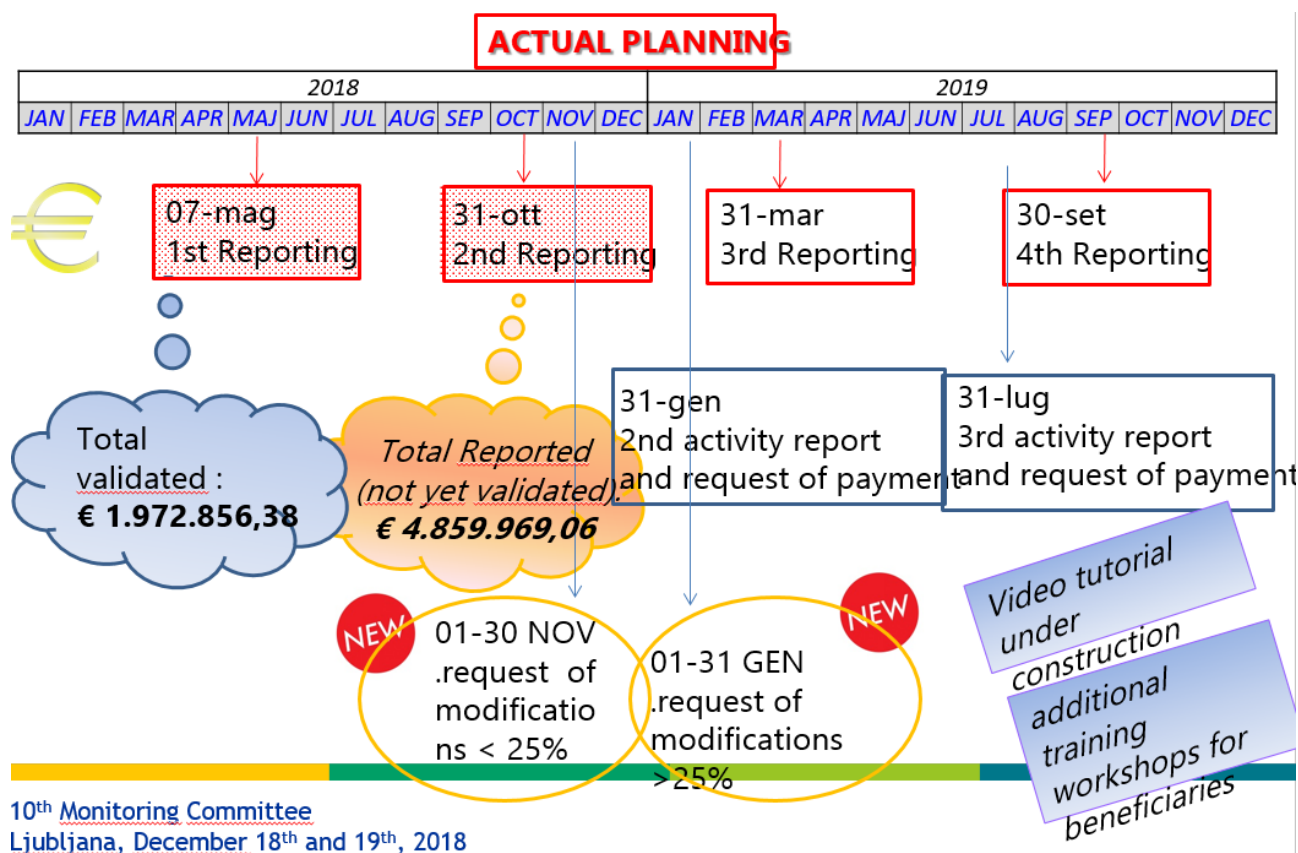
Subsidy contracts of 26 standard projects were signed in 2017. Only the finalization of the subsidy contract related to the project ARTE has been postponed due to a LP change and the related pending pre-contractual checks.

In the very first phase of project implementation, 12 requests for modifications have been issued from the beneficiaries (according to art. 8 of the Subsidy Contract, beneficiaries can submit requests for modification with regards to activities, project planning, financial figures, duration). In details, six requests for modification were under 15% (shifts among BL) of the financial breakdown and the JS/MA took acknowledgment of them. Three of those requests were under 25% and were approved by the MA. Last, three of them have been discussed and approved by the Monitoring Committee through a written procedure, as described in previous sections of the Report.

Despite the JS/LP face-to-face meetings held before the signature of subsidy contracts in which indicators and milestones have been explained and clarified, modification requests intervened at a very early stage of project implementation, due mainly to a

capacity-gap or misunderstanding by beneficiaries on expenditure EU/Programme rules (mainly errors were made in charging costs of staff and external experts). Meeting have been planned with projects to constantly check and monitor project implementation. Programme structures gave the necessary pieces of information to potential applicants/applicants, in close connection to each call, to have clear manuals, FAQs, meetings, tutorials, events, and constant support during the opening time of calls (ensured both by the JS and by the IT company INSIEL Insiel technicians). Thus, as large efforts and different tools have been put in place thorough all 2018, probably the gap lies in the lack of information between participants to workshops and persons actually in charge of designing project proposals and of implementing projects.

Regarding the reporting phase, several problems have been experienced. Standard projects were requested to spend 8% of total costs in their first 8 months of implementation, as a crucial step towards the fulfilment of 2018 milestones. Despite technical meetings with LP held for presentation of the online system and support given in back office by JS, Insiel and FLC, reporting deadlines have been shifted during the period, as described in the following figure, which could potentially have temporary negative consequences on implementation of project cycle and represent a strong burden to beneficiaries.



The follow-up and support to reporting resulted fairly difficult. One reason is connected to few online system blocks, both related to mistakes of the beneficiaries - mainly in wrongly uploading documents in the system - and to system malfunction. Within the First Reports INSIEL had to replace documents in order to make them visible to FLC. Double work had then to be carried out by the FLC and project partners, who were asked to send once again the documents. The failures in the online systems - resulting in difficulties in accessing documents, causing delays - represented a major problem in reporting and, at large, in project and Programme implementation. In broad terms, it is well known how delays in certification of expenditures and repaying back to beneficiaries who loaned resources to cover their expenditures can lead to liquidity problems affecting the completion of project activities.

Informatics bottlenecks need to be improved, while the system must run without difficulties in order to avoid critical issues in the future and that the audit trail is

ensured for Italian and Slovene FLC activity. At the same time, beneficiaries need even more support from the JS and INSIEL help-desk to deal with the information system.

In December 2018, the provider of information systems Insiel Spa participated to the MC meeting and stated that it is continuously working on fixing emerging system errors and that it is committed and engaged in improving the system to avoid future failures. INSIEL Spa will be in charge to put in place a training plan Dec 2018 - Apr 2019, including on-the-spot training (to be performed in Italy and Slovenia) in order to facilitate the use of all on-line functions and it is also developing new functions related to the assessment of project proposals and improving the reporting section. It is also working in co-operation with JS and external TA on a video tutorial for beneficiaries and FLC for all reporting functions (submission, reporting), which will be available after mid-2019.

Apart from the on-line system, another consideration is that the majority of beneficiaries did not apply simplified cost-options to their projects. Simplified cost options (defined in the EU Regulation 1303/2013) are optional on choice by the beneficiary itself with respect to the activities performed, the types of expenditure and its own reporting capabilities. A low percentage of beneficiaries using the simplified options can be explained both in terms of a low perception of their usefulness, and of the intention by beneficiaries to go in continuity with the usual reporting practices. On the other hand, where the Managing Authority and the MC consider the application of simplified cost options relevant to the progress of the Programme, beneficiaries capacity building has to be duly supported in their understanding.

2.4 Calls for strategic projects assessment procedure and projects implementation

In the Programme's Financial allocation, the budget foreseen for strategic projects amounts to € 31 million of which € 27 million covered by ERDF funds. Strategic projects are characterized by greater relevance in terms of implementation of the strategies of the European Union and the Programme itself. Given their strategic nature and expected impact, as well as their contribution to the entire programming system, strategic

projects were selected through a top-down institutional approach, through which targeted issues have been identified in order to improve their expected impact. Two calls for strategic projects were prepared and launched in year 2018 (call 05/2018 and call 06/2018). They resulted in 10 approved projects for a total amount of € 26.565.449,99.

The number of projects to be financed per each axis is determined by the Programme already. The Monitoring Committee approved the ten strategic themes in February 2017. The outcomes were as follows.

Axis 1, promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area, represents 24% of the ERDF allocation. Under this axis (strategic theme 1 - nanotechnologies and theme 2 - creative industry), 2 projects were financed for a total ERDF allocation of 5.996.190,87 Euro.

Axis 2, cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans, represents 15% of the ERDF allocation. Under this axis (strategic theme 3 - Secap and theme 4 - mobility and intermodality), 2 projects were financed for a total ERDF allocation of 5.999.078,20 Euro.

Axis 3, protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources, represents 35% of the ERDF allocation. Under this axis (strategic theme 5 - EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM, Theme 6 - WW1, Theme 7 - MINORITIES AND MULTICULTURALITY, Theme 8 - NATURA 2000 AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURES, Theme 9 - FLOODS DIRECTIVE), 5 projects were financed for a total of 12.077.504,07 Euro.

Axis 4, enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance, represents 20% of the ERDF allocation. Under this Axis (strategic Theme - 10 CIVIL PROTECTION), 1 project was financed for a total of 2.492.976,85 Euro.

Within the 10 financed projects, there are 105 beneficiaries: 49.5% from Slovenia, 25.7% from Veneto and 24.8% from Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. In terms of allocated resources, Slovenia received 44.7%, Veneto 24.4% and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia 30.9%.

The Monitoring Committee approved eight strategic projects in July 2018, through the 18th written procedure, in October 2018 one project on Priority Axis 1-1b - Strategic Theme 2 - Creative Industry and in December 2018 the last project on Priority Axis 3 - 6c - Strategic Theme 5 - Excellence in Tourism, due to a request issued in October by the MC (Italian delegation) for additional checking and assessment within that theme.

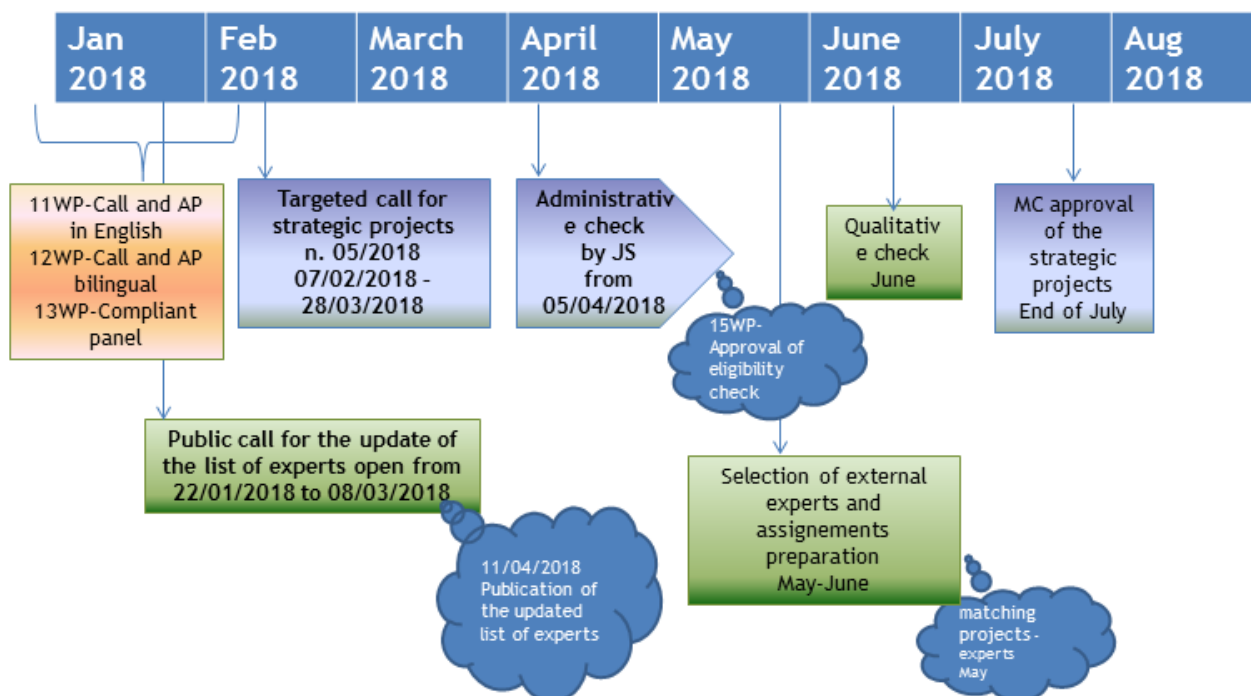
For the eight projects approved in July, the LPs signed the Subsidy Contracts after conclusion of pre-contractual checks.

Information on strategic projects is reported in the table below:

Table 9. State of art of strategic projects at the end of 2018

| Asse | PI | TEMA | ACRONIMO AKRONIM | LP | SUBSIDY CONTRACT signed | project duration | Kick off meeting |
|------|-------|------|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1b | 1 | Nano-Region | Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto Officina dei Materiali CNR-IOM | 17/10/18 | 01/02/2019 - 21/02/2022 | not yet |
| 2 | 4e | 3 | SECAP | Regione Fvg Direzione Centrale Ambiente ed Energia | 15/10/18 | 1/11/2018 - 21/11/2021 | not yet |
| 2 | 4e | 4 | CROSSMOBY | Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia - Direzione Centrale infrastrutture e territorio | 15/10/18 | 01/09/2018 - 21/09/2021 | ok |
| 3 | 6c | 6 | WALKofPEACE | Posoški razvojni center | 17/12/18 | 01/10/2018 - 21/10/2021 | ok |
| 3 | 6c | 7 | PRIMIS | Unione Italiana | 17/12/18 | 01/01/2019 - 21/01/2022 | not yet |
| 3 | 6d | 8 | GREVISLIN | RRA Severne Primorske | not yet | 15/11/2018- 5/12/2021 | ok |
| 3 | 6f | 9 | VISFRIM | Autorita' Di Bacino Distrettuale delle Alpi Orientali | 10/10/18 | 01/01/2019 - 21/01/2022 | not yet |
| 4 | 11CTE | 10 | CROSSIT SAFER | Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia - Protezione Civile | 17/12/18 | 01/01/2019 - 21/01/2022 | not yet |

As shown in the figure above, the timeline of the first call for strategic projects (n. 5/2018) foresaw the project assessment to be completed by mid-summer 2018 and is represented in the following figure:



There were some issues related to the assessment of the first call for strategic projects: the following project proposals, in fact, have been rejected, as failed to satisfy eligibility criteria according to the Assessment Manual:

| Theme n. | Theme title | Acronym | LP |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| 1 | NANOTECHNOLOGY | BIRDIE | UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE - Dipartimento di scienze della vita |
| 2 | CREATIVE INDUSTRIES | INTERFACE | UNIVERSITA' CA' FOSCARI - Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici |
| 5 | EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM | B3&Connected | RAFGV - Direzione centrale cultura, sport e solidarietà |

The three LPs decided to apply for the complaint procedure, as, according to the call procedures, this tool has been a new possibility introduced by calls in 2018. The complaint procedure has been managed by the Complaint Panel, which confirmed ineligibility of the three project proposals. The Complaint procedure has been managed

accordingly to the Rules of the Complaint panel and it took a month for completing the procedure.

Therefore, an additional call had to be launched (n. 6/2018) to allocate resources for the strategic themes 2 (Creative industries) and 5 (excellence in tourism). The launching of this new call slightly changed the original planning.

It needs to be mentioned that, compared to calls 2016, each project was assessed by a couple of external evaluators, issuing a single joint assessment on each projects (instead of two assessments, one for each evaluator). This has been a valuable simplification avoiding the JS to make rather complex calculations and average for the scoring of any single criterion as happened in the first calls and a less time-consuming task.

It is here worth pointing out that, even according to recommendations from the First extensive evaluation report, assessment procedure has been revised between first standard calls in 2016 and strategic calls in 2018. In fact, the assessment procedure in the first calls involved two assessors, one Slovenian and one Italian, producing two separate assessments on the same project proposal. Each assessor independently scored and commented each specific criterion, JS then drafted a joint assessment for each project application on the basis of the arithmetic average of the two assessments provided by Italian and Slovenian external assessors. In the case of a relevant difference between the two assessment outcomes, a further assessment had to be carried out, with the involvement of other two experts (again, one Slovenian and one Italian) producing a joint assessment. This further assessment was then compared to the previous ones, in order to reach an average and to finalize the assessment process.

In the 2018 assessment procedure two assessors worked together providing at once a single joint assessment, in order to pursue a high quality level of assessment in a more limited time, complying with efficiency and efficacy principles.

The quality of process is also ensured by the newly introduced complaint procedure, which allows the applicant to benefit from an additional form of protection.

The Monitoring Committee in October 2018 gave the Managing Authority the mandate to perform further requested additional technical verifications and assessments over project proposals presented under Priority Axis 3 - 6c - Strategic Theme 5 - Excellence in

Tourism according to indications given by the legal advisor of the Programme. The final approval decision was therefore postponed until the end of the year 2018.

Due to the date of approval and early implementation phase, it is hard to make an assessment on the implementation of the strategic projects.

2.5 Final calls for standard projects assessment procedure

Evaluation question: *How effective proved the calls for project procedures?*

The 10th MC has approved a targeted call (call 07/2019) for standard projects, along with its Application Package, in December 2018. AF and Guidelines have been updated accordingly. The call is targeted on the Performance of the Programme and on its “still not fulfilled” output indicators.

The procedure related to the drafting of this last targeted call for standard projects benefited from a joint work of a bilateral technical group (which includes representatives of the two Member States’ delegations and MA/JS). Following the decision taken by the 8th MC to launch a further call for standard projects, the bilateral technical group met two times (July 12th and September 6th, 2018) to share views and perspectives, focusing on Programme indicators according to a gap-analysis. Issues remaining open on the call out of the technical preparation process have been presented to the 9th and 10th MC, defined, decided and approved.

Main features of the approved targeted call for standard projects are the following.

The targeted call, to be launched in mid-January 2019, foresees a project duration of 24 months.

Indicators addressed by the call have been chosen following a detailed gap-analysis on Programme performance and are, therefore, the following:

| Programme IP | ID | Output Indicator | Programme target 2023 |
|---------------|-------|---|-----------------------|
| 1b | C026 | Numero di imprese che cooperano con istituti di ricerca (Indicatore comune) / Število podjetij, ki sodelujejo z raziskovalnimi institucijami (skupni kazalnik) | 38 |
| 6d | C023 | Superficie di habitat cofinanziati per ottenere un miglior stato di conservazione / Površina podprtih habitatov za izboljšanje njihovega stanja ohranjenosti | 6000 |
| | 3.2.2 | Azioni pilota transfrontaliere a sostegno della biodiversità / Čezmejne pilotne aktivnosti za podpora biotske raznovrstnosti | 48 |
| | 3.2.3 | Partecipanti agli eventi educativi e divulgativi / Udeleženci izobraževalnih in informativnih dogodkov | 8.500 |
| 6f | 3.3.1 | Numero di tecnologie verdi innovative testate e attuate / Število preizkušenih in implementiranih inovativnih zelenih tehnologij | 13 |
| | 3.3.2 | Numero di aziende che applicano soluzioni ecologiche nuove ed innovative / Število podjetij, ki uporabljajo nove zelene inovativne rešitve | 7 |
| 11 ect | 4.1.1 | Protocolli e Accordi transfrontalieri sottoscritti / /Sklenjeni čezmejni sporazumi in protokoli / | 10 |
| | 4.1.2 | Soluzioni congiunte che aumentano l'integrazione, la coerenza, l'armonizzazione della governance dell'area del Programma (politiche condivise, quadro legislativo o regolamenti, documenti strategici congiunti, strumenti di e-government, ecc.) / Skupne rešitve, ki zagotavljajo večjo povezanost, skladnost in usklajenost upravljanja programskega območja (skupne politike, pravni okviri ali predpisi, skupni strateški dokumenti, orodja e-uprave itd.) | 11 |

Another important feature characterising the last call, which was matter of discussion between the two delegations, is related to the minimum partnership requirement. An analysis on the participation of the territory in the previous calls has been conducted showing a fragmented participation out of the first calls for standard projects in 2016.

In order to favour the cohesion and participation of the whole Programme area, in the targeted call for standard projects n. 7/2019 a mandatory requirement has been

included, and namely «*The minimum requirement for partnership is one partner per Member State, of which at least one Italian from Veneto Region (Venezia NUTsIII) and at least one Slovene coming from one of the following statistical regions: Gorenjska or Obalna-kraška or Goriška*».

2.6 The system of indicators

Evaluation questions:

- *How is the level of fulfillment of indicators?*
- *Which are the existing/relevant gaps?*

In the period considered by this Second Extensive Report, indicators played an even more crucial role. Mid-term review insisted in this period, highlighting the role and the rationale of the system of indicators.

Such indicators are relevant to the different aspects of implementation, from expenditure to outputs and results.

Looking at the expenditure, indicators show an implementation progress that is in line with the planned financial breakdown, (€ 92.588.182 and an ERDF contribution of € 77.929.954).

By the end of year 2018, the following projects have been approved and cofinanced:

- 27 standard projects (26.316.581,19 ERDF allocated, 156 beneficiaries)
- 10 strategic projects (26.565.449,99 ERDF allocated 105 part beneficiaries)
- 2 I.T.I. projects (8.500.000 ERDF, 1 partner and 7 implementing bodies)
- 5 TA projects (4,7 Mio ERDF, 5 partners)

As far as the system of indicators is concerned, all listed projects are considered in drawing the picture of Programme implementation. However, while strategic projects effectively contribute to expenditure progress, their impact on indicators must be considered in a future perspective, due to their early stage of implementation. In fact, their projection towards the fulfillment of indicators and the reduction of the different

gaps is reasonably important. It is worth pointing out that before subsidy contracts with strategic projects' LPs have been signed, the JS met those LPs to better focus the approved strategic projects on indicators according to a gap previous analysis.

As referred to in previous sections of this Report, the desirable and expected impact of strategic projects on indicators must be carefully considered and it has been one of the fundamental reference for the shaping of the last call for standard projects (call 07/2019), as approved by the MC in December 2018.

Nevertheless, the Monitoring Committee paid more attention to the Programme performance for the last call for standard projects than on that on strategic projects which was the one with much more financial allocation, both on the call itself and as financial dimension of each project. It may be considered that the Programme has been much more demanding in terms of indicators on "small" standard projects than on big strategic projects which, by definition, must have greater impact on territory both in terms of results as in terms of reaching indicators. In this perspective, and in the perspective of greater effectiveness and efficiency, the Programme should have been more demanding.

Although it is natural for the interventions to be refined in the progress of programming, both in terms of coherence with the needs of the territory and in terms of consistency with the output and outcomes indicators, a lack of focus of the previous interventions on the aforesaid indicators must certainly be noted.

In the process of defining and approving the calls, the Monitoring Committee has progressively focused on the contribution of co-financed activities to indicators. A process of increasing focus, however, that went hand in hand with the reduction of available resources. This has meant that many resources have been committed and expenses with less impact on the indicators and that the residual resources must necessarily be much more targeted towards those indicators.

Finally, it is worth considering decisions taken by MC on residual resources on Axis 2 of the Programme. Specifically, residuals on Axis 2 will be allocated to the five standard projects under implementation (following an expression of interest procedure)

supporting additional activities to contribute to lagging-behind-indicator 2.1.1. (80% of budget) and the CAP&COM project activities (20% of budget).

The Programme is currently facing (at the time considered in this assessment) its intermediate stage, overcoming difficulties related to the initial phase and heading to a next, close and proper, midterm implementation.

Therefore, considering implementation by priority axis, it is appreciated the details of such an implementation. Looking at priority axis 1, data show the following situation:

Indicators Axis 1

| Axis | Id | Indicator | Unit, if applicable | Standard 2018 | ITI 2018 | Strategic 2018 (forecast) | Total 2018 | Milestone 2018 | Expected 2023 | Target 2023 |
|------|-------|--|---------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------------|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | CO42 | Number of research institutes joining cross border, transnational or interregional research projects | Organisation | 24 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 5 | 36 | 27 |
| 1 | CO26 | Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutes | Enterprises | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 | - | 38 | 38 |
| 1 | 1.1.1 | Number of innovative services, products and instruments transferred to enterprises | Number | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | - | 31 | 10 |

According to this table, common indicator CO42 met its target value for 2018, and it is very close to the fulfillment of the final target for 2023. The analysis of the strategic projects approved under the calls number 5/2018 and 6/2018 show the involvement of further relevant actors filling and overcoming the existing gap in a 2023 perspective.

Common indicator CO26 shows a gap. Standard projects involved 30 enterprises so far and the calls for strategic projects, according to an informal analysis made by the JS on the forecasts declared by the LP and adjusted, will tackle the gap. The last call for

standard projects no. 07/2019 is designed to tackle on Axis 1 the fulfillment of this indicator.

Concerning indicator 1.1.1, an effort in reducing the gap with the final target has already been made, as the fulfillments made by standard projects almost reached the 2023 target. According to an informal analysis made by the JS on the forecasts declared by the LP and adjusted strategic projects are expected to contribute to the indicator over the target (see table). It is worth underlining that this analysis on indicators affects horizontal issues, such as public-private cooperation, applied research and innovation at large, of main importance in the European investment and structural funds 2014-2020 strategic framework. Therefore, the given analysis of gaps and of the measures taken to reduce them is certainly positive.

Regarding priority axis 2, Indicator 2.1.1 faces a relevant gap, referring to both 2018 and 2023 target values. According to an informal analysis made by the JS on the forecasts declared by the LP and adjusted, strategic projects focus on this target, supporting gap reduction towards the 2023 target (see table). The MC decided that residual funds on Axis 2 will be allocated to the five standard projects under implementation for additional activities contributing to indicator 2.1.1 (procedure to be launched in 2019).

Indicator 2.1.2 already matched target for 2023, with opportunities to overcome figures because of forecasts by strategic projects. This is very important to highlight, considering the main relevance of actions reducing carbon emissions in the EU long-term strategies, EU 2020 in particular.

The following table shows the relevant data.

Indicators Axis 2

| Axis | Id | Indicator | Unit, if applicable | Standard 2018 | ITI 2018 | Strategic 2018 (forecast) | Total 2018 | Milestone 2018 | Expected 2023 | Target 2023 |
|------|-------|---|---------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------------|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2 | 2.1.1 | Number of actions for the reduction of public buildings annual primary energy consumption | Number | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 25 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| 2 | 2.1.2 | Pilot actions for innovative services for a low-carbon emissions smart mobility | Number | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | - | 16 | 5 |
|---|-------|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|

Priority axis 3, as summarized in the following table, offers different assessment perspectives in an articulated system of indicators. First, the analysis of common indicator CO09 reveals a remarkable gap with its milestone for 2018 and the final target 2023. Both standard projects and strategic projects as well as ITI projects focus on this indicator with an envisaged contribution to the fulfillment of the targets. However, the combination among the implementation of standard and ITI projects might not be very effective in matching the targets. It is therefore recommended to monitor the follow-up of current and future projects regarding their focus on this indicator, such as the consideration of a further specific action tackling the indicator CO09, even due to the importance of common indicators in the whole system.

Moreover, indicator 3.1.1 is on the right way to fulfill the final target. With the forecasted contribution by the strategic projects and from the ITI projects the target will probably be overreached. However, it is worth carefully considering the opportunity of a consistent follow-up of the strategic and ITI projects implementation, to monitor the progress towards the fulfillment of the indicator concerned.

Regarding indicator 3.1.2, ITI project already fulfilled mid-term target in 2018 and it is still focusing on this indicator on the way to meet the final target. Certainly, getting to the final target value in 2023 means an implementation acceleration compared to the progress made so far.

Indicators Axis 3

| Axi s | id | Indicator | Unit, if applicabl e | Standar d 2018 | ITI 201 8 | Strategic 2018 (forecast) | Total 2018 | Mileston e 2018 | Expecte d Target 2023 | Target 2023 |
|----------|----|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
|----------|----|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|--------|------|---|---|------|-------|--------|--------|
| 3 | C009 | Increase of visits to cultural and natural heritage sites, attractions cofinanced (common indicator) | Number | 300 | 0 | 0 | 300 | 5.000 | 43.000 | 20.000 |
| 3 | 3.1.1 | Number of realized investments or services/products created to support conservation /restore natural or cultural heritage sites | Number | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | - | 41 | 30 |
| | 3.1.2 | Km of completed cycling routes | Km | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | - | 12 | 12 |
| 3 | C023 | Surface of habitats co-financed to obtain a better status of conservation | Ha | 251 | 0 | 0 | 251 | - | 3909,2 | 6000 |
| 3 | 3.2.1 | Instruments and services developed for the evaluation and promotion of eco-systemic services | Number | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 3.2.2 | Cross-border Pilot actions supporting biodiversity | Number | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | - | 15 | 48 |
| 3 | 3.2.3 | Participants to educational and promotional events | Number | 1289 | 0 | 0 | 1289 | - | 3460 | 8.500 |
| 3 | 3.3.1 | Number of tested and implemented innovative green technologies | Number | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 8 | 13 |
| 3 | 3.3.2 | Number of companies applying new or innovative ecological solutions | Number | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | - | 4 | 7 |
| 3 | C020 | Population that is benefitting of protection measures preventing | Number | 0 | | 0 | 0 | - | 33.200 | 1.111 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | floods | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

A progress analysis regarding common indicator CO23 tells that the final target remains not close to be reached, even according to the expected results of current and future project implementation. This recommends further analysis and interventions.

As far as indicators 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 are concerned, the assessment of current implementation in the perspective of final targets highlights relevant gaps, which need to be addressed properly. A dedicated intervention is planned targeting the last call for standard projects no. 07/2019 on Axis 3 - IP 6d only to the fulfillment of indicators CO23, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Similarly, indicators 3.3.1 and 3.2.2 show existing gaps at the moment. For all those targets is strongly recommended an overall assessment by the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee about possible effective measures to put in place within the Programming period with the available resources. A dedicated intervention is planned targeting the last call for standard projects no. 07/2019 on Axis 3 - IP 6f only to the fulfillment of indicators CO23, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Specific attention must be devoted to common indicator CO20, which fulfillment requests a further and stronger effort. Although expected results for the final target show no critical issues, a gap analysis cannot avoid consideration of the final target at the current implementation stage, which needs to be addressed effectively in order to be reached.

Looking at priority axis 4, data draw a complete picture regarding all indicators of the Axis. The picture describes a positive progress towards the fulfilment of the final targets, which must be finalised in the implementation phase of current and future projects. It is worth pointing out that a dedicated intervention is planned targeting the last call for standard projects no. 07/2019 on Axis 4 only to the fulfilment of indicators 4.1.1. and 4.1.2. In this perspective, the implementation of interventions under call no. 07/2019 can lead to the fulfilment and overreaching of the targets 2023.

Indicators Axis 4

| Axi s | id | Indicator | Unit, if applicabl e | Standar d 2018 | ITI 2018 | Strategi c 2018 (forecas t) | Total 2018 | Mileston e 2018 | Expected Target 2023 | Target 2023 |
|----------|-------|---|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 4 | 4.1.2 | Common solutions that increase integration, cohesion, harmonization of governance in the Programme area (shared policies, legal framework or rules, common strategic documents, e-government instruments, ecc.) | Common solutions | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 2 | 24 | 11 |
| 4 | 4.1.4 | Number of cross-border health-care teams trained and operational | Number | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | - | 5 | 5 |
| 4 | 4.1.3 | Number of beneficiaries participating to common trainings | Number | 701 | 0 | 0 | 701 | - | 1219 | 400 |
| 4 | 4.1.1 | Signed Cross-border protocols and agreements | Number | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | - | 11 | 10 |

Regarding indicators 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 data and forecast contribution respectively from strategic and I.T.I. projects show the fulfillment of target values for 2023.

HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

In the current programming period, there is also the need to monitor, also horizontal principles. This means that there is a focus also on greening and inclusiveness.

In October 2018, the Managing Authority informed the Monitoring Committee that the matter on environmental indicators will have to be treated by involving the Environmental authorities for a follow up on the recommendations made by Environmental authorities themselves in the framework of the ex-ante programming phase.

The Programme encourages project's contribution to the challenges of sustainable development in all its Calls for proposals by including:

- a specific criterion assessing project compatibility with and/or contribution to sustainable development (for example: green public procurement);
- specific criteria in each axis in line with the environmental principles;
- projects contribution to programme outputs within Axes 2 and 3, which are linked to sustainable developments;
- projects contribution to environmental principles within the calls for proposals;
- addressing potential beneficiaries with typologies and examples of actions already proposed in the calls for proposals for each axis and type of project.

The Programme encourages potential beneficiaries to submit project proposals with a positive impact on sustainable development. Furthermore, the recommendations of the SEA and EIA documents were taken into consideration in the drafting of all calls for proposals, including assessment criteria and providing / requiring specific mitigation measures for the 4 different axes and different types of projects. The PA 2 and PA 3 have a direct impact on sustainable development in the area, and PA 1 and PA 4 may have an impact depending on expected results and envisaged actions.

The assessment on Programme regarding sustainable development is widely positive. In fact, looking at the calls launched so far, 36 out of 37 cofinanced projects envisage positive impact on sustainable development.

Considering that some projects are tackling harmonization of public services (like waste management) and green infrastructures, these indicators are further detailed in the activities and common results obtained by those projects that bring together both the municipalities as their service companies in charge of waste management.

As for the e-cohesion, the Programme meets all mandatory requirements as information is carried out through electronic data exchange systems and documents are registered, stored and handled on an on line monitoring system.

The Programme e-system called “GGP2” for project submission and project’s management and verification has been developed by the in-house company of the autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Insiel SpA. for all projects submitted within

all European-funded programmes managed in Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. All the e-system runs in bilingual versions, in line with the Programme rules. Though some labels are still not translated into Slovene.

GGP2 is composed of a FRONT-END (for applications) and a BACK OFFICE (For project implementation). The system has been improved with several releases, and is still subject to improvements with new tools to facilitate the workflow.

As for the FRONT END, the project proposals within the Calls for strategic projects (n. 05/2018 and n. 06/2018) were uploaded using the front end for e-applications (FEG2), broadly improved compared to the system used for the first calls in 2016, which shortcomings have been tackled in a more user-friendly system.

As for the BACK OFFICE, all reporting in 2018 have been taken over on the online systems (ITI and standard projects, validations by First Level Controllers). The reporting section in 2018 is still under improvement.

The e-system is still not functioning properly. In 2018, in fact the system had not allowed a smooth work of controllers, both first and second level.

The reporting activity resulted fairly difficult, connected to few online system blocks, both related to system spot-blocks and to mistakes by beneficiaries mainly wrongly uploading documents in the system. The failures in the online systems resulted in difficulties in accessing documents for FLCs and issuing the certificates mainly as the major challenge in reporting and in project and Programme implementation. Within the 1st Reports INSIEL had to replace documents in modules visible to FLC. Double work had to be carried out by the FLC and PPs, who were asked to send documentation twice. For some beneficiaries, delays in certification of expenditures and repaying back to beneficiaries could potentially cause a temporary negative cash flow.

In December 2018, the provider of information systems, INSIEL Spa, participated to the MC meeting assuring its continuous work on fixing emerging system errors and its commitment in improving the system to avoid future failures. Many meetings have occurred to tackle the issue with participation of FLCs who tested functions of the

system and reported mistakes to avoid future failures. The functionality for FLCs has not entirely fixed yet.

3. Follow up of implementation of ITI projects

Evaluation question: How ITI implementation supported the achievement of the Programme's overall objectives?

3.1. The model of governance of the intermediate body

In addition to the peculiar crossborder feature, the Programme foresees the implementation of an ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) in the EGTC GO area, that comprises the area of the Municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter Vrtojba. The ITI is composed by 2 pilot actions which are in line with the Investment Priorities and contribute to the Objectives of the Programme. It is implemented according to the “Sole Beneficiary” model and it is managed by the Office for Intermediate Body (OIB), a separated and functional independent Unit of the EGTC GO that will act as Intermediate body (Section 5.3.1 of CP) - Art. 11 of Reg (EU) 1299/2013.

The strongly innovative element is represented by the management structure: the 2 projects are linked in an ITI whose governance is delegated to the EGTC’s independent Office of the Intermediate Body. Referring to the ITI, this Office has programming and managing tasks delegated by the MA (through an Agreement IB/MA (2016), meanwhile the EGTC’s Office for the implementation of projects has the role of Sole Beneficiary and implements the 2 projects as unique contracting body for all services and infrastructures located both in Italy and in Slovenia. The model represents a new methodology in cross-border cooperation, which guarantees that the three municipalities (through a sole body, the EGTC) share the decision making process and joint the control of the achievements of the outputs as Intermediate Body and, in the same time, implements concretely the projects all over the cross border territory. It is a new solution supporting the integration of the single urban area of the three cities.

This pilot experience on IB governance is a unique case among Cooperation Programmes. Such a unicity does not allow comparisons and benchmarking and can be properly evaluated more in an outcome/final perspective than in output/medium term one. A possible term of comparison could be the model of integrated sustainable urban development projects decided and directed by urban authorities. In this perspective, there is still open question that need to be answered: is the IB governance of an ITI carried out by an EGTC an effective management tool in the Cooperation Programme? (The evaluation of this question will be part of a Thematic Report).

3.2. The first ITI project - Isonzo/Soča

The project aims to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area along the river Isonzo, with a view to increasing its attractiveness from a tourist and recreational point of view.

The main aim is to promote and increase the usability, even by residents, of the cross-border territory crossed by the river Isonzo in the municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, improving the accessibility and sustainable mobility of the area. The project involves the construction of a common cross-border network of cycle and pedestrian routes that will form a cross-border urban park, the provision of recreational infrastructures that will enhance the territory as a tourist destination and finally the construction of an identifying brand for a more effective communication able to intercept also the flows of non-local visitors. The long-term objective is to complete by 2021 considerable infrastructural works, which will improve the usability of the area and increase its attractiveness for citizens and tourists.

An innovative territorial planning approach is foreseen: In order to implement the infrastructures envisaged by the Isonzo project, the EGTC GO may decide whether to apply the Slovenian legislation or the Italian legislation in the applicable procurement law. The municipal councils of the three Municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba have approved a deed with which they delegate the EGTC GO Assembly to decide each time which legislation to apply. This is the first resolution adopted by all three municipal councils, which lays the foundations for a unitary method

of planning the territory of the three cities. The general rule is to apply the legislation of the country in which the investment is located. When the investment is a single cross border joint investment belonging to both countries, the procedure to be applied is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Considering that validation of ITI expenditure is under responsibility of Italian FLC, a specific FLC procedure ("consultation procedure") has been adopted for the ITI projects when the Slovenian legislation is adopted.

Table 10. Four Lots of investments for project Isonzo/Soča

| LOTS | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Lot 1. Infrastructure works for the recreational area of Vrtojba | Lot 2. Walkway on the Isonzo river in Solkan and cycle paths connecting with the cycle path coming from Bovec. | Lot 3. Project for the construction of a cycle and pedestrian route along the border. Transalpine Route. | Lot 4. Construction of pedestrian and cycle paths along the Isonzo from via degli Scogli to Parco Piuma and up to Straccis and along the transversal axis from the Piuma Park to via San Gabriele. |
| Start of works: by February 2019. | Start of works: by February 2019 | Approval of the executive project: November 2019 | Approval of the executive project: November 2019 |
| Duration of the construction site: 6 months | Duration of the construction site: 1 year. | Start of works: April 2020 | Start of works: April 2020. |
| The call for tenders was published in November 2018. Conclusion of the works: September 2019 | Conclusion of works: February 2020 | Conclusion of works: December 2020 | Conclusion of works: December 2020 |

Since only the Lot 1 of the foreseen works has been started so far, it is difficult to make an evaluation on the contribution to the Programme overall objectives. Other three Lots of works are foreseen and the main activities will be carried out in 2019 and 2020.

Administrative burdens slowed down the starting phase of the project. Delays on infrastructure work in Solkan were caused by difficulties in initial expropriations and permits. This brought the need to reallocation of funds within WPs due to one-year delay in expropriation and consists in a change in the dynamic of expenditure (which is put forward).

In any case permits are all released and investments all started and their execution is plainly foreseen for beginning of 2019.

Other challenge was connected to the unique experiment of having an Italian legal entity (the EGCT) with a cross-border projection as a cross-border contracting authority managing joint investments implemented in Italy and Slovenia. In this respect, the IB EGTC had to deal with the Italian reform process of public procurement legislation in 2016, and with the application of public procurement regulations of two countries.

3.3. The second ITI project - healthcare

The population living in the cross-border area of the EGTC GO through a pilot path of integration of the services and health facilities involved. The project intends to build a network based on the existing excellences in the two territories, on the needs of the health and on the need for an innovative planning of services. Specifically, the project activities involve the collaboration of joint Italo-Slovenian working groups, to set up innovative models and services in five distinct areas further illustrated below.

Table 11. Achievements and planning by project “Health”

| TOPIC | OBJECTIVE | ACHIVEMENTS | PLANNED ACTIVITIES |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| HEALTH-CARE BOOKING SYSTEM | The activity aims to overcome administrative and operational obstacles to give the citizens of the EGTC area the opportunity to book and use cross-border health services on both sides of the border, regardless of their country of origin, thus putting into practice what is foreseen by EU directive 2011/24 on the free movement of patients. | The health provision of the two areas and the reservation and provision systems of the Italian and Slovenian health services were analyzed to find administrative and legal solutions that would allow the creation of a network of cross-border health services. | On the basis of the indications provided by the analysis and taking into account the technical characteristics of the two Italian and Slovenian IT systems, a single booking system will be developed , which will allow the GECT GO area's citizens to book and use the services also in the state other than that of the residence. |
| MENTAL HEALTH | Thanks to the project, a joint Italian-Slovenian team was set up with the task of drawing up common guidelines for the treatment of patients aged between 18 and 35 with mental | The first project activity involved an analysis of how to take care of and treat people with mental health problems in Italy and Slovenia. The analysis highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the two methods of taking charge and | The model provides for the multidisciplinary team to carry out the following activities: a) information and prevention activities; b) community |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | health problems. | treatment, on the basis of which the cross-border team developed a joint model meant to increase the quality and accessibility of cross-border services. | intervention in the crisis; c) socio-labor reintegration. |
| AUTISM | The project aims to introduce the early diagnosis (already from 18 months of life) of the autism spectrum disorder. Existing international studies confirm that early treatment can significantly improve communication, relational, cognitive and adaptive skills. One of the most | A working group of experts has been set up | A working group of experts has been set up that have prepared a space. At the Basaglia Park in Gorizia, spaces will be re-furnished that the joint medical team can use during the treatment of children with autism spectrum disorders in the territory of the three municipalities. |
| PHYSIOLOGICAL PREGNANCY | Thanks to the project, pregnant women in the territory of the three Municipalities will be able to benefit from pre- and post-delivery services, provided by a cross-border group of midwives and gynecologists who will be based on the best European practices. Currently these services are not present in Slovenian territory or in Italian territory, as they represent an innovative method in today's obstetric practice. | The first project activity concerned the analysis of the methods of taking charge and treatment of pregnant women in Italy and Slovenia, to understand the differences and find synergies. A working group composed of Italian and Slovenian obstetricians and gynecologists was set up, which, based on the results of the analysis and taking into account the rules in force in the two States, have developed a model of joint treatment of physiological pregnancy, which provides the innovative services. | A number of services will be provided on the territory of the EGTC GO , based on the common methodology developed by the cross-border expert group. They will be provided by a joint medical team composed of midwives and with the involvement and advice of numerous other specialists in the common structures built at the Basaglia Park of Gorizia and at the Splošna bolnišnica "Dr. Franca Derganca" Nova Gorica - Health Center of the women. |
| SOCIAL SERVICES | The action, which takes place in collaboration with the three founding Municipalities of EGT GO, intends to create a network of cross-border social services for the population of the EGTC area, in particular for the vulnerable groups. The result of the action will be a cross-border protocol between the | A permanent cross-border working group consisting of staff of the three Municipalities was set up | Basic and in-depth training will be organized for the operators of the social services of the three cities. In the three Municipalities three info points will be created, where citizens can receive information on existing services throughout the area and how they will be able to use them. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | three Municipalities, which will provide for the joint provision of social services, involving all the bodies managing social services and private associations. | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Working Groups successfully carried out the programming phase, creating the necessary fora and starting the common work. Some of the services will be fully cross-border and some of them carried out only on one side of the border. The implementation phase of all these new health-care services offered to the population still has not been fully carried out, implemented and tested.

In terms of applying the EU Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare it is interesting to bring examples from the two Reports published on this matter.⁴ The Directive tackles the conditions under which a patient may travel to another EU country to receive medical care and reimbursement. It covers healthcare costs, as well as the prescription and delivery of medications and medical devices. The Directive is meant to cover planned health interventions. In this sense, the reports show that the mobility of patients is rather low with the exception of a few countries (e.g. France and Finland). Italy and Slovenia are not in the countries where the patients would frequently use this kind of health-care services. The reports show though, on the cases where there was some mobility of patients, that geographical and cultural proximity are determining factors in choosing to use cross-border healthcare services. The key issues then remain reimbursements by the healthcare system and that might need to be carried by the patients to access service in another country. These are valuable indications in order to ensure proper information to potential patients of the health ITI project in the cross-border area and facilitate the access to highly innovative shared services and joint medical teams in different expertise areas (autism, mental health, pregnancy and childbirth, social services). Stemming from the above, in comparison with the results of

⁴ REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL The first one from year 2015: Commission Report on the operation of Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, COM/2015/0421 final and the second one from year 2018: REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the operation of Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, COM/2018/651 final

the two mentioned Reports, it is positive that the authorities treating financial claims are involved in the project (national sanitary system) and the cooperation is going on in a geographically homogeneous area.

The ITI projects were chosen for their potential to be put in place rather early during the Programme implementation. After the initial delay and methodological issues that had to be solved, now they are showing their initial results, both in terms of being in their core phase of deep activities implementation and in terms of achievement of indicators.

All in all, there is a potential for a positive contribution on Programme indicators and on the Programme's overall objectives, even beyond the programming period if the infrastructure foreseen in the first project and the services set up in the second one are intensely used by the local inhabitants.

4. Survey - Analysis of the outcomes

Following requests raised in May by the Monitoring Committee through and according to the Methodological Note of this Report, a survey for the beneficiaries of the Programme has been prepared and launched (see Annex 2) in mid-December, 2018, and - following a few recalls - closed for participation in late January 2019.

The survey has been implemented through a questionnaire, composed of a series of scale/rank questions to which it is possible to respond through a scale of values from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) based on the different level of satisfaction. Beneficiaries have been invited to reply to the different questions as follows: *"Please rate your level of satisfaction on a range from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)"*.

The questionnaire covered the following items: Programme calls (time frame, accessibility to information sources, clearness of documents, friendliness of procedures, efficiency of supporting tools, timing and transparency of the assessment procedures); the overall Programme cooperation and development strategies; information and publicity.

The questionnaire has been delivered through an online platform to a representative sample of beneficiaries. It has been a very user-friendly approach and a questionnaire filling average time of approximately 15 minutes, for a total of 11 questions.

The survey targeted a statistically representative sample of beneficiaries. Sampling methodologies supported in dividing the relevant population (in the specific case the beneficiaries of the OP Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020) into different groups because of their different typology according to: public and private nature (also adding a specific typology consisting in research center/university, due to the relevance of those entities for the Programme), their role as lead partner or project partner; nationality, coverage of the whole Programme area; details regarding the administrative level of the public beneficiaries and the legal status of private beneficiaries; Programme priority axis financing the single projects.

The sample was finally made up of 45 beneficiaries - 24 Italian, 20 Slovenian, GECT - involving all the 29 standard projects' lead partners and other 16 project partners:

- 17 public entities (7 Public administration region/municipality, 10 other public bodies);
- 10 private entities (ltd. Companies, cooperative companies);
- 18 research centers/universities.

Participation could have been more satisfactory. However, the sample is anyhow statistically representative. The sampling identified an overall number of 27 respondent beneficiaries, which represent approximately 18% of the total OP beneficiaries so far.

Different typology of beneficiaries, from the perspective of the sectorial nature and nationality is highlighted in the following graphics.

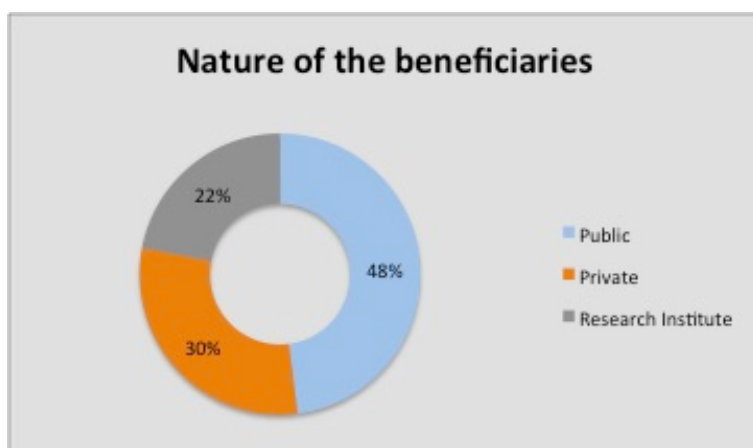
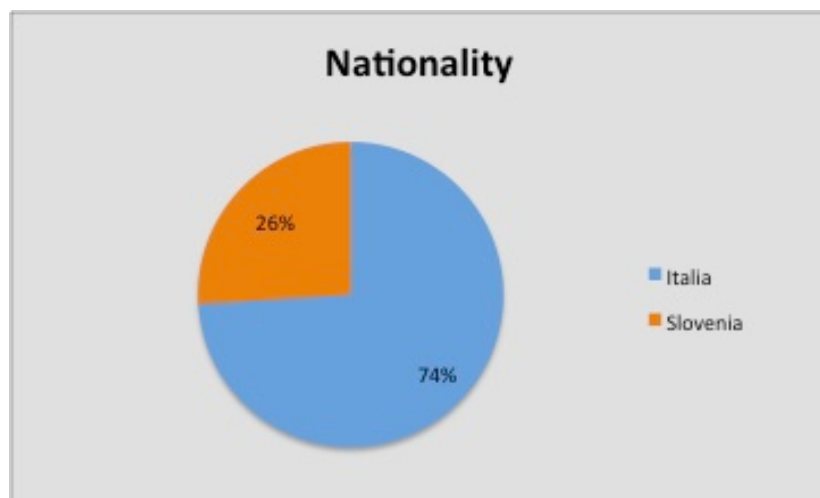


Figure n. 1. Participation rates to the survey per nature (public, private, universities/research centers) of beneficiaries

Figure n. 1 shows beneficiaries' participation by their public/private status, considering

as a separate typology universities and research centers or agencies. This according to the relevance of universities, research centers, research agencies or similar bodies in the mainstream of the Programme. Collected data show a major participation of public actors, compared to the other typologies of beneficiaries involved.

Figure n. 2. Survey Participation rates per nationality of beneficiaries

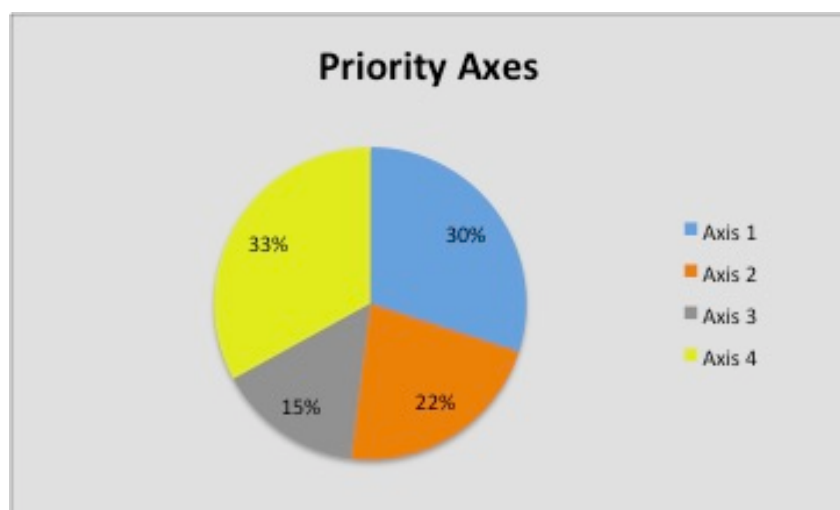


Looking at Figure n. 2, we can see that almost three-quarters of the participants represent Italian institutions, while the remaining 26% is Slovenian.

Participation has been also analyzed according to the source of co-financing: more

in detail, Figure n. 3 provides evidence of the single OP Priority Axis supporting beneficiaries' projects. In this perspective, Figure n.3 reveals different participation rates per Priority Axis, but at the same time an overall good coverage of the four OP Axis in the survey.

Figure n. 3. Survey Participation rates per financing Axis



Considering the ensemble of the questionnaire, what emerges from the survey is an overall positive feedback, although a careful consideration of the negative ones is surely recommended. Going more in details of the different questions, we can analyze

the specific trends.

The first set of questions has been devoted to gather information about the calls, in terms of timing, publicity and clarity.

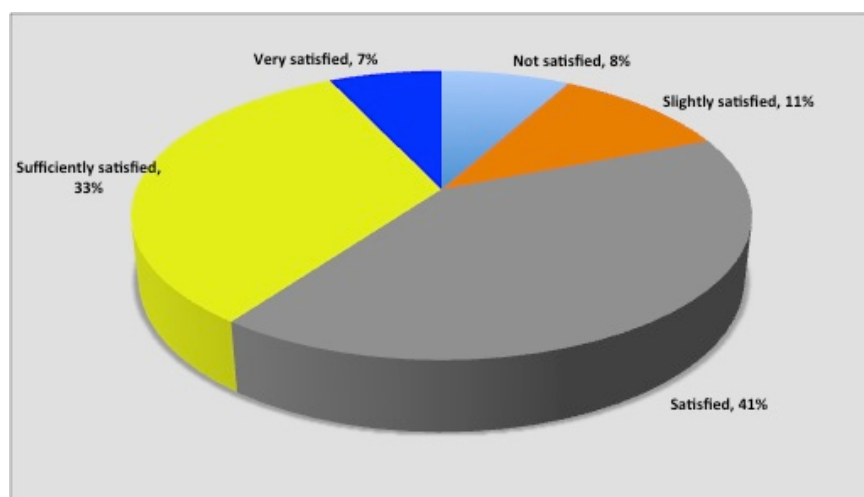


Figure n. 4. Question 1 *How do you evaluate the publication timing of the calls?*

40% of the participants replied with a high score (above average) and only 19% with a low score (below average). Counting the average score into the high score, 81% of the survey participants are satisfied, at different degree, with the timing of the call.

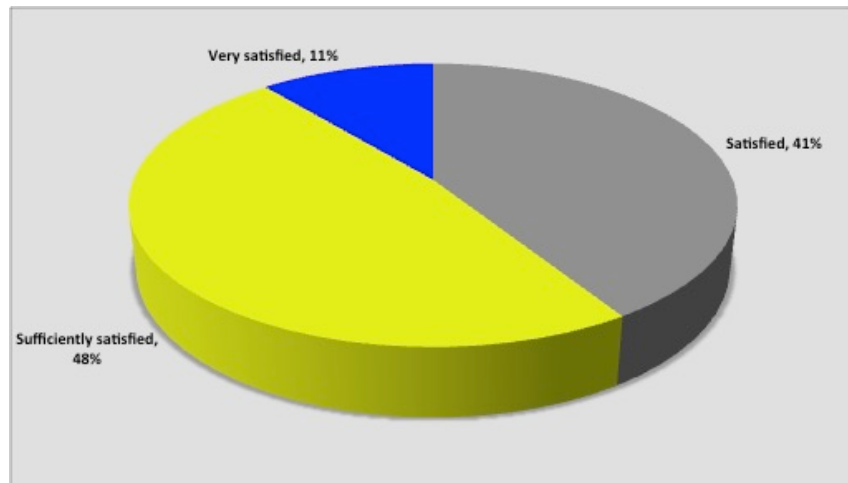


Figure n. 5. Question 2 *How do you evaluate the accessibility to information sources on the publicity of the calls?* Compared to Question 1, here the picture is even more optimistic: 59% of the participants replied with a very high score (above

average) and only 41% with a lower score (average). There were no scores given below average, bringing us to the conclusion that the information was accessible.

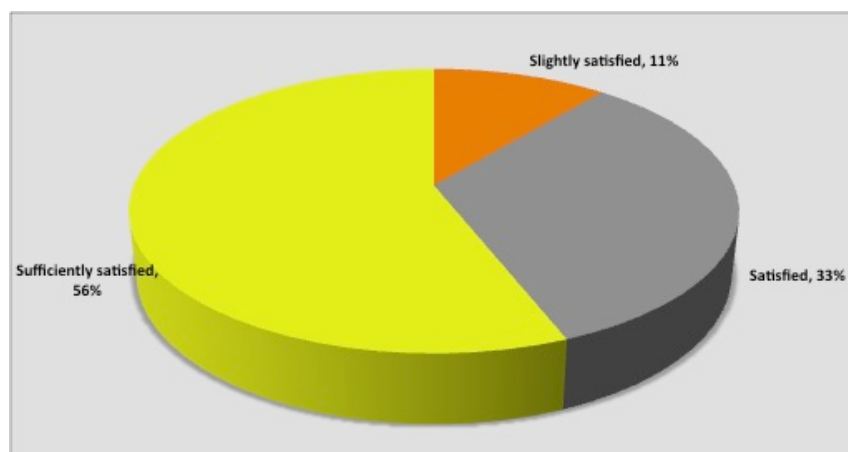


Figure n. 6. Question 3 *How do you evaluate the clarity in the formulation of the calls?*

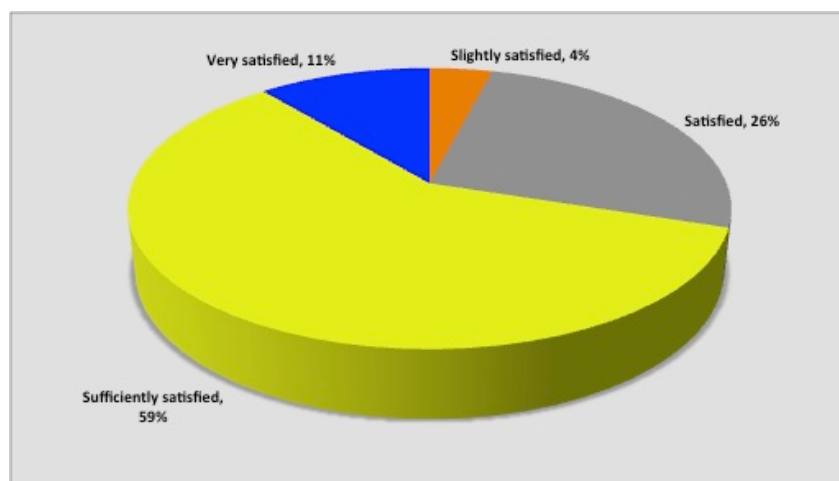
In this question, there is a concentration around the average: the highest and

lowest scores were not assigned, while 56% of the participants replied with a higher score (above average) and only 11% with a lower score (below average). Counting the average score into the high score, 89% of the survey participants are satisfied with the clarity of the calls.

It must be stressed out that a relevant percentage of respondents choosing an average satisfaction option, although it indicates a positive evaluation, represents a need to carefully check the quality level of procedures, information, documentation.

The second step of the questionnaire has been dedicated to Programme information and publicity, in order to receive feedback regarding information/communication activities and tools and awareness raising activities strengthening the capacities of the beneficiaries (and even those of potential ones in the wide public) to shape quality projects and to receive updated and detailed information about the Programme and its granting opportunities.

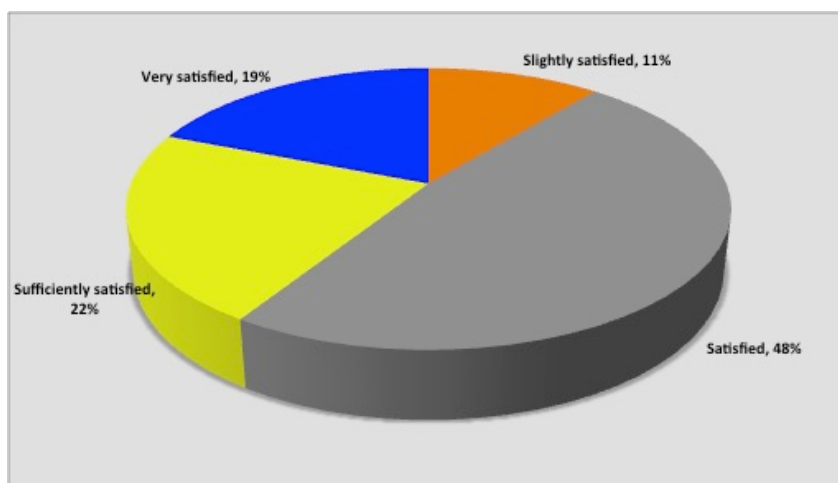
Figure n. 7. Question 4 *How do you evaluate Programme information and communication activities (public meetings, info days, workshops, manuals, website, FAQ) for the formulations of quality projects?*



70% of the participants replied with a high score (above average) and only 4% with a low score (below average). The lowest score was never assigned. Counting the average score into the high score, 96% of

the survey participants were satisfied with the Programme information and communication activities.

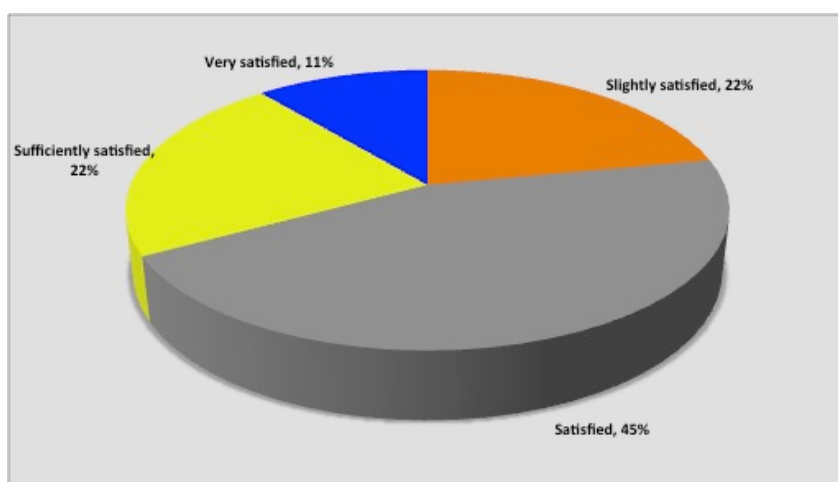
Figure n. 8. Question 5 *How do you evaluate the clarity of the Programme information tools for the activation of project information and communication measures (call, manuals, logos, visual identity, project web site)?*



41% of the participants replied with a high score (above average) and only 11% with a low score (below average). The lowest score was not chosen by any of the participants. Counting the average score into the high score, 89% of the survey

participants are satisfied with the clarity of the Programme information tools.

Figure n. 9. Question 6 *How do you evaluate Programmes awareness raising activities devoted to the wide public (open days, promotion materials, publications, web site, social media - Twitter)?*



33% of the participants replied with a high score (above average) and only 22% with a low score (below average). Nobody chose the lowest possible score. Counting the average score into the high score, 78% of

the survey participants are satisfied with the awareness raising activities devoted to the open public.

The following part of the survey tackled issues regarding procedures and tools supporting beneficiaries' participation to the Calls.

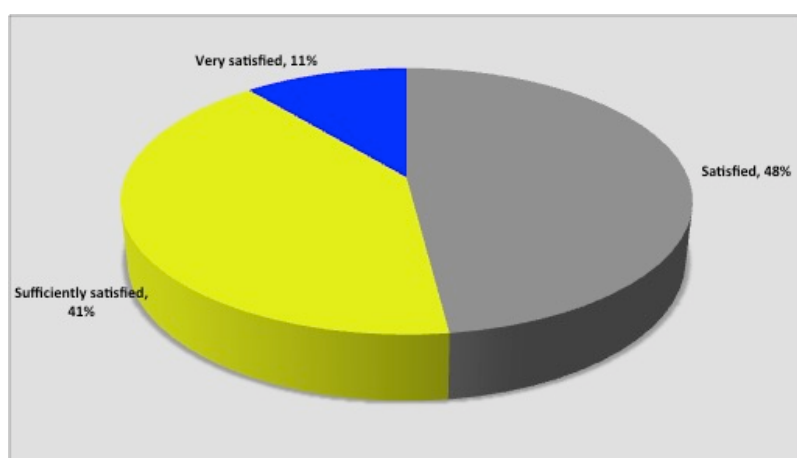
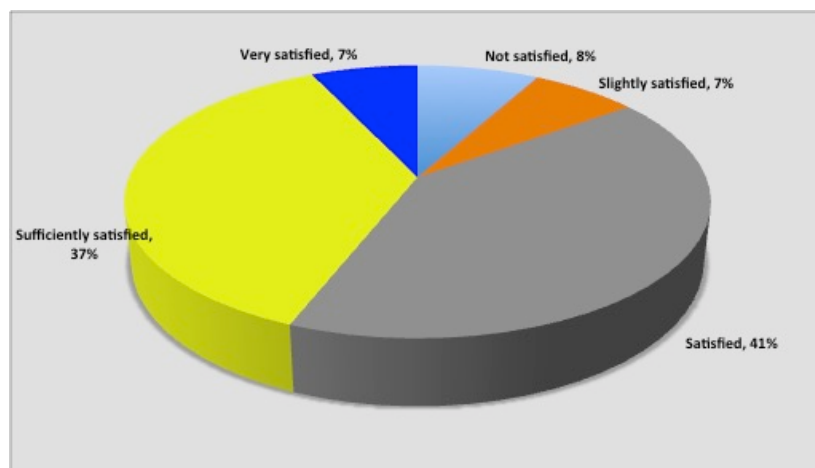


Figure n. 10. Question 7 *How do you evaluate the clarity in the tendering procedures?*

There is a very positive feedback to this question: nobody of the participants chose the two lowest scores:

52% of the participants replied with a very high score (above average). Counting the average score into the high score, all of the survey participants found tendering procedures clear.

Figure n. 11. Question 8 *How do you evaluate the information and operational support tools for participation to the calls?*



There is a concentration on the average satisfaction and a positive tendency: 44% of the participants replied with a very high score (above average) and only 15% with a low score (below average). Counting the average score into the high score, 75% of the

survey participants are satisfied with the operational support tools for the participation to the calls.

A further slot of questions were meant to collect information about the level of beneficiaries' satisfaction regarding selection procedures, particularly from the perspective of timing and transparency.

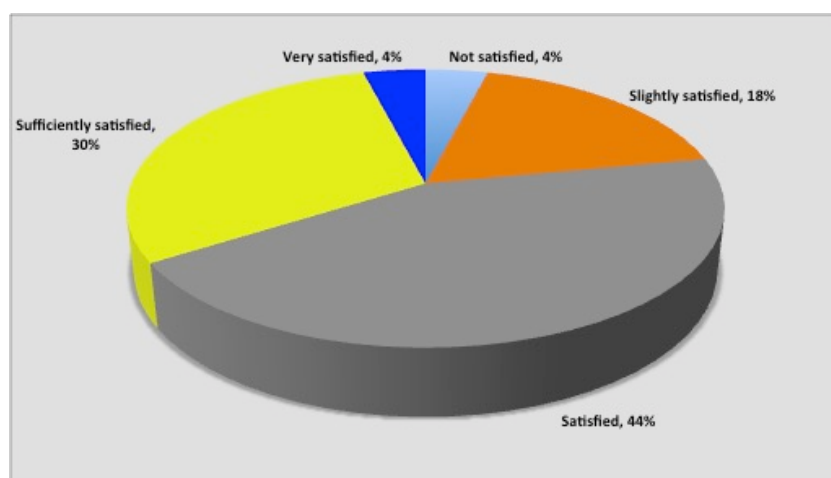


Figure n. 12. Question 9 *How do you evaluate the timing of the selection procedures?*

34% of the participants replied with a very high score (above average) and only 22% with a low score (below average). Counting the average score into the high score, 78% of the survey participants are satisfied

with the timing of the selection procedures.

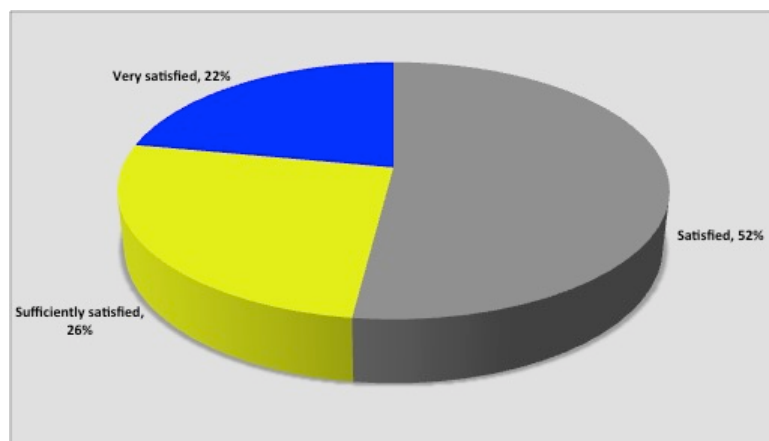


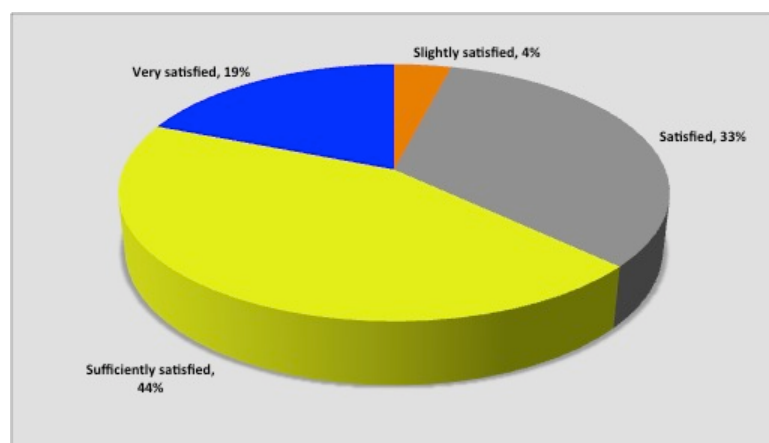
Figure n. 13. Question 10 *How do you evaluate the transparency of the selection procedures?*

The feedback is very positive, as no participant chose the lower two scores: 48% of the participants replied with a very high score (above average) and 52% with an average score.

Last scale/rank question of the questionnaire targeted

Programme implementation, with the specific purpose of receiving a feedback on the added value of Programme support for the achievement of broader cooperation and development objectives.

Figure n. 14. Question 11 *How do you evaluate the contribution received by the Programme with respect to the overall cooperation and development strategies in which your project has been included?*



A further analysis of data collected is shown in Annex 1.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

In all and comparing the findings out of the First Extensive Evaluation Report, it is noted that most of the delays detailed in the previous report have been overcome.

As for first standard projects, there are good first results and good coverage of the EU 2020 strategy. Results of strategic projects are not assessed because they are still at a

early stage. The gap analysis on indicators has been a useful instrument to address the remaining Programme activities and it is worth deepening.

The main difficulties related to the e- system. The functioning of monitoring system is a challenge to be tackled. There has been a constant, pressive and frequent dialogue of the MA/JS with the service provider, Insiel, with the involvement also of the FLCs. The main bottleneck resulted for activities of controllers. For some beneficiaries, delays in validation/certification of expenditures caused by errors/failures of the e-system and consequent delayed repaying back to beneficiaries could potentially cause a temporary negative cash flow. Some positive changes were made in the FRONT-END section. In order to make steps forward, Programme authorities invited Insiel representatives to Programme MC meetings, weekly held meetings with the provider and invested a lot of effort in supporting the path to additional needed changes, as well as invested a lot in training all users of the system. Programme authorities will need to continue ensuring the necessary support to close this difficult phase as soon as possible and facilitate a smooth implementation and closure of the projects.

The main findings out of the **survey** to beneficiaries is that there is a general satisfaction with the Programme by beneficiaries but rather scarce level of participation of beneficiaries to these kind of surveys launched at Programme level. The main problems highlighted by beneficiaries are related to the e-system platform, to bad quality of translations, to difficulties in integrating FLC procedures in the e-system, which caused the need to repeat operations on paper because of technical problems on the e-system.

The first steps towards **capitalization** have been made for more mature topics, with the support of Interact. By entering in the mature phase, the Programme might increase this kind of activities and work together with other Interreg programmes and macro-regional strategies. There are still potentials in both sectoral or cross-sectoral communication and capitalization activities, possibly by an integration by projects, on sectoral and cross-sectoral integration within the final report of each project. A significant step in this direction will be the Annual Event on capitalization, foreseen in year 2019.

As for **simplification**, a more-friendly FRONT-END e-system to simplify the application procedure for the strategic projects has been put in place and a series of meetings before signing the Subsidy Contracts shall facilitate projects starting.

Table 12. Resume of recommendations

| Topic | First Report Recommendations (I Report covers the period Dec 2015-July 2017) | Follow up of Second Report and Recommendations (recomandations are highlighted in bold) (II Report covers the period Aug 2017-Dec 2018) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Programme management | Programme management structures must continue to satisfy all the requirements according to the Common Provision Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, particularly in terms of adequate capacities and staffing. Decision making processes must continue | Programme implementation (preparation, approval and launching of two calls for strategic projects - call n. 5/2018 and call n.6/2018 - and preparation and approval of the last call for standard projects - call n. 7/2019) proved to keep complying with all the |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | to be clear and transparent. | requirements according to the Common Provision Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, also in terms of clarity and transparency (3 MCs, 11 written procedures, Working groups, bilateral group meetings for call 7/2019). |
| | Effectiveness of procedures, mostly those involving stakeholders and beneficiaries, must be fine-tuned with the timing of Programme implementation, in order to avoid delays. | <p>The IT system is still representing the main issue to be managed by the Programme, affecting the reporting of standard projects, the first level control system, as well the second level control, the system does not guarantee the audit trail in general the timely delivery of services and information. Improvement is needed.</p> <p>In order to avoid delays, lengthy reporting and any misunderstanding, the Programme granted a specific guidance to project partners by organising one-to-one meetings right after approval, at the start of the project implementation. Dedicated workshops on the use of the on line reporting system were organized, targeting the beneficiaries. Improvement must be realised in the progress of Programme implementation.</p> <p>Capacity building action to support the understanding and dissemination of practices fostering effectiveness (e.g. simplified cost options) is to be considered appropriate and recommended.</p> |
| Progress of programme implementation | <p>Indicators system must be checked when requested/allowed to support the efficient monitoring of the Programme. A deeper reasoning should be done about milestones and target values for 2018 and 2023. As outcome of the first standard call, in some cases it seems to be a relevant disproportion among some of the targets and the capacity of the current projects to reach them, even in a future perspective.</p> <p>Tools and procedures must continue in the effort of reducing the administrative burden of applicants and beneficiaries, fine-tuning online procedures.</p> <p>Decision making/selection procedures must be optimised in order to avoid delays or time extensions in the granting of resources.</p> <p>Future calls must focus on those targets and indicators that need a stronger</p> | <p>In the process of preparation and adoption of the last call for standard projects, a specific effort has been made on indicators, in the light of reducing gaps with final targets, following a specific gap analysis.</p> <p>In the process of defining and approving the calls, the Monitoring Committee has progressively focused on the contribution of co-financed activities to indicators. A process of increasing focus, however, that went hand in hand with the reduction of available resources. This has meant that many resources have been committed and expenses with less impact on the indicators and that the residual resources must necessarily be much more targeted towards those indicators.</p> <p>The Programme should have been more demanding before.</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | effort to be satisfied/reached. | Gap analysis on indicators shows an overall gaps reduction & tackling. It is therefore recommended to monitor the follow-up of current and future projects regarding their focus on indicators. |
| | Decision making/selection criteria and procedures must continue to be clear and transparent, with a regular update of the information channels. Articulation and complexity of selection procedures can be simplified, even with the objectives of avoiding delays, keeping the same quality level. | Assessment procedure has been revised to meet recommendations asking for simplification and time reduction. |
| | Projects successfully meeting the quality requirements of the first call, which could not be eligible for the allocated funding, must be valorised as a good source of support to reach the indicators in an economic and timely manner. | The Programme adopted different solutions by publishing new calls. |
| Communication strategy | <p>Programme communication must continue to ensure coherence with EU rationale and guidelines. Considering that communication competences and responsibilities are shared among different actors an efficient coordination must be put in place.</p> <p>Actions at local level in the Programme area must satisfy the high expectations of stakeholders, applicants and beneficiaries about the quality and frequency of meetings/events.</p> | <p>Compared to findings from the First Report, there was a positive step forward in the sense that the shift from the preparation phase to the mature phase was successfully obtained. The number of events for the stakeholders increased, the events were more focused on the stakeholders' needs.</p> <p>There is still potential to work on capitalisation activities and in targeted promotion on Programme's results and for specific groups (e.g. young public).</p> |
| Description of I.T.I. as for implementation of I.T.I. principles included in the Programme | <p>I.T.I. organisation and management must continue to ensure coherence with the EU regulations and guidelines, in the light of supporting the implementation of Programme.</p> <p>Result and output indicators appear not easy to be fully satisfied in a 2018 perspective, therefore need to be regularly monitored and eventually desirably revised.</p> | <p>The strongly innovative element is represented by the management structure.</p> <p>This pilot experience on IB governance is a unique case among Cooperation Programmes. Such a unicity does not allow comparisons and benchmarking and can be properly evaluated more in an outcome/final perspective than in output/medium term one. At the current implementation stage, ITI projects show patterns of improved cross border cooperation, which naturally need to evolve in stable dynamics.</p> <p>On the other hand, the sole beneficiary as a collector of extra resources from other sources seems still to be an objective to be reached. In this perspective, there are still open questions that need to be answered: if</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | the IB governance of an ITI carried out by an EGTC is an effective management tool in the Cooperation Programme filling up also the linguistic gaps that could affect the results of joint activities. |
|--|--|--|

ANNEX 1 - Survey to beneficiaries

The survey was available for the beneficiaries in Italian and in Slovene.

Personal data

Public beneficiary

- Municipality
- Region/Province
- Agency/Public body
- Other (Specificare/specify)

Private beneficiary

- Ltd. company
- Cooperative company
- Other (Specificare/Specify)

Research Centre/University

- University
- Research Centre/Institute/Science and/or Technology Park

Location

Italy

- NUTSII Region
- NUTSIII Province/Municipality

Slovenia

- NUTSII Region
- NUTSIII Region
- Municipality

Financial data

Overall cofinancing of the project from the Programme (For Italians distinguish national cofinancing/ERDF)

€

Financing Priority Axis

- Axis 1
- Axis 2
- Axis 3
- Axis 4

*Please rate your level of satisfaction on a range from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)
 1 very dissatisfied, 2 somewhat dissatisfied, 3 satisfied, 4 somewhat satisfied, 5 very satisfied*

Information about the Calls

How do you evaluate the publication timing of the calls?

How do you evaluate the accessibility to information sources on the publicity of the calls?

How do you evaluate the clarity in the formulation of the calls?

Programme information and publicity

How do you evaluate Programme information and communication activities (public meetings, info days, workshops, manuals, website, FAQ) for the formulations of quality projects?

How do you evaluate the clarity of the Programme information tools for the activation of project information and communication measures?

How do you evaluate Programmes awareness raising activities devoted to the wide public (open days, promotion materials, publications, web site, social media - Twitter)?

Participation in the Calls

How do you evaluate the clarity in the tendering procedures?

How do you evaluate the information and operational support tools for participation to the calls?

Selection procedures

How do you evaluate the timing of the selection procedures?

How do you evaluate the transparency of the selection procedures?

Implementation

How do you evaluate the contribution received by the Programme with respect to the overall cooperation and development strategies in which your project has been included?

Programming and Management

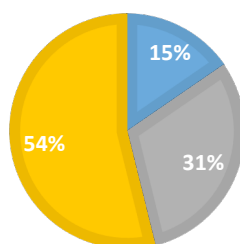
*Please report any suggestion, proposal or critical remark with respect to the modalities, objectives and timing of the programming and/or management of the Programme.
 maximum of 500 characters*

Please find following the outcomes according the different types of beneficiaries.

Public actors

Q 1 : HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE PUBLICATION TIMING OF THE CALLS?

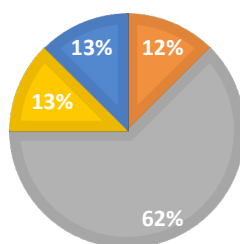
- 1 per nulla soddisfatto
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- 3 soddisfatto
- 4 abbastanza soddisfatto
- 5 molto soddisfatto



Private actors

Q 1 : HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE PUBLICATION TIMING OF THE CALLS?

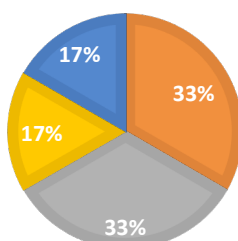
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Research centres/Universities

Q 1 : HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE PUBLICATION TIMING OF THE CALLS?

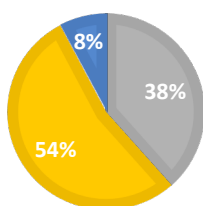
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Public actors

Q 2: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION SOURCES ON THE PUBLICITY OF THE CALLS?

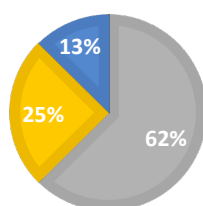
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Private actors

**Q 2: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE
ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION SOURCES ON
THE PUBLICITY OF THE CALLS?**

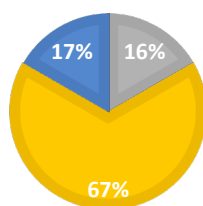
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Research centres/Universities

**Q 2: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE
ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION SOURCES ON
THE PUBLICITY OF THE CALLS?**

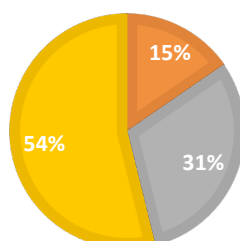
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Public actors

Q 3: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CLARITY IN THE FORMULATION OF THE CALLS?

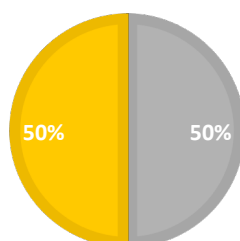
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Private actors

Q 3: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CLARITY IN THE FORMULATION OF THE CALLS?

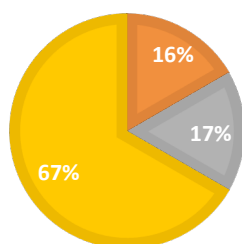
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Research centres/Universities

Q 3: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CLARITY IN THE FORMULATION OF THE CALLS?

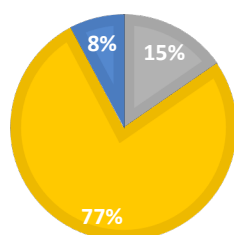
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- 4 abbastanza soddisfatto
- 5 molto soddisfatto



Public actors

Q 4: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE PROGRAMME INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES (PUBLIC MEETINGS, INFO DAYS, WORKSHOPS, MANUALS, WEBSITE, FAQ) FOR THE FORMULATIONS OF QUALITY PROJECTS?

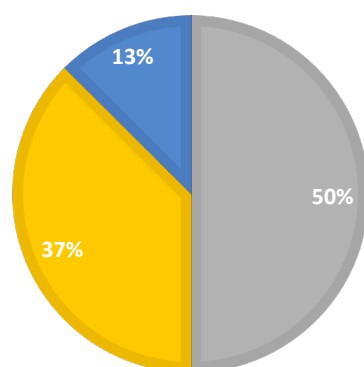
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- 3 soddisfatto
- 4 abbastanza soddisfatto
- 5 molto soddisfatto



Private actors

**Q 4: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE PROGRAMME
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES
(PUBLIC MEETINGS, INFO DAYS, WORKSHOPS,
MANUALS, WEBSITE, FAQ) FOR THE FORMULATIONS
OF QUALITY PROJECTS?**

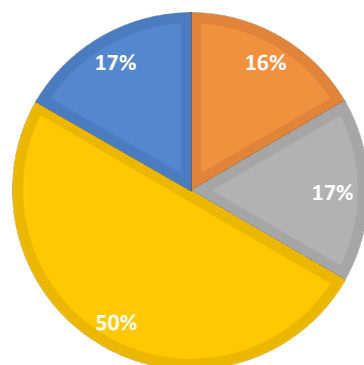
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4 abbastanza soddisfatto 5 molto soddisfatto



Research centres/Universities

**Q 4: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE PROGRAMME
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES
(PUBLIC MEETINGS, INFO DAYS, WORKSHOPS,
MANUALS, WEBSITE, FAQ) FOR THE FORMULATIONS
OF QUALITY PROJECTS?**

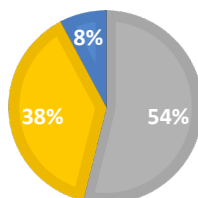
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4 abbastanza soddisfatto 5 molto soddisfatto



Public actors

Q 5: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CLARITY OF THE PROGRAMME INFORMATION TOOLS FOR THE ACTIVATION OF PROJECT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MEASURES (CALL, MANUALS, LOGOS, VISUAL IDENTITY, PROJECT WEB SITE)?

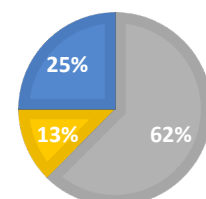
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Private actors

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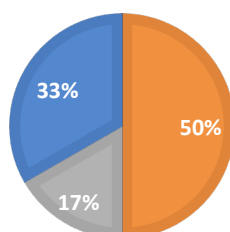
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Research centres/Universities

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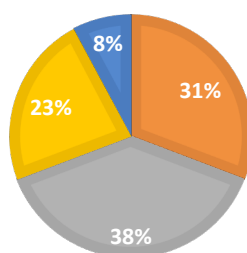
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Public actors

Q 6: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE PROGRAMMES AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES DEVOTED TO THE WIDE PUBLIC (OPEN DAYS, PROMOTION MATERIALS, PUBLICATIONS, WEB SITE, SOCIAL MEDIA - TWITTER)?

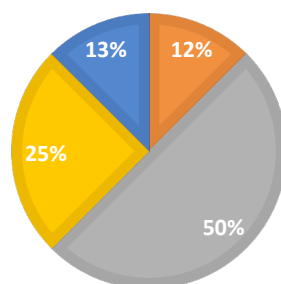
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Private actors

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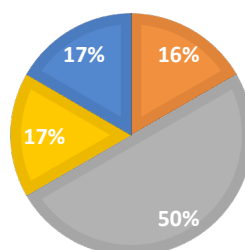
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Research centres/Universities

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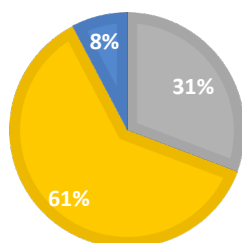
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Public actors

Q 7: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CLARITY IN THE TENDERING PROCEDURES?

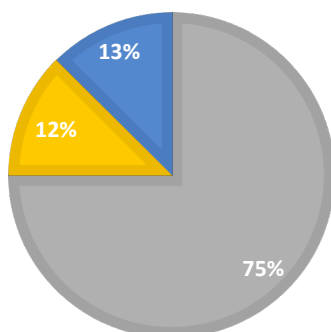
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Private actors

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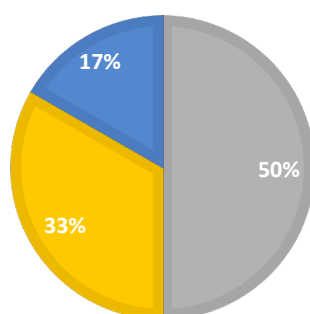
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Research centres/Universities

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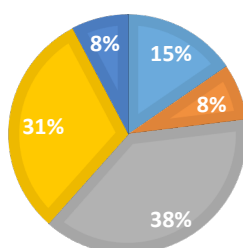
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Public actors

Q 8: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE INFORMATION AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION TO THE CALLS?

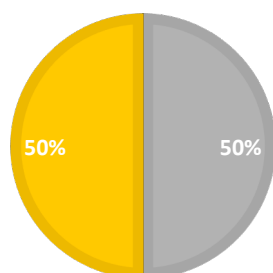
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Private actors

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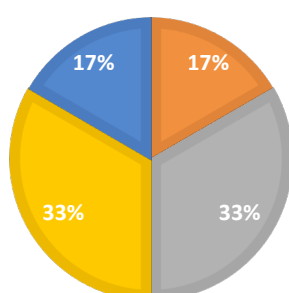
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Research centres/Universities

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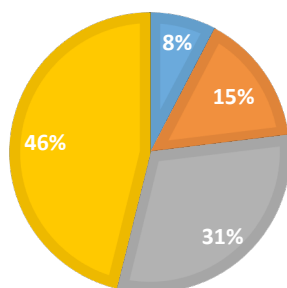
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Public actors

Q 9: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE TIMING OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES?

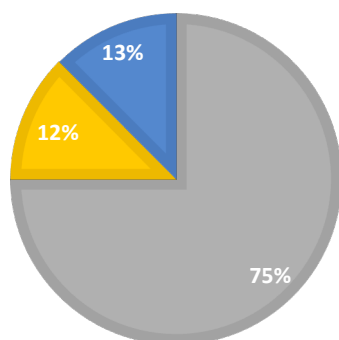
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Private actors

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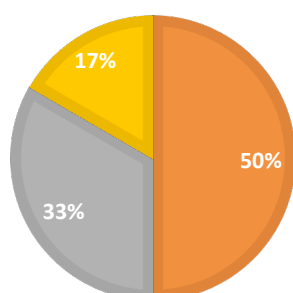
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Research centres/Universities

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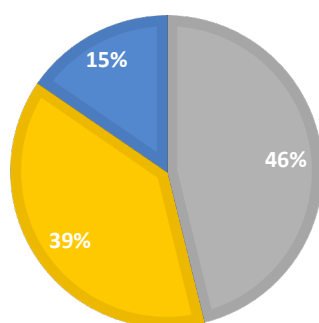
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Public actors

Q 10: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES?

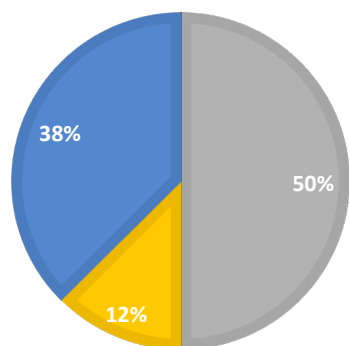
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Private actors

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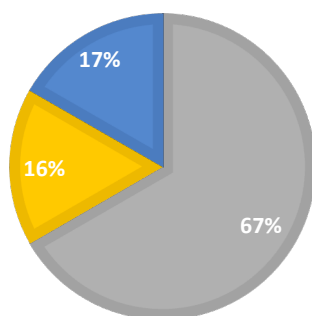
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Research centres/Universities

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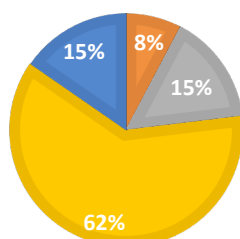
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Public actors

Q 11: HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED BY THE PROGRAMME WITH RESPECT TO THE OVERALL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN WHICH YOUR PROJECT HAS BEEN INCLUDED?

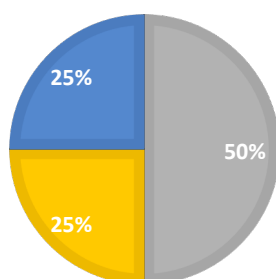
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