

Interreg
Italia-Slovenija



Cofinanziato
dall'Unione europea
Sofinanciata
Evropska unija

INTERREG VI-A
ITALY – SLOVENIA
2021-2027

Citizen's Summary

SYNTHESIS

With a budget of approximately EUR 88.6 million, the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Cooperation Programme will implement its strategy in line with EU Cohesion Policy Objectives for the period 2021-2027, specifically:

- PO1 "A more competitive and smarter Europe"
- PO2 "A greener Europe"
- PO4 "A more social and inclusive Europe"
- ISO1 "Interreg Specific Objective for better cooperation governance"

The Programme will be developed in continuity with the previous programming period 2014-2020, during which 63 projects were financed in the fields of competitiveness, research and innovation, protection and enhancement of cultural and natural resources and cross-border services.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAMME AREA

The Programme area extends over a total surface of 19,841 km² and has a total population of approximately 3 million inhabitants. It covers 5 Italian NUTS 3 regions (Venice, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia and Trieste) and 5 Slovenian NUTS 3 regions (Primorsko-notranjska, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška). Overall, on NUTS 2 level on the Italian side, the regions involved are those of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, while for the Slovenian side Slovene Western and Eastern Cohesion regions.

The Programme area encompasses Alpine mountainous landscapes and foothills, hills and plains, river basin areas, seashore lagoon landscapes, Karst landscapes and more than 320 Km of coast on the Adriatic Sea.

The Programme area comprises urban areas as Trieste, Udine, Gorizia, Ljubljana, Pordenone, Venice, conurbation Koper-Izola-Piran, Nova Gorica, Kranj and Postojna and several urban centers located in relatively short distances from each other. There is close proximity between the cities of Trieste and Koper on the coast, in the southern part of the cross-border area and the functional urban area in Goriška (Nova Gorica, Gorizia, and Šempeter-Vrtojba), where the EGTC GO is operating since 2011.

A map of the Programme area is provided down below:



PROGRAMME MISSION AND PRIORITIES

Cohesion Policy contributes to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion and to correcting imbalances between countries and regions. In this framework, the Interreg VI-A Italy – Slovenia Programme aims to implement solutions to address territorial challenges in the fields of research and innovation, climate change, circular economy, natural and cultural resources, tourism and a better cooperation governance.

The mission of the Programme is:

“Enhanced cross-border cooperation for improving the quality of life of the population, preserving and promoting cultural and natural heritage and enhancing the climate neutrality of the Programme area through sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth”.

The financial allocation on the Programme amounts to a total of € 88.623.329 (€ 70.898.662 provided by ERDF and € 17.724.667 national public and private co-financing). The table provided below presents the financial breakdown and types of projects to be supported under Policy Objectives and Specific Objectives identified to address the existent needs and challenges in the Programme area:

Policy Objective	Specific Objective	Financial breakdown ¹	%	Types of projects ²
PO 1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe	SO 1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	8.048.831 €	10%	standard and capitalisation projects
PO 2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe	SO 2.4 - Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	11.678.401 €	14%	standard and capitalisation projects
	SO 2.6 - Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy	6.617.760 €	8%	standard and capitalisation projects
	SO 2.7 - Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution	12.714.180 €	15%	standard and capitalisation projects, strategic project (POSEIDONE)
PO 4 - A more social and inclusive Europe	SO 4.6 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	37.316.563 €	45%	standard and capitalisation projects, strategic projects (ADRIONCYCLETOUR and KRAS-CARSO II), Small Project Fund (SPF) managed by EGTC GO
ISO 1 - Better Cooperation Governance	ISO 1 (b) - Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions	4.574.806 €	6%	standard and capitalisation projects
	ISO 1 (c) - Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions	1.875.000 €	2%	people-to-people projects

¹ Resources available for projects, including ERDF and national contribution, net of Technical Assistance

² More details about strategic projects are provided in the section "Operations of Strategic Importance"

Policy Objective 1 is dedicated to a more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity. The programme will address this objective by allocating around **EUR 8 million** on SO 1.1.

Specific Objective 1.1: “Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies”

In terms of R&D, the Programme area is characterized by a low level of expenditure and a scarce inclination to collaboration in the processes' innovation. Moreover, the majority of enterprises in the area lack competitiveness due to their relatively small size and low capacity to apply available research and technology to develop new products and services.

To tackle these issues the Programme will promote cooperation among R&D centres and enterprises, facilitating technological transfer to SMEs, fostering the creation of cross-border networks and the capitalisation of R&D results within a new integrated framework taking advantage of common S3 priorities.

The action identified to address these objectives is “**Promoting a cross-border ecosystem for R&D and strengthening the innovation capacities of local actors**”, and the exemplary actions are:

- Supporting the implementation of joint pilot actions to foster innovation processes through the exploitation of new advanced technologies (e.g., nanotech, biotech, quantum tech)
- Developing partnerships through the approach of the quadruple helix -public bodies, enterprises, research centres and civil society- in order to stimulate knowledge sharing, open innovation strategies and the joint development of new product and services, mainly in the field of eco-innovation
- Promoting technology transfer processes also through the capitalisation of past experiences and the synergy with Horizon Europe valorising non-financed Seal of Excellence projects (rif. Art. 73.4 CPR)
- Building partnerships among clusters / business networks, innovation poles, business acceleration providers (incubators, accelerators) and other actors to improve their positioning (and that of the companies involved) in existing or new global value chains, taking into consideration common specialisation areas

Planned achievements:

At least **12 organisations** from the two sides of the border still cooperating in the field of R&D after projects completion

At least **5 new solutions** adopted for R&D

Key target groups:

Public institutions and agencies, academic and education institutions, training organisations, research centers, private companies, entrepreneur and business support organizations, innovation agencies, business clusters, civil society organizations.

Policy Objective 2 is dedicated to a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility. The programme will address this objective by allocating around **EUR 31 million** on Specific Objectives 2.4 related to climate change, 2.6 related to circular economy and 2.7 related to biodiversity (€11,6m, €6,6m and €12,7m respectively)

Specific Objective 2.4: “Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account ecosystem based approaches”

In terms of **climate change**, the challenges in the Programme area are vulnerability to floods, increase of the average temperature due to global warming and natural disasters. Thereby, a major need of the territory is to create common specific measures to jointly address climate related challenges.

Thus, the Programme will reinforce actions aimed at adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects on the territory. Such measures may contribute to improving risk prevention and management practices and, consequently, quality of life in the Programme area.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Fostering resilience capacity to climate change and mitigating risks related to natural disasters”**, and the exemplary actions are:

- Application of joint tools to counteract the effects of climate change and extreme events and to improve quality of life in the cross-border space
- Strengthening cross-border cooperation among local authorities to build up integrated risk management systems and joint action plan
- Promoting investments for the development / strengthening / modelling of joint early warning and risk monitoring systems as well as small infrastructures for risk prevention and management, also with bio-engineering techniques
- Promoting active awareness of risks due to anthropogenic changes and related climate changes on local ecosystems (including forest areas), in particular at local communities’ level with the involvement of citizens and schools
- Design of coordinated rescue protocols and actions

Specific Objective 2.6: “Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy”

As for the **circular economy**, the main objective in this regard is to reduce pressure on natural resources of the area. Two major obstacles for the Programme in this regard result from the different governance of water and waste management on the two sides of the border as well as from high infrastructure costs.

To face this challenge, the Programme will support the development of common approaches for capacity building on circular economy and the capitalisation of good practices on sustainable economic activities. It will also promote integrated strategies for waste management and developing innovative technologies to improve resource efficiency.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Developing shared model/solutions for the circular economy”**, and the exemplary actions are:

- Innovative and sustainable solutions for the conversion of production activities from a linear model towards a circular economy model, also capitalising past experiences/good practices
- Exchanges of good practices for the design of new models for the optimization of the use of resources and the diffusion of eco-innovations through the quadruple helix approach
- Developing cross-border services based on ICT solutions in order to increase the efficiency and sustainability of economic activities (logistic, delivery, mobility services, etc.)
- Supporting the creation of experimental supply chains in the context of the circular economy and sustainable food production, using digital technologies and artificial intelligence
- Developing and testing innovative technologies following the concepts of industrial symbiosis and facilitating waste reuse, as well as carbon capture, utilization or storage
- Supporting projects relating to ecosystem services (e.g., pro biodiversity business) and water management

Specific Objective 2.7: “Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution”

Coming to the **protection and preservation of nature**, the Programme area is defined as rich in terms of biodiversity and geodiversity with plenty of animal and plant species, landscapes, including river basins, marine protected areas, natural parks, the unique Karst landscapes and Dolomiti included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The area is also characterised by a high concentration of NATURA 2000 sites. Such richness in natural resources and their fragility leads to the elevated necessity of safeguarding and protecting the area from natural risks and pollution.

Therefore, the Programme will foster shared approaches to management of protected areas, safeguarding and protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, cross-border management of pollution reduction, implementing green and blue infrastructures that can become the basis for the development of sustainable tourism in the area.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Conservation, protection, promotion of the cross-border area natural capital”**, and the exemplary actions are:

- Promoting green and blue infrastructures (for example green urban spaces, protection of ecosystems, development of ecological quality in agriculture, protection and restoration of coastal and marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites)
- Promoting, applying through pilot actions, capitalising joint strategies for the conservation and protection of biodiversity and geodiversity in the cross-border area (through the protection of habitats, the reduction of the presence of invasive species, promotion of protected areas)
- Preserving and restoring the natural capital of the cross-border area and promoting mitigation measures, including carrying out capacity studies and visitor management plans, in order to limit the anthropogenic pressure also linked to tourism, through inclusive actions involving public institutions, businesses, third sector organisations and citizens
- Promoting sustainable spatial planning, including transfer of best practices and pilot actions linked to application of sustainable spatial planning solutions aiming to preserve soil as a natural resource and ensure sustainable land use and landscape management

- Implementation of the strategic project POSEIDONE - Promotion Of greenSEa Infrastructure Devoted to a New Environment

Planned achievements (Policy Objective 2):

At least **11 joint strategies and action plans** adopted and implemented in the fields of climate change and environmental protection

At least **8 organisations** from the two sides of the border still cooperating for risk mitigation after projects completion

At least **2 new solutions** adopted and implemented for circular economy

Key target groups:

Public institutions and agencies, environmental institutions, waste operators, academic and education institutions, research centers, private companies, civil protection bodies and emergency services, rescue organisations, civil society organizations, local action groups and similar.

Policy Objective 4 is dedicated to a more social and inclusive Europe. The programme will address this objective by allocating around **EUR 37 million** on SO 4.6.

Specific Objective 4.6: "Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation"

In terms of **cultural heritage**, the Programme area is very rich and diversified (plenty of tangible and intangible resources; presence of UNESCO protected sites; the Italian and Slovene minorities and other cultural and linguistic identities). Given the richness of cultural and natural assets, **tourism** is one of the leading economic sectors in the Programme area, although recently affected by the pandemic. Since there is an increase in the demand oriented towards an integrated and sustainable offer, the Programme could encourage cross-border tourism in the area by promoting local, natural and cultural heritage. It is therefore important to encourage deeper cooperation in the sector and to exploit synergies with the initiatives linked to European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia to maximize the potential effects on tourism in the whole area.

Thus, taking into account the features of the area, the Programme will support digitalisation of the natural and cultural heritage to make it easily accessible also to disadvantaged groups and to foster the creation of cross-border sustainable offer. It will also support the promotion of linguistic minorities through the development of new services offered by creative industries. Tourism in the area has to become more ethic-oriented and directed to smaller/ less popular destinations: it should focus on the social impact of the financed activities, encourage a greater involvement of host communities in the planning and follow-up of tourism activities and let them benefit from the generated income and services provided (as highlighted by the EC report "Transition Pathway for Tourism", 2022). The Programme will therefore aim at promoting peri-urban and rural areas as tourist destinations supporting an integrated approach (even more relevant after the pandemic) in order to take into

account all related issues such as culture, nature, education, innovation, transport, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Preservation, maintenance and promotion of the cultural heritage, implementation of sustainable and innovative practices in tourism, support to education and training to foster employability and social inclusion”**, and the exemplary actions are:

- Developing integrated tourism products based on the natural and cultural resources of the area (e.g., implementing cultural itineraries based on rural, urban and coastal linkages) and ensuring a variety of services also suitable for less privileged people
- Preservation, revitalisation, maintenance and promotion of common tangible and intangible cultural heritage (e.g., contemporary art, language, folk culture, craftsmanship, historical heritage, architecture, literature, visual arts, music, cuisine, etc.) also in view of the increased well-being of local residents
- Strengthening the linkage between education and tourism/cultural labour market by investing in bilingual and inclusive education and training with particular focus on digital and green skills
- Supporting ECoC 2025 through the Small Project Fund
- Digitalising the tourism and culture sector to help product diversification, to foster recovery after the pandemic, and to make cultural heritage more accessible also to disadvantaged groups of population
- Promoting the linguistic minorities, their culture and identities
- Developing joint strategies, structures and communication platforms for the exchange of experience and know-how in tourism sector
- Contributing to the implementation of macro-regional connections designing / planning /realizing sections of the ADRIONCYCLETOUR cycle route flagship
- Implementation of the strategic project KRAS-CARSO II

Planned achievements:

At least **9 joint strategies and action plans** adopted and implemented with regard to cultural heritage and tourism

At least **91 participants** having completed joint training schemes in the field of culture and tourism

At least **5 new solutions** adopted and implemented in the context of ECoC projects

At least **44 sites/tourist destinations** more reachable

Key target groups:

Public institutions and agencies, academic and education institutions, training organisations, private companies, entrepreneur and business support organizations, DMOs and tourist boards, civil society organizations, local action groups and similar.

Interreg Specific Objective 1 is dedicated to a better cooperation governance. The programme will address this objective by allocating around **EUR 6,5 million** on ISO1.b related to efficient public administration and ISO1.c related to people-to-people actions (€4,6m and €1,9m respectively):

Specific Objective ISO1.b: “Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions”

Cooperation governance in the Programme area is challenging due to legal and administrative obstacles together with the language barrier. Although the area is characterized by strong experience of local and regional actors in territorial governance and cooperation approaches, there is still a need to promote administrative simplification in the processes of policy-making and to focus on the needs of the population including residents, commuters, students and tourists. The Programme, thus will foster the cooperation in the Programme area especially concerning the services for citizens regarding, for example, multimodal transport, healthcare, labour market, especially paying attention to most isolated and remote areas and disadvantaged groups of the population.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Increasing governance capacity to optimize services for citizens”**, and the exemplary action is:

- Joint investments to improve quality and accessibility of public services for the benefit of the most isolated and remote areas (i.e., through telemedicine, e-services for disadvantaged groups etc.) exploiting ICT technologies to share and process data and developing a bilingual offer
- Exchange of experience and data, training programmes to enhance the capacity of public authorities to design and implement integrated cross-border initiatives on specific issues for the Programme area (e.g., inner and maritime mobility, health services, etc.)
- Improving institutional multilevel governance to reduce administrative, cultural and social obstacles and promote common solutions in specific sectors (e.g., labour market, health services)
- Supporting strategies for multimodal accessibility in view of a better and sustainable connectivity among urban, rural and coastal areas, increasing the offer of cross-border public transport services (land, sea) in favor of residents, commuters, students and tourists

Specific Objective ISO1.c: “Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions”

Concerning people-to-people actions, the Programme will address the needs of population focusing on an enhanced participation and involvement of local actors, such as NGOs, environmental, cultural and social associations, schools and other relevant actors for exchanging experience, networking and bringing together citizens and local actors to foster cooperation in the fields of common interest and to overcome existing obstacles.

The action identified to address these objectives is **“Supporting small-scale projects through people-to-people cross-border initiatives”**. The exemplary actions are:

- Supporting all types of joint actions in order to strengthen the cross-border common roots and identity, to build trust and to overcome existing obstacles (language, culture, geography)
- Valorising and promoting local cultural elements, such as traditions, customs, art, local food and wine products, from an economic and touristic point of view by participation in international trade fairs and promotional events, organisation of joint workshops, etc.
- Promoting exchange of experiences, networking, living labs bringing together citizens and local actors to foster cooperation in the field of sport, education, nature, and other fields of common interest
- Integrated digitalisation of the cross-border cultural heritage to increase its accessibility to the public and implementing promotional digital solutions, e.g., digital platforms, apps
- Creating education and training possibilities taking into account the needs of national minorities living in the Programme area, such as materials for schools and universities on history, culture, languages and identity of National Minorities, entrepreneurial training courses, targeted language courses, camps for children and young people, etc.

Planned achievements (Interreg Specific Objective 1):

At least **3 joint strategies and action plans** adopted and implemented aiming to enhance governance capacity

At least **23 persons** from both countries having attended joint actions across borders in view to reduce administrative, cultural and social obstacles

At least **20 organisations** from the two sides of the border still cooperating after projects completion to boost collaboration and mutual trust

Key target groups:

Public institutions and agencies, training organisations, private companies, entrepreneur and business support organizations, civil society organizations, local population, local action groups and similar.

HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

The Interreg Italy-Slovenia 2021-2027 Programme will be committed to ensuring the respect of the horizontal principles, including gender equality, non-discrimination, accessibility and sustainable development throughout preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of projects. The horizontal principles will be taken into account and promoted through:

- identification of specific selection criteria
- dedicated monitoring plan
- possible thematic evaluations

Sustainable development will be promoted taking into account the UN SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle. Accordingly, the selection of operations will take into account the use of Green Public Procurement, nature-based solutions, lifecycle costing criteria, standards going

beyond regulatory requirements, avoiding negative environmental impacts, climate proofing and 'energy efficiency first principle', etc.

The compliance with the "do no significant harm" principle will be ensured during the programme implementation.³

OPERATIONS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The Programme intends to implement the following 3 operations of strategic importance:

1) Strategic project ADRIONCYCLETOUR contributes to define the cycling route running along the coast of the Adriatic Sea in Italy (Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions) and in Slovenia (coastal network), including its main cycle connections to the hinterland areas (inland network), and supports the development, at EUSAIR level, of an innovative and attractive cross-border/transnational tourism product on the ADRIATIC-IONIAN Cycle Route.

- Lead Partner: Central Directorate for Infrastructure and Territory - Transport, Digital and Sustainable Mobility Infrastructure Service of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
- Timetable: from September 1st, 2022; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

2) Strategic project POSEIDONE fosters the sustainable development of the territory on a cross-border scale, promoting the enhancement of the natural environment, the protection of biodiversity, the implementation of green and blue infrastructures and indirectly contributing to the development of sustainable and slow tourism, also capitalising the results of previous Interreg projects.

- Lead Partner: VeGAL – Development Agency of Eastern Veneto
- Timetable: from January 1st, 2023; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

3) Strategic project KRAS - CARSO II contributes to the sustainable development of the cross-border functional area of the Classical Karst, promoting sustainable and slow tourism in full compliance with the environmental and historical assets of the area, capitalising the results of previous Interreg projects.

- Lead Partner: Karst and Brkini Regional Development Agency
- Timetable: from January 1st, 2023; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

SUPPORT TO SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS AND SMALL PROJECT FUNDS

Small projects are foreseen for the Italy-Slovenia Interreg 2021-2027 Programme as a tool that contributes to Programme objectives' achievement and helps overcoming cross-border obstacles to

³ Projects supported by the programme should not lead to significant harm to any of the environmental objectives mentioned in the Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation, including climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, circular economy, pollution prevention and control, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

cooperation by building trust between citizens and institutions, raising awareness, promoting mutual understanding and networking.

The Programme is planning to implement them by supporting:

- **people-to-people cross-border initiatives** aiming at strengthening cross-border cooperation by networking and exchanging experience in the fields of common interest, building trust and strengthening common identity by overcoming language, cultural and geographical obstacles (implemented in the form of small-scale projects ranging from 30.000 to 100.000€ ERDF with the maximum duration of 12 month within Interreg Specific Objective 1. (c)). Relative call for projects can be launched in 2024.
- **The European Capital of Culture 2025** Nova Gorica · Gorizia using bottom-up approach **within a Small Project Fund** (Specific Objective 4.6). The ECoC 2025 aims at creating and implementing a programme of events highlighting the richness of culture, shared heritage and history and bringing benefits to local communities.

The EGTC GO will manage the implementation of the fund as a sole beneficiary via open calls and simplified application procedures. An annual call for projects is foreseen starting from 2022. 2 types of projects are expected:

- short projects with a maximum duration of 12 months and the budget within 30.000€ and 100.000€.
- long projects that exceed the 12 months duration, but end within 24 months. The allocation up to 200.000€.

The Small Project Fund will apply simplified cost options for the projects that do not exceed EUR 100 000 and will also support the use of SCOs for projects with greater budget.