



Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale
Evropski sklad za regionalni razvoj

Integrated Evaluation Plan

Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia

April 2020

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1. Foreword

This document is functional to setting the evaluation process s to be carried out during the period 21.12.2016 - 31.12.2023 by the External Evaluation according to the framework established by the public procurement documents and the technical offer as consolidated in the Contract signed by the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the contractors.

In compliance with the TOR, within 60 days from the approval of the Activity Plan the Evaluator is expected to deliver the Integrated Assessment Plan which develops the following methodological subjects:

- Analysis of the Cooperation Programme;
- Analysis of the Evaluation reports and Thematic Reports of the Programme in the period 2007-2013;
- Analysis of policy for each Programme's NUTS III areas;
- Analysis of interaction with other Programmes financed by Structural Funds (see section 6 of the Programme);
- Mapping of relevant actors;
- set of indicators for each Specific Objective and Investment Priority of the Programme;
- Mapping of existing or acquirable relevant data (through monitoring system, official statistics, relevant studies and investigations, through surveys);
- designing of evaluation objectives;
- fine-tuning of evaluation questions and definition of evaluation methods to be adopted and analysis of their feasibility.

As required in the TOR, the Integrated Evaluation Plan will be yearly updated by the end of December.

2. Analysis of the Cooperation Programme

The Integrated assessment plan focuses on the evaluation of the Interreg Programme V-A Italy-Slovenia for the programming period 2014-2020. The latest corrigendum of the OP was approved by its first session of the Monitoring Committee meeting, which was held on the 8th of March 2016 in Nova Gorica.

The overall objective of the Programme is **“Promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and liveable area”**.

The Programme intends to implement smart solutions answering to territorial challenges in the fields of innovation, low carbon economy, environment, natural and cultural resources, and institutional capacity building.

The following table presents an overview of 4 Priority Axes, hereinafter referred as PA, - together with their 6 Specific Objectives, hereinafter referred as SO - have been identified to answer to the existent needs and challenges.

TABLE 1. THEMATIC OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENT PRIORITIES AND PRIORITY AXES OF THE OP INTERREG V-A ITALY-SLOVENIA 2014-2020

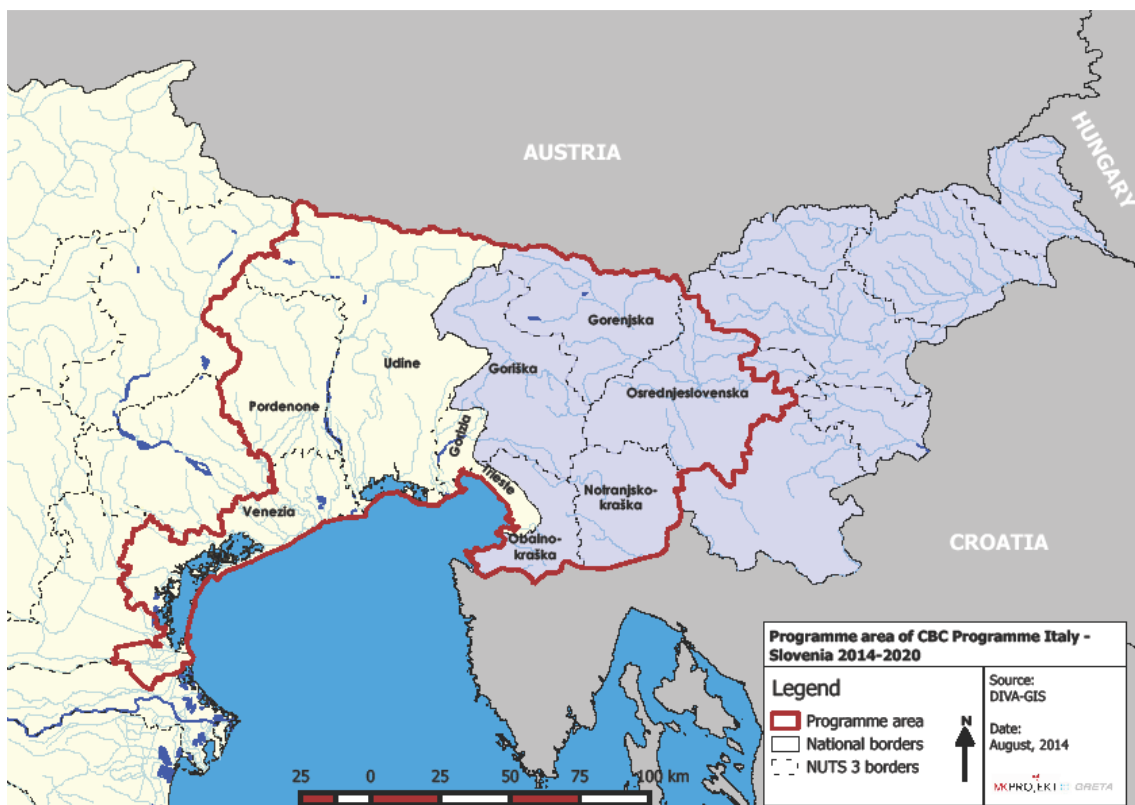
THEMATIC OBJECTIVES	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	TYPE OF ACTIONS	€ AMOUNT
TO 1	1.b) Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialization, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies.	PA.1. Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area	SO 1.1. Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	1. Awareness raising, knowledge transfer and capitalization activities, development of tools and services (analytical tools, strategies, management tools, capacity building etc.) in relation to jointly developed innovative products and/or services; 2. implementation of innovative activities and investments in key sectors of the Programme area, taking into account KET, FET and overlapping regional smart specialization strategies.	22.003.752,00
TO 4	4.e) Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.	PA.2: Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans	2.1. Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	1. Fostering the reduction of energy consumption also by promoting the implementation of energy saving strategies and action plans; 2. Decreasing emissions level, also by piloting the use of alternative transportation systems and the general use of alternative energy sources (only renewable ones).	13.752.345,00
TO 6	6.c	PA.3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources	3.1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	1. Developing common strategies, plans and tools related to conservation and protection of natural resources; 2. Development and practical implementation of common strategies, plans and tools related to conservation, protection, attractiveness and valorization of material and immaterial cultural heritage; 3. Implementation of small investments and trainings;	32.088.805,00

THEMATIC OBJECTIVES	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	TYPE OF ACTIONS	€ AMOUNT
	6.d		3.2. Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	1. Definition of common tools, protocols and plans concerning protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems; 2. Testing and implementing integrated strategies, tools and green infrastructure addressing protected and environmentally highly valuable areas, including Natura 2000 sites; 3. Promotion of sustainable and responsible awareness and behaviors, in particular inside the protected and nature value areas	
	6.f		3.3. Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	1. Developing, demonstrating and implementing small-scale innovative environmental friendly technology investments - pilot projects.	
TO 11	11 ETC	PA.4: Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance	4.1. Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	1. Operations addressing institutional capacity building aimed at development of structures, systems and tools; 2. Operations addressing the human potential and needs.	18.336.464,00
	PA.5: Technical Assistance				5.550.938,00
TOTAL					91.682.300,00

The Programme area extends over a total surface of 19,841 km² and has a total population of approximately 3 million inhabitants. The entire Programme area includes 5 Italian Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - NUTS3 level regions (provinces of Venice, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia and Trieste) and 5 Slovenian statistical regions (statistical regions of Notranjsko-kraška, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška).

The reduction of the Programme area brings the Programme to its previous INTERREG II and INTERREG III geographic configuration. The **new territorial dimension** could help to strengthen the cohesion level of the Programme area and better focus strategic approaches and actions on the three pillars of concentration, territorial connection and administrative cooperation. Moreover, the need to contribute to the new-born macro-regional strategy EUSAIR requires more specific attention to coordination and demarcation of activities among all the ETC Programmes concerning the interested area. The Programme area takes part to two macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), moreover the Danubian Strategy (EUSDR) affects the Programme in the Slovenian side of the Programme area. The report on the Ex-ante evaluation of the Programme identified a high level of consistency with all macro-regional strategies in which the programme area takes part in. Furthermore, Programme also indicates a high level of consistency with other major direct EU programs such as Horizon 2020, Cosme, Life and Erasmus. This is an important basis for the generation of synergistic impacts of implemented projects.

Figure 1: Map of the Programme area



The overall Programme budget is € 91.682.300,00, with an ERDF contribution of € 77.929.954,00 (85%) and a national co-financing of € 13.752.346,00.

The funds allocated to Priority Axes 1, 2, 3 and 4 (corresponding to the selected Thematic Objectives 1, 4, 6 and 11 ETC) amount to 94% of the Programme financial resources; the remaining 6% is allocated to TA. The Programme foresees three project typologies (strategic, standard, ITI).

Highlights of the Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

- ✓ Within Programme Priority axis 1, crossborder economic cooperation is strongly linked to research and innovation and to transfer of know-how therefore it is essential the interrelation among SMEs and research centers;
- ✓ Within Priority axis 2, transport system is closely linked to a concept of sustainability and environmental preservation;
- ✓ Within Priority axis 3, tourism is connected to urban accessibility and to the safeguard of natural and cultural heritage;
- ✓ Priority axis 4 is focused on the pivotal role given to institutional cooperation;
- ✓ the Programme implements another EU Regulation novelty such as the ITI managed by the EGTC GO as Intermediate body.

3. Analysis of the Programme period 2007-2013

Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 can benefit from many lessons learnt in the previous financial period of 2007-2013.

On 20 December 2007, the European Commission approved a Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme between Italy and Slovenia for the period 2007-2013, which was financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Territorial Cooperation objective in Italy and Slovenia.

The program has had a very dynamic implementation during the entire program period. 17 sessions of the Supervisory Committee were organised, as well as meetings of various working groups and meetings at the European Commission. The latter were the result of the failure of the Supervisory Board meetings, where program partners were unable to reach unanimous decisions. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the SB made 86 rulings through correspondence sessions. Consequently, the program has been revised four times.

Within three calls for proposal **a total of 458 project proposals were submitted**, most of them for priority 2 (37,55 %), followed by priority 3 (34,50%) and priority 1 (27.95 per cent). If we analyse the project proposals by individual call for proposals, most of the project proposals were submitted for the second call (55,24 %), followed by the third call (29,26 %). In total **87 projects were financed** within three calls for proposals (or 19 per cent of all submitted project proposals).

By co-financing 87 projects with a total value of 119,744,917.71 euros (ERDF 85% + 15% national co-financing), the Cross-border Cooperation Program Italy-Slovenia 2007-2013 has contributed significantly to increasing of attractiveness and competitiveness of the program area, which is particularly evident in the final part of the Program implementation.

A total of 914 projects partners were involved. Due to a joint preparation, implementation, staff and financing, the co-financed projects have connected 422 institutions, both public and private entities from the entire eligible area. They were also involved in the capitalization of results in terms of project implementation and cooperation in the future.

Within 16 strategic projects co-financed under the call for proposals No. 01/2009 232 project partners carried out project activities. The number of LPs from the two countries was balanced: nine from Italy and seven from Slovenia.

Within 51 standard projects co-financed under the call for proposals No. 02/2009 525 project partners carried out project activities. 34 LPs were from Italy and 17 from Slovenia.

Based on the analysis of various evaluation reports **the projects were directed at targets that have contributed to the following sectors: environmental conservation, climate change and reducing risks.** This information is also important in the light of the same core priorities of the 2020 Strategy.

Apart from the priorities, listed in the previous paragraph, **the implemented projects within the programme period 2007-2013 were connected to the sectors of research, development and innovation** that were confirmed as priorities also in the programme

period of 2014-2020. To a lesser extent also projects addressing the topics of entrepreneurship, education and lifelong learning were represented.

Projects were very diverse in the terms of partnerships, budget, timelines and typologies of implemented activities. Added value of the programme is not reflected only in the implemented projects, but also on the broader scale regarding the contribution of individual skills of partners into a common framework of cross-border knowledge. Based on the opinions of the leading partners that were included in the survey regarding the implementation, **the most positive effect is recognized in the creation of a common social capital and common added value of cooperation that has a positive effect on the application of tasks and processes in partner organisations.**

In all three evaluation reports regarding the programme period 2007-2013 reflect all main results of the programme. However, the last evaluation report in particular emphasized the need to reduce the complexity of decision-making and implementation in the new programme period.

4. Analysis of policy for each Programme's NUTS III area

Before proceeding with the analysis of policy for each Programme's NUTS III area, a preliminary consideration must be highlighted. In fact, while in Slovenia each NUTS III region has adopted its own Regional Development Programme for the period 2014-2020, in Italy multiple development programmes impact on the same NUTS III area, even fragmenting the area in smaller areas of interest, or combining the same area with others in broader strategies. Therefore, the Slovenian single and specific programming level allows an assessment in terms of consistency between the different Regional Development Programmes and the CP Italy-Slovenia. As far as Italian NUTS III areas are concerned, on the other hand, the analysis provides evidence of the multi-perspective programming approach coming from different level/sources, in an overall consistency assessment.

In Italy, each statistic region that corresponds to NUTS III classification, is defined as a Provincia: although the institutional system is changing towards the amendment of the Provincia, replaced by Cittàmetropolitana as far as the big cities (a total of 14 in the Country) are concerned, there is still room for manoeuvre for the Autonomous Regions to deal with this issue.

In every Operational Programme, such as in other development plans, we can recognise elements referring to development strategies of this kind of administrative units.

→ ITH35 Venezia NUTS III - Provincia di Venezia

In the NUTS III area of Venezia multiple strategic approaches and plans are operative at the moment, ranging from metropolitan developments plans to ESI Funds OPs, to UNESCO sites management plan and others devoted to the unicity of Venice as a "city built on water". Strategic priorities are multi-perspective and interconnected in the light of sustainability and efficient use of resources, natural and cultural most of all. The impact of innovation and innovative development drivers is proven by the involvement of the area in the S3 strategy of the Regione Veneto.

→ ITH41 Pordenone NUTS III - Provincia di Pordenone

Strategies and priorities coming from different sources (ESI Funds OPs, national strategies, S3 strategy of the Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia) impact on the NUTS III area of Pordenone, supporting the mainstream orientation towards innovation and sustainability. Keywords that applies to different sectors, from rural development to smart mobility in an area characterised by small towns and an economic sector made up of SMEs trying to recover from a critical period. Development drivers are therefore in line with those of the Programme.

→ ITH42 Udine NUTS III - Provincia di Udine

The NUTS III area of Udine holds interesting and relevant assets from different points of view, indeed already supported by several development strategies - backed by EU and national funds - that need therefore to seek integration with the Programme priorities. Ranging from top level food and wine production, to cultural and natural resources, the Provincia di Udine is moving towards new development drivers led by methodological and operative approaches of innovation, sustainability and capacity building.

→ ITH43 Gorizia NUTS III - Provincia di Gorizia

The NUTS III area of Gorizia is characterised by a diversified territory going from coastal environment to internal and mountain areas, so implying different development strategies and instruments. Another key element to consider is the typical cross border economy, such as areas with relevant industrial facilities in a process of recovery and diversification. Naturally, there are already several EU and national development strategies and investments under way in the area, with a growing need of integration among them. All those efforts, indeed, are going towards the innovation of processes and products, the efficient use of resources and the optimisation of public and private assets and capacities.

→ ITH44 Trieste NUTS III - Provincia di Trieste

The NUTS III area of Trieste has several peculiarities, due to its location as a border region - with a relevant presence of Slovenian speaking minorities, indeed majority of population in rural and non-urban (outside the city of Trieste) areas - and its long history of multicultural city. Furthermore, the area is important for its port and industrial facilities, but also for its cultural relevance (universities, research centres) and natural resources. As other well-developed areas in northern Italy, the Provincia di Trieste is looking at new development patterns, based on research and innovation, sustainability, knowledge sharing and higher competences.

In **Slovenia**, each statistic region (that corresponds to NUTS III classification) adopted its own Regional Development Programme (RDP) for the period 2014-2020. These documents were drafted by regional development agencies in direction of key regional initiatives and also include key regional projects. In order to indicate the level of consistency of the Programme Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 with regional specific policies, each RDP was analysed. This single and specific programming level allows - as described before - an assessment in terms of consistency between the different Regional Development Programmes and the CP Italy-Slovenia.

→ RDP of Osrednjeslovenska region

The vision of the region is “*The green motor of development - metropolitan bioregion of knowledge*” which indicates that this is the Slovenian region with the most accumulated knowledge and creation potential as it is the centre of the key state, scientific, research, educational and cultural institutions. The programme has set three development priorities: growth of competitiveness of the regional economy, conservation of the environment with sustainable use of resources and people friendly region. Based on these priorities, programs and special measures on different investment fields were set. OP Italy-Slovenia indicates a strong consistency with the RDP of Osrednjeslovenska region. Specific objective 1.1 is consistent with the program 1.1. Innovation, creativity and knowledge for competitive economy. Specific objective 2.1 is consistent with Program 2.1 Climate-safe and energy-friendly region and program 3.1 Sustainable mobility. Specific objectives 3.1.and 3.2 are both consistent with Program 2.3. Conservation of nature. Specific objective 3.3.is consistent with Program 2.2 Environmental infrastructure. Specific objective 4.1 is not consistent with any program or specific measure of the RDP for Osrednjeslovenska region.

→ RDP of Gorenjska region

The vision of the region is “*Gorenjska - where I want to live, work and play*”, which also indicates a similarity with the vision of the OP Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 in a way that more effort should be put in a creation of a more liveable living space for its inhabitants. RDP of Gorenjska region has set three development priorities (DP): Environment/Countryside, People and Technologies. Based on these priorities, five development policies were drafted. Specific objective 1.1 is consistent with development policy 1. Technological development, entrepreneurship and innovation. Specific objective 2.1 is consistent with development policy 4. Environment, spatial planning and infrastructure but mainly on the field of increasing the efficiency of energy use. Specific objectives 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are also consistent with the same development policy as it includes also conservation of environment, low carbon mobility, sustainable development and improvement of waste water management. None of the development policies is focused on the strengthening of institutional cooperation (specific objective 4.1) although it is stated that the institutional technical support to the regional development is important and will be realised as a horizontal project.

→ RDP of Goriška region

The vision of Goriška region is: “*The region of northern of Primorska will be one of the most successful regions of central Europe. With innovation and networking it will reach sustainable and long term economic growth while preserving natural and cultural richness for the quality of life of current and next generations*”. In order to achieve this, RDP has set 2 priorities: Raising of competitiveness, innovation and employment opportunities in the region and Improvement of quality of life. Selected priorities indicate a high level of similarity with the OP Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020. These two priorities are then divided on 7 measures which the consistency was analysed. Specific objective 1.1 is consistent with the measure 1/U1: Raising competitiveness and innovation which focuses strongly on providing the regional instruments in order to support enterprises, networking and development of different types of entrepreneurship. Specific objective 2.1 is not directly consistent with none of the measures, although projects that address also the topic of energy efficiency are set to realize within the measure 1/U1. Specific objective 3.1 is consistent with the Measure 2/U2: Preservation and development of material and intangible heritage. This Measure represents covers only cultural heritage, while protection and development of natural heritage is not specifically reflected by the measures of the RDP of Goriška region. Specific objectives 3.2, 3.3 and 4.1 are not consistent with any of the identified measures in the RDP of Goriška region. However, strategic objective 3.2 is partly consistent with the measure measure 1/U1. Raising competitiveness and innovation, where some supporting measures in order to ensure a more innovative environment for the economy are predicted.

→ RDP of Primorsko-notranjska region

The vision of Primorsko-notranjska region is: “*With cooperation and responsible use of resources towards better quality of life on green Karst*”. In order to achieve this, the RDP has set three development priorities: Competitiveness of economy, Sustainable environmental and infrastructural development and Inclusive society. These priorities are reflected in 8 specific priority programs. Specific objective 1.1 is consistent with economical program that is focused on the R&D, innovation and stimulation of the economy. Strategic objective 2.1 is consistent with the programme for infrastructure

where energy is identified as one of the five key action plans. Specific objective 3.1 is consistent with the programme for Environment and management of resources regarding the natural heritage and with the programme for broader social development regarding the cultural heritage. Strategic objective 3.2 is consistent partly with the programme for Environment and management of resources especially regarding the management of forest ecosystem and natural values. Strategic objective 3.3 is partly consistent with the programme for economy regarding the creation of supporting environment for growth of enterprises and partly to the programme for environment and management of resources with the relation of water management. Specific objective 4.1 is not consistent with any program or specific measure of the RDP for Primorsko-notranjska region.

→ RDP of Obalno-kraška region

RDP of Obalno-kraška region has set four main priorities: Strengthening of economic competitiveness and employment, Strengthening of life quality and inclusive society, Rural development and sustainable management with natural and cultural resources and Infrastructure, environment and sustainable spatial development. These priorities are then reflected in 14 programmes and 31 specific measures. Specific measure 1.1 is consistent with the programme 1.1 Strengthening the competitiveness of the economy. Specific objective 2.1 is consistent with the programme 4.1 Sustainable energy sector with the focus on efficient use of energy and exploitation of the potential of alternative and renewable sources of energy. Strategic objective 3.1 is consistent with the programme 3.1 Conservation of nature and biodiversity which focuses mainly on the conservation of natural heritage while the cultural heritage lacks of special focus. Specific objective 3.3 is partly consistent with the same programme 3.1 where a special focus is given to the strengthening of the management of protected areas (Natura 2000 sites) thus focusing only on the management of the ecosystems that are already under a status of conservation. Specific objective 3.3 is consistent with the programme 4.3 Infrastructure for environmental protection which focuses on the purification of drainage and waste water. The RDP of Notranjsko-kraška region is the only RDP of Slovenian regions involved in the OP Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 that predicted also the importance of institutional cooperation. Therefore specific objective 4.1 is consistent with the programme 4.5 Support services for spatial planning. The focus of this programme is to cooperate on the level of municipalities and other relevant authorities in order to plan joint actions and solutions.

5. Analysis of interaction with other Programmes financed by Structural Funds

The IAP takes carefully into consideration the multiple patterns of interaction among the Programme and the other financial and investment programmes, plans and instruments operating in the area. This mainly because the focus of evaluation must be set on the capacity of the Programme to develop and foster the above mentioned patterns, in the light of EU's priority regarding a closer integration among investment programmes and also complying with Art. 10 and Annex I of the Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, whereas it is stated that coordination and use of synergies with other European Structural and Investment Funds as well as with other relevant Union policies, strategies and instruments, including those in the framework of the Union's External Action Member States, have to be pursued.

Therefore, **evaluation will concentrate on the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms and authorities in the Programme area.** As pointed out in the legal framework and in the guidelines, the IAP will also guarantee close coherence with Section 6 of the Programme. Attention will be therefore be paid at the capacity of the Programme key actors to coordinate activities under the Cooperation Programme with other ESI-funded programmes covering their territory and to check synergies and possible overlapping of the submitted project proposals with other projects and programmes.

First of all, evaluation must focus on **interaction between the Programme and the other Programmes supported by ESI Funds.** Regarding the EAFRD and the EMFF, the Programme is not developing significant activities dedicated to agriculture or fisheries: however, the objectives of sustainable development, the protection of the natural environment, the exploitation of territorial and maritime resources, interventions related to ports and maritime activities or the diversification of tourism constitute strategic issues for the Programme as well. Looking at ESF Programmes, evaluation will consider that the Programme is not specifically dedicated to ESF priorities, therefore the coordination with ESF programmes is supposed to be less intense: nonetheless it will impact on actions devoted to social inclusion, education, vocational training and cross-border labour force.

Evaluation on **coordination must then be broadened towards other national and regional funding instruments.** This the case, for instance, of the funding instruments in place in Friuli Venezia Giulia, from the Regional Strategy S3 (adopted by Decision of the Regional Government n. 708, dated April 17, 2015) and its priorities and technological trajectories, in relation to Axis 1 of the Programme, to the Capacity building Plan (Piano di Rafforzamento Amministrativo) adopted by the Regional Administration on 30 December 2014, with regard to Axis 4, and even further to the six strategic priorities of the Regional Plan of Performance (Decision n.1332 dated 11 July 2014) with regard to the all 4 Axes of the Programme, and to the national and regional strategies for Internal Areas (so called, ITI Internal Regional Areas).

Furthermore, Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia has adopted an integrated and cross-cutting programming approach in order to strengthen synergies arising from the integration with other programmes and complementarities among ESI Funds providing tools of multi-level governance.

Regarding Regione Veneto, a Unitary Programming Sector has been established within the Administration, in charge of coordinating ESI Funds Programmes. It also supports all those general partnership consultation activities dealing with cross-cutting themes as well as it provides technical and operative assistance on discussion and negotiation tables according to the provisions of the partnership code of conduct.

Evaluation will also devote effort in analysing patterns of interaction and coordination with the Danube, Adriatic-Ionian and Alpine macro-regions strategies and with other neighbouring Interreg V-A Programmes - in particular, Austria-Italy, Italy-Croatia, Slovenia-Hungary and Slovenia-Austria - focusing on programme implementation, common management procedures.

Moreover, evaluation will also focus on the activities and project co-financed under EU programmes, such as Horizon 2020 and COSME, with particular consideration to their specific support to SMEs. More in details, consistency will be analysed with regard to issues such as research and innovation and competitiveness of SMEs (Axis 1). As far as projects related to protection of biodiversity, territorial geology, climate and environmental protection and safeguard (Axes 1, 3 and 4) are concerned, interactions will be considered with the LIFE Programme and with LIFE integrated projects.

In order to identify and collect useful information in an evaluative perspective, it is worth underlining that different actors holds strategic responsibilities in the sectorial programmes devoted to the policy areas just described. In Italy the Agency for the Promotion of European Research, in close cooperation with the Ministry for Education, University and Research, provides advice, support and assistance for application to national and European programmes, with particular reference to Horizon 2020 while the Ministry for Environment and Protection of Land and Sea is responsible for the implementation of LIFE Programme.

In Slovenia the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport is responsible for the delivery of Horizon 2020 while LIFE Programme is managed by the Ministry for Agriculture and Environment.

Evaluation must then look at how Programme authorities and other actor involved in the Programme management and delivery will communicate results and outputs of the co-funded operations coherently with the Communication Strategy. This mainly towards of other ETC programmes in the cooperation area and with the INTERACT programme to ensure an active exchange of information and experience about projects and initiatives. The macro-regionals strategies, which have been set up for the Programme area, will also be an element of relevant interest, and hopefully another way to foster coordination among the Programme and the other ESI-funded programmes.

It is worth pointing out the necessity of focusing the evaluation process even on coordination competences and responsibilities, as far as EU funded Programmes are concerned, both in Italy and Slovenia.

As Section 6 of the Programme correctly highlights, ESI Funds coordination in Italy is supported by the recently established (according to article 10 of Law Decree no. 101/2013 ratified with amendments by Law n. 125/2013, in order to ensure the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 119, fifth paragraph of the Italian Constitution and strengthen the action of planning, coordination, monitoring and supporting Cohesion policy) Agency for territorial cohesion, within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in a shared system of competences with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers itself.

At national level the Partnership Agreement for Italy, adopted on the 29th October 2014 by the European Commission, confirms the Strategic coordination group for the ETC (established by decree of the Head of Department DPS no. 33 of 27th April 2010, amended by Decree no. 9 of 12th April 2011) and the establishment of national committees accompanying Italy's participation in the territorial cooperation programmes, one for each of the interregional and transnational programmes in which Italy participates and one for

the Italy-Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme, because of the wide cooperation area and the number of eligible Italian Regions.

In Slovenia the Government office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GODCP) coordinates the development programmes, monitors the implementation of development policies and its programmes and it is also responsible for the coordination of documents pertaining to development planning and compliance of national development programmes as well as EU and other international organisations' programmes. European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanism Office and European Territorial Cooperation Division are also part of GODCP.

According to the Partnership Agreement for Slovenia (adopted on the 30th October 2014 by the European Commission) the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee provides coordination between ESI funds Programmes and with other EU instruments as well as other national instruments and the EIB instruments.

6. Mapping of relevant actors

In the perspective of an effective evaluation, it is fundamental to involve a number of relevant actors - internal and external to the Programme - with their own specific contribution to the setting of an overall assessment of the co-financed activities and the capacity to pursue the Programme's objectives.

According to the Regulation 1303/2013 there are no substantial changes in the functions of Programme Authorities for the period 2014-2020 compared to 2007-2013. Core Programme Authorities will remain the same, ensuring institutional stability and smooth transition to the new EU framework.

Managing Authority (MA)

The MA, assisted by the Joint Secretariat, is responsible for managing the Programme. It ensures that the different Programme Authorities and structures interact in a smooth and co-operative way. MA role and functions are included in a specific organizational Unit - Central Directorate for Finance, Property, Coordination and Programming of Economic and EU Policies, European Territorial Cooperation, State Aid and General Affairs Office -, functionally independent and separated from the other Authorities and FLC bodies in the Friuli Venezia Giulia autonomous Region.

Certifying Authority (CA)

Responsible for certifying the declarations of expenditure and the applications for payment before their submission to the European Commission, located in the Central Directorate for Finance, Property, Coordination and Programming of Economic and EU Policies, articulated in Tributes, Fiscal Fulfilments, Personnel and EU Programming Expenditure Documents Control Office

Audit Authority (AA)

Within the Presidency of the Region, Directorate General Audit Office, it is responsible for verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system. The AA will be assisted by a Group of Auditors composed by representatives of both MS participating in the Programme.

Joint Secretariat (JS)

In compliance with Art. 23 (2) of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the JS shall assist and support the MC and, where the case, the MC Working Groups (WGs) in carrying out their respective functions. The JS is set up under the responsibility of the MA. For the JS recruitment, the MA shall aim at ensuring compliance with the principles of equal treatment, equality between men and women and non-discrimination. The JS has an appropriate staff (including a Head) and it is hosted by the MA offices located in the premises of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region seat in Trieste (Italy).

Monitoring Committee (MC)

MC supervises the implementation of the Programme in order to monitor its effectiveness and quality and the responsible implementation of the selected projects. Detailed MC

functioning provisions are established in the MC's Rules of Procedure adopted on its first meeting (March, 8 2016). The MC may set up WGs to facilitate its decision-making process on specific issues.

Group of Auditors (GoA)

In line with Article 25(2) of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the AA shall be assisted by a GoA composed of representatives from each MS participating in the Programme and carrying out the functions provided for in Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. On the basis of art. 25 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the auditors shall be functionally independent of controllers who carry out verifications under Article 23 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. The GoA is set up within three months of the decision approving the Programme. On the basis of Articles 72(f) and 127(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the decision on the body carrying out the system audits and the checks on expenditure will be taken by the AA, after consultation with the GoA, during the process of designing the audit strategy of the Programme.

Intermediate Body (OIB)

In line with Article 11 of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, the Intermediate Body for carrying out the management and implementation of an ITI as referred to in Article 36(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall be the OIB, a specific Unit functionally independent within the EGTC named "GECT GO/EZTS GO". Its activities and functions are ruled in a specific governance agreement signed by the MA and the OIB of the GECT GO/EZTS GO.

The OIB of the GECT GO/EZTS GO does:

- apply in the implementation of the ITI appropriate selection procedures and criteria approved by MC;
- support the work of the MC referred to in Article 47 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and provide detailed data on the overall progress of the ITI;
- ensure that the beneficiaries are provided with a document setting out the conditions for support for each operation including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, and the time-limit for execution;
- ensure that the data is collected, entered and stored in the monitoring system;
- support the MA in drawing up the annual and final implementation reports referred to in Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Representatives of Member States: National/Regional Authorities

MSs contribute to the Programme by respective National/Regional Authorities (Info Point, setting the First level Control system), representing the MSs and as such participating in the MC and taking part in the implementation of the Programme.

In line with the 2007-2013 experience, the Slovenian Info Point located in Štanjel (Slovenia) and established by National Authority - GODCP, shall support the MA in spreading the information on the implementation stages of the Programme across the Slovenian territory.

In Italy, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region and the Veneto Region shall support the MA in spreading the information on the implementation stages of the Programme across their territories.

Tasks to be carried out at local level in both regions crucially include project generation and contribution to partnerships building. The office in charge for these activities in Friuli Venezia Giulia will be functionally separated from the Managing Authority. The Veneto Region, given its geographical distance from the land border, will also be in charge of developing effective strategic approaches for a wider involvement of key actors of Venice area to the achievement of the overall Programme goal of a more cohesive cooperation area through information, communication and widespread promotion activities targeted to potential new local beneficiaries and to the regional partnership.

In order to follow through the above outlined duties, both the Slovenian Info Point and Italian Regions will directly manage an appropriate share of TA resources.

Bodies designated to carry out control tasks

Bodies holding key competences and responsibilities in the field of controls are identified as follows:

- REPUBLIC OF ITALY: Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia/EU Structural Funds FLC Unit
- REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA: Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Control Division - ETC, IPA and IFM Programmes

Bodies designated to carry out audit tasks

Bodies holding key competences and responsibilities in the field of audits are identified as follows:

- Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia/Presidency of the Region/ Directorate General/Audit Office
- Republic of Slovenia – Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Slovenia, Budget Supervision Office of the RS

Other relevant actors need to be listed in this section, in the broader context of stakeholders, meaning all those actors involved and interested in the smooth programming and effective delivery of the Programme, holding and bringing their own perspectives, support and resources. A preliminary consideration needs to be put in evidence, regarding the different context in Italy and Slovenia, leading to a different identification and description of stakeholders. On the Italian side, in fact, the set of stakeholders is much more articulated, by a quantitative and a qualitative point of view, due not only to bigger demographic and macro/scenario figures, but also to a more articulated socio-economic and public system: a system made up of several level of governance/administration (boroughs/urban districts, Municipalities, towns associations, Provinces, Metropolitan areas, Regions) with a long tradition of involvement of specific stakeholders. All this considered, stakeholders are here following identified by category.

On the Slovenian side, smaller figures and a less articulated system of stakeholders will allow a more specific description by single actor.

The key stakeholders from the Italian side of the Programme area are:

- Local PAs, the articulated system of local public administrations: Comuni (municipalities), Province (provinces), Cittàmetropolitane (metropolitan cities).
- Economic partners, chambers of commerce, trade associations
- Social partners, employers' and employees' organisations and representations.
- Universities, both public and private
- Research and innovation centres, in the different fields and sectors covered by the Programme
- NGOs, in the different policy areas covered by the Programme

The key stakeholders from the Slovenian side of the programme area are:

→ [Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region \(RDA LUR\)](#)

RDA LUR unites 26 municipalities and communities in Central Slovenia. It provides support in sustainably orientated business, infrastructural, social, cultural and creative activities. At the same time, it encourages connecting and developing partnership networks among various stakeholders whose activities bolster the region's sustainable development. The agency carries out the development projects that contribute to the rise of the quality of life in the region, looks out for synergies among projects and connects with domestic and foreign experts. It advises and helps interested stakeholders to find financial resources for the successful preparation, coordination and implementation of their projects and at the same time it handles the promotion of the region, its development and achievements in both the national and international levels.

→ [Business support centreKranj \(BSC Kranj\)](#)

BSC encourages the development of the region of Gorenjska that includes 18 municipalities. As Regional Development Agency, it is responsible for the preparation of key regional development documents. BSC Kranj develops and implements programs and projects that strengthen regional competitiveness by connecting the needs of local communities and enterprises with national and European development policies and financial resources. The approach towards development activities is based on the actual needs of the region as well as understanding of global trends.

→ [Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska](#)

Regional Development Agency of Northern Primorska which is situated in Nova Gorica was funded in order to unite all local, regional and national potential and implement nationally and internationally founded development projects. Its aim is to identify the needs arising in the economic, social, environmental and spatial sector within its region, thus promoting its development.

→ [Regional Development Agency Green Karst](#)

Regional Development Agency Green Karst as the RDA of Primorsko-notranjska region acts as an institution on the regional level with the aim of enhancing development in all aspects of working and living in the Primorsko-notranjska region. It functions as a regional coordinator of interests on the local as well as on the national level in the fields of regional development, economy, human resources, environment and natural resources management and rural development. It is aimed at developing, enhancing and sustaining

regional development. It provides development, organizational, technical and professional support for the development of the region with providing the services of coordination, communication, participation of regional stakeholders, project development and management and training.

→ [Regional Development Centre Koper \(RDC Koper\)](#)

The Regional Development Centre Koper acts as an institution on regional level with the aim of promoting business and economy development in the Obalno-kraška region. It performs the role of regional coordinator of interests on local as well as national level in the fields of regional development, economy, human resources and environment protection. With a role of Regional Development Agency RDC Koper became a permanent representative of ministries, governmental organizations, chambers of commerce and craft, companies and other institutions. RDC Koper promotes and implements projects of cross-border partnerships with Italy and Croatia.

→ [Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation](#)

Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation is the main national professional organization in the field of nature conservation. It was established in 1999 by the Nature Conservation Act. Seven regional units provide high-quality coverage of the terrain on the entire territory of Slovenia. The work of regional units is rounded off by the Central unit, which is responsible for coordination, unity of methods and uniform functioning of the institute outwards and inwards. The institute devotes special attention to the most valuable natural parts of nature, and the most threatened areas and species. The institute educate and raises awareness about the importance of nature conservation and the sustainable coexistence of man and nature. In addition, it is dedicated to various national and international projects enhancing nature conservation.

→ [Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia](#)

The institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia is a public institute that carries out professional and administrative tasks with regard to the preservation of immovable and corresponding movable property and intangible cultural heritage. Its main tasks are to identify, evaluating and documenting cultural heritage, preparing proposals for entering heritage into the register kept by the Ministry of Culture, drawing up conservation plans and restoration projects, supervising building, research and protective undertakings, supervising, executing archaeological surveys and providing helpful advice to owners of cultural heritage, education and popularisation.

→ [University of Ljubljana](#)

University of Ljubljana is the oldest and largest higher education and scientific research institution in Slovenia. University with its rich tradition was founded in 1919. It has more than 40.000 undergraduate and postgraduate students and employs approximately 5.600 higher education teachers, researchers, assistants and administrative staff in 23 faculties and three arts academies. The University of Ljubljana is renowned for its quality social and natural sciences and technical study programmes, structured in accordance with the Bologna Declaration. The University of Ljubljana is listed amongst the top 500 universities in the world according to the ARWU Shanghai, Times THES-QS and WEBOMETRICS rankings. The University of Ljubljana has close ties with Slovenian companies and foreign enterprises. Its partners include multinational corporations and the most successful Slovenian companies.

→ University of Nova Gorica

The University of Nova Gorica was founded in 1995 and has 9 research institutes and 7 schools out of which one is located in Venice, Italy. University of Nova Gorica aims to be an independent, research orientated and student friendly university, where knowledge is formed within a harmonious relationship between students and researches, so that the knowledge can be transferred to younger generations and into business environment. The latest international Round University Ranking system considers the University of Nova Gorica best university in Slovenia and ranks it among the leading world university since in 2016 it was ranked in the excellent 203th place. It aims to be a research and internationally established university, which will be recognized as a driving force of social development in the region and in a wider context. With its innovative teaching approaches in both Slovene and English, the university aims to develop teaching excellence at its contemporary study programmes, thereby securing a high level of employability to home and international students.

→ University of Primorska / Università del Litorale

The University of Primorska has a short history, but it does not lack the determination to grow and strive for excellence. The mission of the University of Primorska is to carry out education and scientific research in a professional and artistic manner and to bear the responsibility for the balanced development of Slovenia in the region, Europe and globally. Studies at the University of Primorska are organized at 6 faculties, around 6000 students are enrolled in the 74 study programmes. Its faculties offer high-quality, diverse and content attractive studies. The research work is undertaken within national research programmes, basic and applied projects and targeted research programmes; at the international level, the research work is undertaken within bilateral cooperation and in the context of European and other international programmes or projects. Since the University of Primorska is situated in an environment that is highly heterogeneous in respect of national, cultural and historical tradition, it is particularly susceptible to openness and integration.

→ Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) provides essential services for enterprises operating in Slovenia, and it is the ideal local partner for foreign investors. The CCIS was founded more than 160 years ago and now has 7,000 member companies of all sizes and from all regions. It is a non-profit, non-governmental, independent business organization representing the interest of its members and is Slovenia's most influential business association. CCIS unites under its roof 24 branch associations representing all sectors of Slovenian Economy. It is a member in numerous government bodies, boards and committees, supporting them with knowhow and expertise. CCIS is a social partner organization and signatory party of more than 20 branch collective agreements, agreements on minimum pay and the Social agreements. CCIS is member of the Economic and Social Council in Slovenia. As a member of Eurochambres (the European Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), as well as other international associations and organisations, the CCIS is part of an extensive international network with innumerable contacts. CCIS is involved in numerous national and international projects related to research and development, business and entrepreneurship, internationalization, social issues (equal opportunities, social dialogue...) as well as training and education.

6. Set of indicators for each Specific Objective of the Programme

In the following table, indicators for each priority axes and specific objectives have been set. The basis for the elaboration of the indicators has been the Operational Programme itself, which provides a good reference for the monitoring of the programme. The Ex-ante evaluation report of the Programme has also been taken into account to select adequate indicators. Furthermore, in addition to the Ex-ante evaluation report six result indicators have been added, which will serve to monitor the effect of the programme activities (implemented projects) on the regional statistics. The main source of these data will be national statistic agencies. The indicators will serve as a monitoring tool for the Operational Programme and will be used in the next steps of the evaluation (next/forthcoming evaluation reports).

Table2.Set of indicators for each Specific objective with measurement unit and source

PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF INDICATOR	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT UNIT	SOURCE	REMARKS
PA.1. Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area	SO 1.1. Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	Result	Level of cross-border cooperation among key actors of the Programme area	Gross value added at basic prices in millions of Euro	Eurostat	
		Result	Increased innovation capacity	Number of registered patterns per NUTS III region	National statistic offices	
		Output	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions (Common indicator)	Enterprises	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational and interregional research projects (Common indicator)	Organizations	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of innovative services, products and tools transferred to enterprises	Number	Programme monitoring	
PA.2: Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans	2.1. Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	Result	Level of capacities of municipalities in decreasing energy use	Municipalities in SEAP	SEAP	
		Result	Decreasing energy use per GDP	Use of energy / GDP (MWh/mio EUR 2000)	National statistic offices	In Slovenia the data is available only on national level
		Result	Decreasing energy use per capita	Energy supply per capita (tone of oil equivalent)	National statistic offices	In Slovenia the data is available only on national level

PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF INDICATOR	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT UNIT	SOURCE	REMARKS
		Output	Number of implemented actions towards the decrease of annual primary energy consumption in existing public buildings	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Pilot implementation of innovative services for smart low carbon mobility	Number	Programme monitoring	
PA.3: Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources	3.1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	Result	Level of Cross-border cooperation in the sustainable valorization of cultural and natural heritage	Number of visitors	National/Regional statistics	
		Result	Level of improved Cross-border destination capacity	Number of overnight stays	National/Regional statistics	
		Output	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of investments implemented or services/products created supporting preservation/restoration of natural and cultural heritage	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Km bicycle path/lane completed	Km	Programme monitoring	

PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF INDICATOR	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT UNIT	SOURCE	REMARKS
	3.2. Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	Result	Level of preservation status of habitats	Status of conservation (Habitats)	Managing Authorities of Natura 2000 sites	
		Result	Level of preservation of status of species	Status of conservation (Species)	Managing Authorities of Natura 2000 sites	
		Result	Value of ecosystem management and sustainable development	Investments in environment protection (1000 EUR)	National/Regional statistics	
		Output	Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status (Common indicator)	Hectares	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Tools and services developed for assessing and promoting ecosystem services	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Cross-border pilot actions to support biodiversity	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Participants to educational and divulgative events	Number	Programme monitoring	
	3.3. Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	Result	Level of cross-border application of green technologies or processes	Total number of applications	Eurostat	
		Result	Innovation capacity of enterprises	Share of enterprises, that have implemented the innovation of product/service in relation	National/Regional statistics	

PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF INDICATOR	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT UNIT	SOURCE	REMARKS
				of all enterprises in region		
		Output	Population benefiting from flood protection measures (Common indicator)	Persons	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of innovative green technologies tested and implemented	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of enterprises applying new green innovation solutions	Number	Programme monitoring	
PA.4: Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance	4.1. Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	Result	Increased capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in cross-border cooperation and governance	%	Survey	
		Output	Cross-border agreement and protocols signed	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Joint solutions increasing integration, coherence, harmonization of the Programme area governance (shared politics, legislative, frameworks or regulations, joint strategic documents, e-government tools, etc.)	Joint solutions	Programme monitoring	

PRIORITY AXES	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF INDICATOR	INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT UNIT	SOURCE	REMARKS
		Output	Number of beneficiaries participating in joint training schemes	Number	Programme monitoring	
		Output	Number of cross-border medical teams full-formed and operational	Number	Programme monitoring	

Source: Analysis of the programme documents

8. Mapping of existing or acquirable relevant data

Here following, additional sources of relevant data have been identified, in order to support the elaboration of the next evaluation reports. The data consists of relevant studies, investigations and surveys that correspond to the subject of the evaluation itself. They are related to the specific objectives of the programme and will be used as an important element of the tripartite evaluation approach. The list must not be considered as exhaustive and other relevant data sources will be integrated if relevant and available.

Tabella3. Mapping of relevant data

SECTOR	RELATION TO S.O.	NAME OF STUDY / REPORT	PUBLISHED BY
Economy, innovation, national indicators	1.1, 3.3	Annual and periodic reports Annual development report	Italian National Institute for statistics https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/16782 Italian Ministry for Economic Development http://www.sviluppoeconomico.gov.it/index.php/it/ministero/organismi/osservatorio-dei-servizi-pubblici-locali/banche-dati Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, http://www.umar.gov.si/en/publications/development-report/?no_cache=1
Energy	2.1	Annual and periodic reports Report on the status on the energetic field	Italian National Institute for statistics http://www.istat.it/it/ambiente-ed-energia Italian National Agency for energy, new technologies and sustainable development http://www.enea.it/it/amministrazione-trasparente/altri-contenuti/accessibilita-e-catalogo-di-dati-metadati-e-banche-dati/banche-dati-enea Republic of Slovenia, Ministry for infrastructure http://www.energetika-portal.si/dokumenti/poslovna-porocila/porocilo-o-stanju-na-podrocju-energetike/
Tourism	3.1	Annual and periodic reports Analysis of tourist year	Italian National Institute for statistics https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/turismo Italian National Observatory on Tourism http://www.ontit.it/ont/ Italian National Tourism Agency http://www.enit.it/it/studi.html Slovenian tourism organisation https://www.slovenia.info/sl/poslovne-strani/raziskave-in-analize/slovenski-turizem-v-stevilkah
Environment	3.2	Annual and periodic reports Various reports on the status of the environment	Italian National Institute for statistics https://www.istat.it/it/prodotti/banche-dati/serie-storiche http://www.istat.it/it/ambiente-ed-energia Italian National Institute for environmental protection and research http://annuario.isprambiente.it/ Slovenian environment agency http://www.arso.gov.si/varstvo%20okolja/poro%C4%8Dila/poro%C4%8Dila%20o%20stanju%20okolja%20v%20Sloveniji/

It is worth pointing out that, even due to a different institutional system in Italy and Slovenia, the Italian Regions have developed their own databases and statistical research sources regarding the policy sectors in which the Programme operates. Those databases and sources will also be considered in the evaluation process.

9. Designing of evaluation objectives

The design of the evaluation objectives begins with the careful consideration of the Programme strategy. The main, broad objective of the Interreg Programme V-A Italy-Slovenia for the programming period 2014-2020 is to “Promote innovation, sustainability and cross-border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and liveable area”.

The Programme aims, indeed, at implementing smart and sustainable solutions responding to territorial challenges in the sectors of innovation, low carbon economy, environment, natural and cultural resources, and institutional capacity building.

Interreg Programme V-A Italy-Slovenia is then organised in 4 Priority Axes, further detailed into 6 Specific Objectives, which try to sum up the above mentioned actions in response to the concrete needs and challenges of the Programme area (as described in the table 1).

In light of designing an integrated assessment plan and, most of all, designing the evaluation objectives, the whole evaluation process and its different stage and outputs supporting the Programme has to be taken into consideration. One main reference in this specific case, is the EC "Guidance Document on evaluation plans", as it provides recommendations for the design of evaluation plans and objectives, setting the main goals of the evaluation process in the 2014-2020 Programming period:

- provide a reference framework for evaluations, especially those for assessing effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Programme (Reg. 1303/2013, Art. 56.3);
- improve the quality of evaluations through effective planning, production and collection of the necessary data ensuring all necessary and appropriate resources (equipment, personnel, facilities, etc.) (Reg. 1303/2013, Art. 54.2);
- promote an evidence/evaluation-based policy;
- facilitate consolidated decisions on the implementation and the strategic orientation of the Programme;
- facilitate the synthesis, interpretation and use of results from monitoring and evaluation activities;
- ensure that the assessments provide useful information for the AIRs and for the Member States' reports;
- collect useful information on the impact of the Programme;
- ensure a realistic assessment of the Programmes impact;
- draw lessons for future programming periods;
- set out how partners were involved.

Therefore **those strategic elements will be included in the evaluation process** (also considering the different evaluation activities planned for 2014-2020: Operative Evaluations on the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme implementation, and its output Assessment Report; Strategic Impact Evaluations of each Priority axis' specific objectives of the Programme, and its output Thematic Reports), being a relevant reference for the Programme's evaluation objectives, which is crucial to focus on effectiveness and impact of the Programme itself on its area of action, as follows:

- to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the activities funded by the Programme;
- to check how the funds allocated to the Programme contributed to the objectives of each Priority;
- to evaluate all strategic and operative elements of Programme implementation.

The evaluations on effectiveness and impact are essential for the collection of information on the fulfillment of Programme objectives, to provide evidence of the benefits brought by the Programme interventions and also to ensure broader transparency. Furthermore, they help improving the Programme impact during the programming period and after its closure.

The evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Programme are defined by art. 54 (1) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 and the EC Guidance documents (in particular, the "Guidance document on monitoring and evaluation" and the "Guidance Document on the evaluation plan"). In line with Article 56 (3) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 the ERDF support contribution to the achievement of the objectives of each Priority shall be evaluated at least once during the Programming period.

Looking more specifically at the Programme, at its internal and external coherence in light of the new context described, evaluation objectives can be further detailed as follows:

- to highlight Programme visibility in terms of contribution to a development of local productive network strategy;
- to measure results in terms of better capacity of innovation and higher competitiveness of enterprises, also in a networking perspective;
- to enhance territorial attractiveness through promotion and safeguard of resources;
- to valorize experiences of crossborder governance and institutional cooperation, also developing innovative models of joint management.

10. Fine-tuning of evaluation questions and definition of evaluation methods to be adopted and analysis of their feasibility

Evaluation questions, related to broader evaluation topics, need to be identified and selected in a shared process among the Programme relevant actors, meaning not only actors holding management or control competences, but also stakeholders and beneficiaries. An ongoing process that sees different moments of revisions, integration and amendment in time, to flexibly fine-tune those questions in relation to Programme implementation. Following the output of the First and Second extensive evaluation reports, moreover, it is certainly more meaningful to focus on those revisions.

It is also crucial to support the definition of evaluation questions with effective methodological approaches and instruments, whose timing and feasibility need also to be carefully considered.

Therefore, evaluation questions must be fine-tuned with reference to the following items:

- the overall Programme strategy and development and effectiveness dynamics in the area;
- the evolution and change of territorial needs;
- the Programme performances, in terms of delivery, results, impact (with different breakdowns referring to priorities, specific objectives, operations);
- the Programme governance, managing and control dynamics;
- the previous evaluation activities.

In coherence with EU provisions and guidelines and with the Programme Evaluation Plan, evaluation questions must be fine-tuned complying with shared basic principles and orientations, pursuing its objectives as already described before in this document, and involving all the different relevant perspectives (Managing Authority/programming structure, beneficiaries and stakeholders):

- evaluation questions must be focused on different relevant actors, either individuals or organisations, in terms of impact on quality of life, quality of services, development and opportunities;
- evaluation questions must pay specific attention to innovative instruments, such as new services, and methods, such as new incentives, supported by the Programme;
- evaluation questions must be focused on processes, procedures and systems, using tools and methodologies of the evaluation not only to measure quantitative effects, but also to raise the awareness of the actual impact of the Programme on creating conditions for change and for local development. This will lead to the definition and fine-tuning of questions concerning the reasons why some outcomes have been determined and some other not, detecting where monitoring and management systems have proved to be efficient and effective, even envisaging reforming orientations;

- evaluation questions must be shaped to cover the Programme life cycle, identifying the system of cause and effect relationships bounding different evaluation steps and assessing the fundamental hypothesis of the whole programming process;
- evaluation questions must take into consideration the Programme's previous evaluation activities and documents, even in a follow-up perspective.

It is worth pointing out that the questions must be clear, relevant and focused, not only to assess outcomes and impact of the policies supported by the Programme, but also to provide decision-makers with updated orientations and a consequent capacity to promote policy and resources' reprogramming.

In the Programme Evaluation Plan, for each evaluation topic, key questions are declined in a two ways perspective: on the one hand looking at the project level, on the other considering the Programme level. Those questions are the core of the evaluation process, in a shared process - with the Managing Authority and the relevant stakeholders - of widening and deepening the terms of reference of the assessment, leading to a final set of questions founded on the available sources of information and data.

Evaluation questions, in a fine-tuning perspective, need to be closely interrelated with different evaluation products/outputs, as also described in Section 8: therefore, where evaluation will focus on efficiency and effectiveness of Programme implementation, results are described in the Assessment Reports. On the other hand, where evaluation is more oriented to impact evaluations - analysing specific objectives in the different Priority axis of the Programme - then Thematic Reports will be the output.



Priority Axis I - Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area

In Priority Axis 1 a strategy promoting more effective investments in research, innovation and education has been developed. Investments pursue the objective of strengthening the existing innovation potentials in all sectors - supporting the attraction of foreign investments and capital flows - through a better cooperation among public and private actors of the R&D system. The Programme area reveals a strong R&D context and the presence of public and private actors committed in research and innovation activities. At the same time, these actors still create weak linkages and short-term co-operation with the business sector, whose role is fundamental for the competitiveness and the growth of the productive system and for an innovation-friendly context. The Programme aims at developing and implementing strategies and actions contributing to a growth in the competitiveness on international market, also creating comparative advantages for SMEs operating in the eligible area. The Programme is committed to foster integration with smart specialization strategies in the area, promoting and multiplying business opportunities especially in the overlapping fields - sustainable living and working environment,

smart and integrated approach to natural resources and traditional productions (e.g. Smart Agri-food, cross border circular chains) and smart factories.

PRIORITY AXIS I							
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	RESULT INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	METHODOLOGIES	DATA	PERSPECTIVE	EVALUATION PRODUCT
SO.1.1. Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	Increased level of cross border cooperation among key actors of the Programme area	EQ1.1. How did the CP contribute to launching and implementing integrated actions between SMEs and R&I players?	Effectiveness	-Desk analysis -Time series analysis e trend analysis -Inferential statistical analysis	CP monitoring data	Project level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ.1.2. Have stable clusters or networks been established among different actors?	Sustainability	-Factorial design statistical analysis -Cluster analysis -Focus group			Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
		EQ.1.3. To what extent the CP supported the adoption of shared models of knowledge exchange?	Effectiveness				Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
		EQ1.4. What progress was made towards increasing the level of innovation and competitiveness of the system (in terms of market share)?	Effectiveness		Statistical data	Programme level	Second thematic report (by 31 December 2021)
		EQ.1.5. What progress was made towards increasing the level of innovation and competitiveness of the system increased (in terms of services and tools)?	Effectiveness	-Desk analysis -Counterfactual analysis -Scenario and what-if analysis - Delphi surveys - Focus group			
		EQ.1.6. To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the CP expected to continue thereafter?	Sustainability				



Priority Axis II - Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans

Priority Axis II identifies an overall strategy devoted to the creation of a society making use of lower carbon economy, not only by promoting emissions cutting in an integrated way in all the involved sectors, but also by promoting new life attitudes. The strategy aims at facing these challenges and needs through the development and implementation of place based low-carbon energy and mobility strategies contributing to reduce GHG emissions and to achieve EU energy targets. By capitalizing projects and past experiences it will be possible to improve local actors' capacities of implementing established solutions, in particular in the public sector. The strategy also aims at introducing innovative solutions for energy saving, resources efficiency, better exploitation of local sources for renewable energy production, smart grids, etc. New solutions for urban smart mobility will be looked at, fostering their sustainability, better quality, accessibility and innovation.

PRIORITY AXIS II	RESULT	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	METHODOLOGIES	DATA	PERSPECTIVE	EVALUATION PRODUCT
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR						
SO.2.1.Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	Level of capacities of the public sector in decreasing energy use	EQ2.1. How did the CP contribute to increase the level of knowledge and experiences exchange concerning the planning, financing and implementing of emissions reduction?	Effectiveness	- Desk analysis - Focus group - Delphi surveys		Project level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ2.2. To what extent has the CP supported the adoption of shared strategies for emissions reduction and green energies supply, involving public and private actors	Sustainability		CP monitoring data Statistical data		Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
		EQ2.3. How did the CP increase the adoption of shared models of urban smart mobility, involving public and private actors?	Effectiveness	- Desk analysis - Focus group - Delphi surveys	Surveys	Programme level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ2.4.To what extent has the CP raised awareness on energy saving and new mobility models (including lifestyle choices) ?	Sustainability				Second thematic report (by 31 December 2021)



Priority Axis III Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources

Priority Axis III is dedicated to natural and cultural heritage and resources, mainly by promoting their sustainable use as a development asset for the area. The valorisation and promotion of natural and cultural sites as an attractive touristic destination is also an objective, such as fostering the diffusion of ICT tools, new skills and competences, territorial marketing, branding and communication strategies, social media. Moreover, new jobs and growth may be created stimulating green technologies, capturing new demand for more sustainable products and services and at the same time improving environment quality with the help of innovative tools. The link between natural assets, managed by the several parks, cultural heritage and tourism will be developed in a sustainable, environment friendly and resource efficient way. Projects in this Priority Axis will also aim at the conservation, protection, attractiveness and valorisation of material and immaterial cultural heritage. The Programme recognizes the importance to preserve biodiversity finding common approaches and sharing visions and tools for the protection of the habitats.

PRIORITY AXIS III							
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	RESULT INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	METHODOLOGIES	DATA	PERSPECTIVE	EVALUATION PRODUCT
SO.3.1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	Level of Cross-border cooperation in the sustainable valorization of cultural and natural heritage	EQ3.1. How did the CP support the adoption of shared strategies, plans and tools related to conservation and protection of natural resources and habitats?	Effectiveness	-Desk analysis -Time series analysis -Trend analysis	CP monitoring data	Project level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ.3.2. What integrated projects and tools were put in place to target protected and environmentally highly valuable areas?	Effectiveness	-Desk analysis -Time series analysis -Trend analysis			Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
SO.3.3 Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	Average quality of bathing waters	EQ.3.3.To what extent did the CP support the adoption of shared strategies for the improvement of common resources management?	Sustainability	- Desk analysis - Focus group - Counterfactual analysis - Scenario and what-if analysis	Statistical data	Programme level	First thematic report (by 31 May 2020)
		EQ.3.4.To what extent did the CP strength the promotion of sustainable and responsible awareness and behaviours?	Sustainability	- Desk analysis - Focus group - Counterfactual analysis - Scenario and what-if analysis - Delphi surveys			Second thematic report (by 31 December 2021)
SO.3.2. Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	Level of preservation of status of habitats	EQ.3.5. What progress was made towards the implementation of actions promoting better coordination and interaction among stakeholders?	Effectiveness	- Desk analysis - Focus group - Counterfactual analysis - Scenario and what-if analysis	CP monitoring data	Project level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ.3.6. To what extent did the CP promote the capitalization of past	Effectiveness	- Desk analysis - Focus group			Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)

experiences and the exchange of best practices?

- Counterfactual analysis
- Scenario and what-if analysis

EQ.3.7. To what extent did the CP support the implementation of innovative initiatives to stimulate a sustainable economic development and job opportunities?

Sustainability

- Desk analysis
- Focus group
- Counterfactual analysis
- Scenario and what-if analysis

Programme level

First thematic report (by 31 December 2021)



Priority Axis IV Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance

The strategy of Priority Axis IV aims at enhancing modernization and quality of public administrations and services, in particular by benefitting from mutual experiences, shared knowledge, harmonized and coordinated practices among the population of the two borders. Priority Axis IV will also foster the cooperation between public and private sectors on a set of key issues (e.g. vocational education, energy, health technologies, etc.). Public administrations should put together available resources, even immaterial ones (competences, knowledge, open-data, technical support, etc.), to gain critical mass and achieve common results and targets. The strategy also aims at bringing together citizens, public bodies, NGOs, minorities, companies and any other entities, in any combination needed for strengthening cooperation. The intent is to define common frameworks, joint strategies, networking tools concerning the aspects that are particularly sensitive to a more cooperative and cohesive approach between the two borders.

PRIORITY AXIS IV

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	RESULT INDICATOR	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	METHODOLOGIES	DATA	PERSPECTIVE	EVALUATION PRODUCT
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SO.4.1.Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	Increased capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in cross-border cooperation and governance	EQ2.1. - Support from the CP to the implementation of capacity building actions aimed at development of structures, systems and tools	Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk analysis - Focus group - Delphi surveys 	CP monitoring data	Project level	Second extensive Assessment Report (by 30 May 2019)
		EQ2.2. - Have shared processes concerning regulatory frameworks, functional networks, common structures, coordination of policies and investments, governance models been developed?	Effectiveness				Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
		EQ2.3. - Support from the CP to the implementation of capacity building actions addressing the human potential and its training	Sustainability				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk analysis - Focus group

Effective evaluation design, further than on detailed and specific questions as pointed out before, must anyway concentrate on basic **evaluation questions characterising the general Programme performances**. Those kind of questions refer mainly to the efficiency of the Programme structure and procedures, including simplification and reduction of administrative burden.

Evaluation questions will be fine-tuned around few relevant questions:

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION PRODUCTS
Performance (financial/physical/procedural)	EQ.P.1 How the programme is being implemented and managed?	First extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2017)
		Second extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2019)
Efficiency	EQ.E.1 How effective are the programme management structure and procedures?	First extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2017)
	EQ.E.2 How effective are the monitoring and indicators systems in supporting the implementation phase?	Second extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2019)
	EQ.E.3 Were there delays or other problems in the granting of the resources?	Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
	EQ.E.4 Were the general objectives of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?	Third extensive Assessment Report (By 31 December 2022)
Simplification and reduction of administrative burden	EQ.S.1 Did the innovative procedures introduced bring about simplification for the beneficiaries of the CP?	First extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2017)
	EQ.S.2 How user friendly are programme procedures and forms, manuals	Second extensive Assessment Report (By 30 May 2019)

The overall evaluation approach must follow the new directions set out by the European Commission for the 2014-2020 programming period, highlighting its role of key element in the development of a systems of causal and circular relationships among policy evaluation, policy planning and policy reshaping, thus shifting the focus from the co-financed activities' implementation towards a broader assessment of the objectives' delivery capacity and of the EU funds contribution impact on policies improvement and development.

Such a renewed approach needs to be backed by a more focused and effective methodological framework, in particular where complex and articulated Programmes are at stake: this the case of the CP Italia-Slovenia, whose strategy develops around a complex and articulated set of actions, identifying multiple targets and instruments, envisaging innovative solutions and scenarios, and mixing different perspectives.

Therefore, planning an effective evaluation design implies the use of a consistent and well-founded evaluation methodology, aiming at providing the relevant actors (i.e. most of all, the Managing Authority, the European Commission, territorial stakeholders, beneficiaries) with quality, updated and reliable data, complying with the following strategic principles: coherence, feasibility and flexibility.

As far as coherence is concerned, the elements of careful consideration will be mainly referred to the relation among evaluation instruments/approaches and objectives, therefore implying evaluation methodologies focused on the implementation, based on logical frameworks for the assessment of the coherence among strategic objectives, specific objectives, operational/implementing strategies.

In order to ensure a feasible methodological framework, in terms of resources such as of timing, the evaluation activities will rely on methodologies focused on quantity and quality of data, sources and systems of information: in particular, evaluation methodologies following the “Theory based evaluation”, mostly qualitative and process evaluation methodologies mixing and combining different approaches and methods, either qualitative or quantitative oriented, aiming also at identifying causal relations in the implementation flow.

Moreover, flexibility must also lead to a successful evaluative approach, mostly through the capacity of shifting in progress the evaluation topics towards the actual need of assessment: this approach will prefer evaluation methodologies based on counterfactual analysis, involving different statistical methods and evidence-based benchmarking, also looking at alternative policy and decisions making choices.

In order to sum-up and to clarify different approaches and instruments, the following images describe how the above mentioned evaluation methodologies will be carried out.

