



**ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT
2016**

Cooperation Programme
Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia
for the programme period 2014–2020
June 2017

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1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB029
Title	Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia
Version	1.0
Reporting year	2016
Date of approval of the report by the Monitoring Committee	10 May 2017

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(A) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

Key information on the implementation of the Cooperation Programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

This is the second Annual Implementation Report (AIR) for the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia for programming period 2014-2020. It reports on the progress achieved under the CP in implementing the programme during the calendar year 2016. The report complies with Article 50(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, which requires the Managing Authority to submit an Annual Implementation Report to the Commission each year from year 2016 until and including year 2023. According to the Article 14 of the Regulation 1299/2013 the reports have to be submitted by 31 May 2016 and by the same date of each subsequent year until and including year 2023. For the reports submitted in 2017 and 2019, the deadline for submission is 30 June.

The report was prepared by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, acting as the Managing Authority of the programme in cooperation with its programme partners. The Monitoring Committee (MC) discussed and approved the Annual Implementation Report 2016 on the 4th MC meeting held on 9 and 10 May.

All programme structures and both Member States, Slovenia and Croatia were in the year 2016 very much involved in the implementation of the Cooperation Programme in particular in the preparation of the Open Call and Application documentation, Implementation manual for beneficiaries, Programme guidelines for programme structures, preparation of the Description of Management and Control System and in information and publicity activities.

By the end of 2015 and in the beginning of 2016 the Joint Secretariat prepared the Application Pack with all the forms and manuals for the submission of the Strategic project under Priority axis 1 – Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins. The first part of the project containing non-structural flood risk reduction measures with the acronym FRISCO1 was submitted via eMS system in January 2016. The project was approved on the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting on 11 April 2016 and the ceremonial signing of the ERDF contract took place on 20 May 2016 in Podčetrtek (SI).

On the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting on 11 April 2016 also 6 Technical Assistance projects were approved to ensure the efficient implementation of the Cooperation Programme. The

allocation of the Technical Assistance funds aims to ensure a proficient operation of all bodies which are needed for the frictionless and successful programme implementation, e.g. Managing Authority (MA), Joint Secretariat (JS), First Level Control (FLC) in Slovenia and Croatia, Certifying Authority (CA), Audit Authority (AA) in Slovenia/Audit Body in Croatia (AB), National Authority (NA) in Slovenia and National Authority in Croatia.

By the end of 2015 and in the beginning of 2016 the Joint Secretariat also prepared the Application Pack with all the forms and manuals for the submission of the project within the Open Call for proposals for Priority axis 2 – Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources and Priority axis 3 – Healthy, safe and accessible border areas. Open Call was launched on 15 January 2016, published in the Official gazette of the Republic of Slovenia and together with the Application pack also published on the programme website. In 2016 two deadlines for the submission of the project applications within the Open Call were set.

2 workshops were held on 17 (Rogaška Slatina, SI) and 22 February (Opatija, HR) for the potential applicants within the first deadline of the Open Call which ended on 11 March 2016. More than 300 participants attended the workshops.

In the first deadline of the Open Call 91 project applications were received and after the Administrative and eligibility assessment only 26 project applications were assessed for quality. Because of the high number of administratively ineligible applications it was agreed that the following measures should be taken for the second deadline: to implement additional functionalities in the eMS, to prepare and publish the most common mistakes of the 1st deadline on the programme web page and to put more emphasis on the next workshops on the mistakes that accrued in the 1st deadline and also to put more emphasis on the quality of the projects, to present in more detail how to prepare a good project in line with the Cooperation Programme. All the agreed measures were taken to improve the number of administratively compliant applications and to improve the quality of the projects for the future deadlines. After the Quality assessment 5 project applications were proposed for approval and approved by the MC on the 3rd MC meeting held on 30 and 31 August 2016. 3 projects were approved under Priority axis 2 and 2 projects under Priority axis 3. Ceremonial signing of the 5 ERDF contracts took place on 18 October 2016 in Rijeka (HR).

The second deadline of the Open Call ended on 14 November 2016 and 2 workshops were held on 10 (Tuhelj, HR) and 11 October (Črnomelj, SI) for the potential applicants. More than 200 participants attended the workshops. Also one thematic workshop regarding the Investment priority 6d (Protecting and restoring biodiversity) was held on 16 October 2016 (Samobor, HR) by Slovenian and Croatian National Authority.

Until the deadline 112 project applications were received. The assessment process started in November 2016 and was concluded in April 2017. The approval of the project applications submitted in the second deadline will take place on the 4th MC meeting on 9 and 10 May 2017.

To ensure the efficient implementation of the Cooperation Programme 3 Bilateral technical meetings with Programme partners were also organized in 2016.

In line with the Communication strategy along with the workshops for applicants and ceremonial signing of contracts for the approved projects also one major event which promoted the funding opportunities and presented the achievements of the CP was organised together with the final conference of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 on 29 November 2016 in Brežice (SI). More than 120 participants attended the event. Also the programme website was upgraded with the Interactive map where all the projects and project partners of the co-financed projects of the OP

SI-HR 2007-2013 and CP SI-HR 2014-2020 are presented.

All activities regarding the designation process started in 2016 with the preparation of the Description of Management and Control System (DMCS) and all required Programme guidelines. The DMCS with required annexes was submitted to the Audit Authority in the beginning of August 2016. In the beginning of March 2017 positive opinion on the compliance of the MA/CA with the designation criteria was issued by the auditors.

In relation to the indicator data, the progress can be measured for the 5 approved projects within the Priority axis 2 and 3 (1st deadline of the Open Call), for 1 approved strategic project under Priority axis 1 and for the Technical assistance.

In the previous years (2014-2016) the initial pre-financing payments were transferred from the European Commission (EC) to the Certifying Authority (CA). During the reporting period no expenditure were certified to the EC and no irregularities detected.

In relation to the indicator data, the progress can be measured only on the level of the selected projects (see table 2). No projects fully implemented the activities by the end of 2016. Financial data of the selected projects is presented in section 3.1.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
A.1	1. Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins	Within Priority axis 1 the first part of the strategic project containing non-structural flood risk reduction measures with the acronym FRISCO1 was approved and started with the implementation. The contracted ERDF amount is 3.460.307,50 EUR.
A.2	2. Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources	<p>Within the 1st deadline of the Open Call 3 projects were approved and started with the implementation within the Priority axis 2, Investment priority 6c. The contracted ERDF amount for the 3 projects is 3.650.280,35 EUR.</p> <p>The problem was that no projects were approved under Investment priority 6d (only 7 submitted project applications which were not administratively compliant or not in line with the programme requirements regarding the content). To address this problem thematic workshop regarding the Investment priority 6d was organised by Slovenian and Croatian National Authority to promote this priority and to further educate the applicants how to prepare good projects in line with the programme requirements.</p>
A.3	3. Healthy, safe and accessible border areas	Within the 1 st deadline of the Open Call 2 projects were approved and started with the implementation within the Priority axis 3. The contracted ERDF amount for the 2 projects is

		955.949,40 EUR.
A.4	4. Technical assistance	<p>6 Technical Assistance projects were approved to ensure the efficient implementation of the Cooperation Programme and to ensure a proficient operation of all bodies which are needed for the successful programme implementation, e.g. Managing Authority (MA), Joint Secretariat (JS), First Level Control (FLC) in Slovenia and Croatia, Certifying Authority (CA), Audit Authority (AA) in Slovenia/Audit Body in Croatia (AB), National Authority (NA) in Slovenia and National Authority in Croatia. The total ERDF amount available for the Technical assistance is 3.000.000 EUR.</p> <p>Activities within this priority axis in 2016 were financed from the Technical Assistance of the 2007-2013 programme.</p>

3.2 Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Data for common and programme-specific indicators by investment priority are transmitted using the tables 1 to 2 below.

TABLE 1: Result indicators (by priority axis and specific objective); applies also to technical assistance priority axis

<i>Automatic from SFC</i>						ANNUAL VALUE										
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	2015	2016¹	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Observations (if necessary)
5bRI	Share of targeted transboundary river basins area under flood risk	%	6,47%	2014	5%	6,47 %	6,47 %	6,47 %								No data is available for the year 2016 because the first reporting will be done in 2018.
6cRI	Visitors to cultural and natural heritage sites in the programme area	Number	4,911,583	2013	5,750,000	4,911,583	4,911,583	4,911,583								
6dRI1	Average degree of conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in programme area-species	Number	Species CS: 2,050	2014	Species CS: 2,052	2,050	2,050	2,050								
6dRI2	Average degree of conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in programme area-	Number	Habitat CS: 2,070	2014	Habitat CS: 2,072	2,070	2,070	2,070								

¹ No data is available for the year 2016 because the first reporting will be done in 2018.

	habitat															
11RI	Level of cooperation quality in the field of health, social care, safety and mobility services within the programme area	Average score from 0 to 5	2,22	2015	3,33	2,22	2,22	2,22								

TABLE 2: Common and programme specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority); applies also to technical assistance priority axes).

S – Selected operations F – Fully implemented operations*	ID	Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
S	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures	Persons	1500	0	0	0								
F															
S	5b-1	Transboundary river basins with joint tools, models and maps for flood risk management developed	Number	6	0	0	6								
F															
S	5b-2	Transboundary river basins with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures implemented	Number	4	0	0	0								
F															
S	5b-3	People with increased professional capacity due to their participation in cross-border activities in transboundary flood risk and river basin management	Number	20	0	0	20								
F															
S	CO09	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attractions	visits/year	50,000	0	0	62,800								
F															
S	6c-1	Small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural	Number	15	0	0	17								
F															

		heritage													
S	6c-2	New or improved cross-border sustainable tourism products and destinations integrating natural or cultural heritage	Number	20	0	0	13								
F															
S	6c-3	Persons participating in capacity building activities	Number	500	0	0	600								
F															
S	CO01	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	7	0	0	0								
F															
S	CO02	Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	7	0	0	0								
F															
S	CO23	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares (ha)	31,000 ha	0	0	0								
F															
S	6d-1	Implemented practical demonstrations of measures in nature in support of biodiversity	Number	10	0	0	0								
F															
S	6d-2	Joint studies and tools for assessing and promoting ecosystem services developed	Number	3	0	0	0								
F															
S	6d-3	Persons with improved practical skills and competences for implementation of biodiversity protection measures and	Number	250	0	0	0								
F															

		valorisation of ecosystem services													
S	11-1	Institutions participating in cross-border structures	Number	45	0	0	20								
F															
S	11-2	Persons representing institutions and stakeholders from the programme area with improved skills and competences in CB service delivery	Number	300	0	0	536								
F															
S	TA-1	Joint CB projects implemented and concluded	Number	57	0	0	0								
F															
S	TA-2	Joint CB informational and publicity events	Number	10	0	5	7								
F															
S	TA-3	Employees whose salaries are co-financed by the technical assistance	FTE (Full Time Equivalent)	12	0	4,8	11,67								
F															
S	TA-4	e-Monitoring System established	Number	1	0	1	1								
F															
S	TA-5	First level controllers established	Number	2	0	0	2								
F															
S	TA-6	Programme evaluation plan prepared and approved by Monitoring Committee (MC)	Number	1	0	0	1								
F															

S	TA-7	Programme communication plan prepared and approved by MC	Number	1	0	1	1								
F															
S	TA-8	Guiding document addressed to applicants and beneficiaries	Number	1	0	0	2								
F															
S	TA-9	Information, consultation and training measures for applicants and beneficiaries	Number	8	0	0	5								
F															

* *S* - Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]

F - Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]

3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) – submitted in annual implementation reports from 2017 onwards

Reporting on financial indicators, key implementation steps, output and result indicators to act as milestones and targets for the performance framework (submitted starting with the report in 2017).

TABLE 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

Priority Axis	Indicator Type	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Mile-stone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Observations (if necessary)
1	Financial	5bFI	Payments: certified total amount of eligible expenditure	EUR	1,720,000 EUR	11,795,950 EUR	0	0	0								
1	Output	5b-2	Transboundary river basins with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures implemented	Number	0	4	0	0	0								
1	Key implementation step	5bK1	Transboundary river basins where works have started	Number	1	4	0	0	0								
2	Financial	6FI	Payments: certified total amount of eligible expenditure	EUR	3,963,439 EUR	33,028,657 EUR	0	0	0								
2	Output	6c-1	Small scale	Number	0	15	0	0	0								

			investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage														
2	Key implementation step	6cKI	Restoration or construction works at heritage sites or at supporting visitor infrastructure started	Number	5	15	0	0	10								
2	Output	CO2 3	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares (ha)	0	31,000 ha	0	0	0								
2	Key implementation step	6dK I	Surface area of habitats planned to be supported based on selected projects in order to attain a better conservation status	Area covered (ha)	10,000 ha	31,000 ha	0	0	0								
3	Financial	11-	Payments:	EUR	707,757	5,897,975	0	0	0								

		FI	certified total amount of eligible expenditure		EUR	EUR													
3	Output	11-1	Institutions participating in cross-border structures	Number	3	45	0	0	0										

3.4 Financial data (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

TABLE 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level as set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014² [Model for transmission of financial data]³ and table 16 of model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

The table is automatically generated in the SFC.

Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)

Not applicable for CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia.

² OJ L 286, 30.9.2014, p. 1.

³ Structured data required for the report on YEI which is to be submitted in April 2015 in accordance with Article 19(3) and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013.

TABLE 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention (Article 112(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013) as set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 [Model for transmission of financial data] and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

The table is automatically generated in the SFC.

TABLE 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area

1	2	3	4	5
	The amount of ERDF support* envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)	Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area ⁴	0	0	0	0

* ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

⁴ In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

Synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the programme that have become available during the previous financial year, including the name and reference period of the evaluation reports used.

The Evaluation plan was approved on the 3rd MC meeting on 30 and 31 August 2016. According to the Evaluation plan the first evaluation focusing on the programme management structure and processes, project application, selection procedures and Communication Strategy is planned for the year 2017.

The first implementation evaluation started in the second half of 2016 and was according to the timing foreseen in the evaluation plan carried on in the first half of 2017. The focus of the evaluation was on programme management and implementation, the project application and selection procedures and the communication strategy. The results of this evaluation are only partly presented in this report; the final results will be presented in AIR 2017.

5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

In 2016 there were no specific direct problems, which would endanger the performance of the programme. However we had to address some challenges regarding the large number of ineligible applications after the Administrative assessment within the 1st deadline of the Open Call and also the low interest in Investment Priority 6d where small number of projects applied and none were selected in the 1st deadline. Because of the high number of administratively ineligible applications the following measures were taken for the second deadline: implementing additional functionalities in the eMS, preparation and publishing the most common mistakes of the 1st deadline on the programme web page and more emphasis was put on the workshops on the mistakes that occurred in the 1st deadline and also more emphasis was put on the quality of the projects, to present in more detail how to prepare a good project in line with the Cooperation Programme. For the Investment Priority 6d the separate thematic workshop was held by Slovenian and Croatian National Authority in order to attract more potential applicants and to present in more detail what is expected from the projects within this Investment Priority. As a result of this actions the number of administratively in compliant applications was drastically reduced and we have received more applications for the Investment Priority 6d and approved 2 project (under 6d) within the 2nd deadline of the Open Call.

Regarding the Priority Axis 1 where the project with non-structural flood risk reduction measures with the acronym FRISCO1 was approved, some delays in the implementation were encountered. To prevent further delays it was agreed among programme partners and Monitoring committee members to closely monitor the activities within the FRISCO1 project and that the progress of the project is reported by the partnership on each Monitoring Committee meeting.

The year 2016 was also challenging for all programme structures, due to the overlapping of both financial periods, on-going implementation of the programme period 2007-2013 and preparing all the necessary documents/procedures for designation of the programme 2014-2020. Despite the limited human resources involved in the activities covering both programme periods, the

programme authorities managed to approve first projects and to implement activities related to two deadlines for submission, assessment and selection process of the 2014-2020 period. Also the designation process was complex and challenging due to many documents which had to be prepared, processes set up and described, understanding of new requirements (e.g. concerning the annual closure of accounts) setting up the monitoring system (eMS) to be available in time for the applicants and beneficiaries.

b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1 (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate

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6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report

Citizen's summary is presented as a separate document.

7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

Where the managing authority decided to use financial instruments it must send to the Commission a specific report covering the financial instruments operations as an annex to the annual implementation report

Not applicable for CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia.

8. WHERE APPROPRIATE, PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (ARTICLE 101(H) AND ARTICLE 111(3) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(B) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

Not applicable for CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia.

8.1. Major projects

TABLE 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP 1. completed 2. approved 3. submitted 4. planned for notification/submission to Commission	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification/submission date (if applicable) (year, quarter)	Date of tacit agreement / approval by Commission (if applicable)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axis/Investment priorities	Current state of realisation – financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)	Current state of realisation - physical progress Main implementation stage of the project 1.completed/in operation; 2.advanced construction; 3. construction; 4. procurement; 5. design	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract ⁵ (if applicable)	Observations (if necessary)

⁵ In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

Not applicable for CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia.

TABLE 8: Joint action plans

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP 1. completed 2. > 50% implemented 3. Started 4. approved 5. submitted 6. planned	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP 1. normal 2. pilot 3. YEI	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations (if necessary)

Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

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PART B - REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEARS 2017, 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

FOR EACH PRIORITY AXIS - Assessment of the information provided above and progress towards achieving the objectives of the programme, including the contribution of the ERDF to changes in the value of result indicators, when evidence is available from evaluations

Introduction

Until end of 2016, in total 12 projects were contracted under all four Priority Axes: a strategic project under Priority Axis (PA)1, five projects under PA 2 and 3 and 6 Technical Assistance projects.

The share of contracted Union funds (ERDF) allocated to PA1, 2 and 3 was 18.7%.

The geographical distribution of approved projects under PA2 and PA3 by the location of project partners shows that so far the implementation of the programme on the Slovene side has been centred mainly on three out of nine eligible regions (Obalno-kraška, Podravska and Osrednjeslovenska) whereas the distribution of partners on Croatian side was more dispersed; out of eight counties only Muđimurska county has no project partner yet.

TA projects were contracted in the total allocated ERDF amount.

Project beneficiaries have not yet reported on the project progress.

The progress in achievement of the programme objectives can be assessed on the basis of planned outcomes of the projects, which were approved until 31 December 2016, and their expected contributions to the programme output indicators and specific objectives. The calculation of result indicators for priority axes is planned for 2018.

PA1 (5b) - Specific objective 1.1: Flood risk reduction in the transboundary Dragonja, Kolpa/Kupa, Sotla/Sutla, Drava, Mura and Bregana river basins

34.5% of ERDF funds allocated to PA1 were contracted for a strategic project prepared by the Croatian and Slovenia water authorities that is going to contribute to coordinated flood risk management and to reduced flood risks through implementation of non-structural measures (joint models, maps and tools) in 6 targeted river basins. The project also provides a basis for preparation of documentation (studies and design) for the optimal structural measures that will be implemented in subsequent strategic project(s).

Expected contribution of approved projects to the programme output indicators:

The approved project is expected to contribute 100% to achievement of the target value of output indicators 5b-1 and 5b-3, while the contribution to output indicators CO20 (population benefitting from flood protection measures) and 5b-2 (transboundary river basins with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures implemented) is planned to be addressed by the subsequent strategic project(s) designed on the basis of the currently

implemented one. The activities on the implementation of strategic project are closely monitored by the Monitoring Committee.

PA2 (6c, d) - Specific objective 2.1: Active heritage preservation through sustainable tourism

The highest interest of potential beneficiaries measured in number of received applications under the 1st deadline of the open call for PA2 and PA3 was for the investment priority 6c. 63 of 91 received applications (69%) addressed the specific objective 2.1. Tourism has been recognised as one of the strongest area of cross border cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia also in the period 2007-2013 and contributed to some already well-established cross-border partnerships.

Three approved projects, which account for 13% of ERDF funds allocated to PA2, are expected to contribute to the programme specific objective through development of new or upgrading of existing sustainable tourist products. These are based on valorisation of cultural and natural heritage of the programme area. As regards selected themes, the protection and valorisation of maritime heritage in the coastal areas, ethnological heritage of rural areas in Podravska and Varaždinska regions, and development of tourist packages integrating dispersed cultural heritage in six programme eligible regions were supported by now. The programme area is expected benefit from new maritime heritage interpretation centres, tourist info centres, visitor centres and new packages and programme for selected target groups, including solutions for monitoring of visits. Much emphasis is given to capacity building activities and promotion of the new tourist products. Modern technologies are planned to be used in the product development (virtual museums, 3D experience ethno house,...).

Expected contribution of approved projects to the programme output indicators:

- The number of planned visits per year to supported sites of cultural or natural heritage (CO09) is expected to exceed the programme targets by 13% (62,800 compared to 50,000 targeted)
- Small scale-investment in visitor infrastructure and preservation of cultural and natural heritage (6c-1) in approved projects is exceeded by 13% (17 planned, 15 targeted)
- The projects include 13 new or improved sustainable CB-tourist products (for example new crossborder routes with heritage attractions and services) and are likely to contribute to achieving 65% of the target value of the programme output indicator 6c-2
- The approved projects intend to involve 600 persons in capacity building activities, which is 20% above the set target for indicator 6c-3.

SMEs are eligible project partners under this specific objective. Although they were included as project partners in received applications, none of the so far selected project partnerships includes SMEs. Therefore there has been no contribution to output indicators CO01 (no. of enterprises receiving support) and CO02 (number of enterprises receiving grants) yet, however SMEs are addressed as project target group in approved projects. Regarding this issue the effort to attract more SMEs to be involved as project partners was made on the workshops for potential applicants and on the individual meetings with potential applicants. As a result in the 2nd deadline of the Open Call 3 SMEs are included in selected project partnership and we believe that the output indicators CO01 and CO02 should be reached within the future deadlines of the Open Call.

Specific objective 2.2: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and promoting ecosystem services

Although there were 7 applications received to the 1st deadline, no projects were approved under the specific objective 2.1. The main reason was that 6 projects failed in administrative and eligibility check and the remaining one was not addressing adequately the priority contents.

Expected contribution of approved projects to the programme output indicators:

The programme specific objective has thus not yet been addressed.

For the applications to be received under the 2nd deadline, a specific workshop was organised for applicants to investment priority 6d where the competent authorities from Slovenia and Croatia explained what were expected contributions from the projects to be relevant for the cooperation programme. Under the 2nd deadline the number of received applications increased to 10 and 7 projects entered the quality assessment.

PA3 (11) - Specific objective 3.1: Building partnerships among public authorities and stakeholders for healthy, safe and accessible border areas

21 (23% of all) applications submitted to the 1st deadline addressed this specific objective. 19.1% of ERDF funds allocated under PA3 were contracted for two projects addressing the institutional cooperation in the field of social and health care and are focused on provision of services for elderly persons and person with dementia.

The projects are going to facilitate increased exchange of good practices between cooperating institutions, identification of solutions for optimisation of services for people with dementia, joint programme for deinstitutionalised long-term care for the elderly, day care centre. Both projects will also contribute to capacity building targets of the programme by training of persons providing home care services, persons working with people with dementia, social workers,...

The expected contribution of the approved projects to programme output objectives:

- 20 institutions will be participating in CB structures, which contributes to 44 % of the set target value for indicator 11-1
- it is expected that 536 persons representing institutions and stakeholders in the programme area will improve skills and competences, which is already 79% above the set target value of the indicator 11-2

Overall assessment of the achievement of the programme objectives

The contracted amount of ERDF funds allocated under PA1, PA2 and PA3 until end of 2016 was relatively small (18.7%). Although there was great interest for the participation in the programme noticed on the kick-off events and informative workshops as well as in the number of received applications to the open call (PA2 and PA3), one of the key reasons for low commitment of funds was that a relatively high share of applications (71%) did not pass the administrative compliance and eligibility check under 1st deadline. Compared to the procedures in the last programme period, applicants were not asked for clarifications or provision of missing document during this step anymore in order to increase the efficiency. Quality assessment also showed that less than one fifth of examined applications were recommended for approval.

The MA/JS analysed main deficiencies and presented them to the MC and communicated them to potential applicants to the 2nd deadline on the programme website and during informative workshops. The rate of administratively compliant and eligible applications increased to 60% in the 2nd deadline. The MC decided to observe results of the assessment and selection process under 2nd deadline before taking any further steps if needed. In order

to further decrease the number of administratively ineligible applications it was decided by the MC to allow request for supplements in the future deadlines regarding the administrative criterion A4 “The Application Package is compiled in the required language” where the most errors occurred. In order to improve the number of selected projects also a lot of effort was put on how to improve the quality of the projects and that the projects fully contribute to the Cooperation Programme – on the workshops for potential applicants and also on individual meetings with potential applicants more emphasis was put on the information and education of the applicants how to prepare a good quality project in line with the Cooperation Programme. As a result 12 projects were selected within the 2nd deadline of the Open Call in 2017.

On the basis of the expected contribution of approved projects to the programme output indicators the programme is about to progress well towards achievement of specific objectives 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1, while the implementation under specific objective 2.2 has not yet started.

Although there is no data available on the actual achievements of approved projects, it is assumed that some target values of the programme output indicators have been underestimated. This regards especially the capacity building activities under PA2 and PA3 (6c-3 and 11-2), where target values are likely to be exceeded.

PA 4 – technical assistance

The expected contribution of the approved projects to programme output objectives

Achievement of the annual targets is progressing well and without significant difficulties.

Programme evaluation plan and Communication strategy were approved by MC and are being implemented accordingly. Applicants and beneficiaries have access to the guiding document, which has been updated/amended on 5 September 2016, when the 2nd deadline for submission of applications was published.

The programme has also made an important step towards ensuring human resource capacities which are closer to the planned targets.

9.2 Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

The principles set out in the Article 7 of the Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013 were taken into account in the programme implementation.

The horizontal principles and their explanation were included in the Implementation manual for beneficiaries – Part 1 (about the programme). Applicants had to self-assess contribution of the project to horizontal principles as positive, neutral or negative in the application forms and justify the assessment with concrete activities undertaken in the project.

The MC adopted the quality assessment criteria for the projects to be supported under PA2 and PA3. Under assessment of the set of strategic criteria the contributions of the projects to the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination was observed by the assessors. The projects demonstrating positive contributions were assessed with 1 point for each of the two principles. The maximum score of points under strategic set of criteria is 39 for projects submitted.

Horizontal principles were also observed in the assessment of the strategic project approved under PA1.

The need for respecting of the horizontal principles was promoted on informative workshops for potential applicants to open call (5 implemented so far). All projects have to respect horizontal principles. In application forms, all projects approved under PA2 and PA3 assessed contributions to promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination as positive in the application forms.

Under PA1 the measures aiming at flood risk protection will contribute to equal opportunities for the development of the areas exposed to the risk of floods. This should be achieved with the joint activities within the project area that will assure this area with new solutions and knowledge about the risk of floods and also prevent flooding. With these activities the project area will gain more opportunities for the development which did not exist before.

All five projects under PA2 and PA3 observe the two horizontal principles, while specific contributions are expected in particular through ensuring open access to participation in the project activities for men and women equally and with respect of non-discrimination. Project will further allow free access to project results and knowledge. The small scale tourist infrastructure, where relevant, will be constructed/renovated in a way to allow access to persons with disabilities.

Specific attention in ensuring equal opportunities is devoted to the elderly and persons with dementia. Contribution to quality of life expected by improved institutional capacities to provide better services and promote social inclusion. Under PA2, the new tourist offers developed in rural areas intend to promote new employment possibilities for the rural population.

9.3 Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

The principles set out in Article 8 of the Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013 were also taken into account in the programme implementation. Topics such as environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, disaster resilience, and risk prevention and management are to a great extent included in the programme priorities (in particular PA1 and PA2).

Sustainable development as horizontal principle was included in the Implementation manual for beneficiaries – Part 1 (about the programme) together with concrete examples of how it can be promoted in projects. The applicants had to self-assess contribution of the project to sustainable development as positive, neutral or negative in the application forms and justify the assessment with concrete activities undertaken in the project.

The MC adopted the quality assessment criteria for the projects to be supported under PA2 and PA3. Under assessment of the set of strategic criteria the contributions of the projects to sustainable development was observed by the assessors. The projects demonstrating positive contributions were assessed with 1 point. The maximum score of points under strategic set of criteria is 39 for projects submitted.

Sustainable development was also observed in the assessment of the strategic project approved under PA1.

Under PA1 non-structural measures will contribute to coordinated flood risk management. In terms of expected contributions, the projects under PA2 address sustainable tourism development and include actions to increase awareness of the visitors and local population on the importance of preservation of the natural and cultural heritage and its valorisation. The projects are about to observe in implementation efficient use of resources, use of communication technologies instead of travels, and similar. It is expected that further contributions are expected in particular from projects that will be supported under investment priority 6d, which has not yet started.

9.4 Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Figures calculated automatically by the SFC2014 based on categorisation data.

Priority axis	Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of total allocation of the programme (%)
A.1	3.460.307,31	34,51%
Total	3.460.307,31	7.50%

The stated financial resources will be spent by the approved strategic project FRISCO 1 containing non-structural flood risk reduction measures within the 1st Priority axis – Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins.

The planned non-structural flood risk reduction activities in the target area (Dragonja, Kolpa/Kupa, Sotla/Sutla, Drava, Mura and Bregana river basins) within the FRISCO 1 project are:

- Identification of the key natural water retention areas in the river basins of the target area;
- Implementation of the natural water retention measures;
- Development and upgrade of the flood forecasting models and flood alert systems;
- Improvement of flood hazard and flood risk mapping;
- Awareness rising and capacity building activities for citizens, businesses, farmers, land owners and public institutions to understand flood risk prevention measures and water management processes and to learn how to response during flood events;

- f. Capacity building of institutions responsible for flood risk management and river basin management (e.g. water management authorities, bilateral commission for water management) and other relevant institutions (e.g. hydro-meteorology services, civil protection, spatial planning and nature protection authorities, etc);
- g. Collection, management and exchange of the flood risk management related data;
- h. Identification of operational gaps and administration burdens for sound transboundary flood risk management, preparation of concrete solutions and if possible, their integration into national systems and daily practice;
- i. Preparation of cross-border harmonized plans, studies and documentation for the implementation of the structural flood risk reduction measures (Strategic environmental assessment (SEA), Environmental impact assessment (EIA), hydrological studies, feasibility studies, etc.);

9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

The Monitoring Committee has been formed in respect of Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The process of selection and nomination of MC members has been coordinated on each side by the National Authorities (NA). NAs also cooperated in the cross border context in order to complement and secure high level of representation of relevant sectors and territories.

The MC comprises members with voting rights and members in advisory capacity. The voting members were nominated with a view to represent all relevant sectors addressed by the Cooperation Programme. The members include representatives of the local and regional levels, civil society, economic partners, and ministries.

The functioning of the MC has been effective. MC members in both partner countries organise preparatory meetings where relevant topics are discussed and opinions aligned nationally. Preparation also allows for more efficient and effective discussion at MC meetings.

MC is supported by Joint Secretariat. MC members have access to relevant materials and information on the intranet. The names of the MC members and MC decisions are published on the programme website.

The programme partners are informed about all programme activities (workshops, meetings ...) and are invited to programme events organised by MA and JS.

10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (A) AND (B), OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013

10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations

The Evaluation plan was approved on the 3rd MC meeting on 30 and 31 August 2016. According to the Evaluation plan the first evaluation is planned for the year 2017.

The first implementation evaluation started in the second half of 2016 and was, in accordance to the timing foreseen in the evaluation plan, carried on in the first half of 2017. The focus of the evaluation was on programme management and implementation, the project application and selection procedures and the Communication strategy.

The evaluation was carried out on the basis of desk research, by using an online survey for all Lead Partners of the submitted projects in the frame of the first deadline of the Open Call and interviews of the programme structures. The follow-up measures based on findings of the evaluation will be included in the AIR 2017.

10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

In regard to the information and publicity measures carried out under the Communication strategies following activities were carried out in 2016, mainly promoting funding opportunities in the frame of the CP Interreg SI-HR (achievement of the indicators set in the Communication strategy that are reported annually). In accordance to this, the Open Call for the submission of project and the official Application Pack were published on the programme website, which is at the same time the key communication channel of the programme, but of course other channels and communication tools were used in order to contribute the implementation of the general and specific communication objectives described in the Communication Strategy. The planned and implemented activities as well as reached results based on the list of communication tools are:

Direct communication:

5 workshops for potential applicants were organised with around 550 participants. In order to help the project development, the JS carried out individual consultations with potential beneficiaries in the premises of the GOSP and a multitude of those via the phone.

Altogether 3 promotional events (other than workshops) were organised with around 350 participants – Kick-off event which was organised already in December 2015, one major event which promoted the funding opportunities and presented the achievements of the CP was organised together with the final conference of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 on 29 November 2016 and ceremonial opening of the JS branch office in Buzet was organised on 2 December 2016.

On-line communication:

In 2016 the number of visits to the programme website was 24.434 visits.

26 e-news were sent out to the 386 members registered to the e-news on the programme website.

Interactive map was prepared and published on the programme website containing the descriptions of all the projects and project partners of the co-financed projects of the OP SI-HR 2007-2013 and also the co-financed projects of the CP SI-HR 2014-2020 are added regularly.

Communication with media and PR / Media communication – advertising:

To all public events, the national and local media from both sides of the border were invited so they had the opportunity to promote the Programme in the national and local media.

Publication activities (printed communication tools):

Regarding the number of information material, 800 issues of the programme brochure and 100 issues of the Cooperation Programme document were printed and distributed at the events.

Other (additional) tools:

On the the occasions of the public events participants received the purchased promotional items (notepads, pens, etc.).

Moreover in frame of the programme, the uniform visual identity was used for all programme documents (e.g. invitations, handouts, presentations), on the programme website and e-newsletters, on the promotional materials, publications, in frame of the events and other activities.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (A), (B), (C) AND (F), OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1299/2013)

11.1 Progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme

As stated in the CP under Priority Axis 2 – Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources actions shall focus on mobilising the natural/cultural potential of hinterland and small/medium towns. The projects selected in the 1st deadline of the Open Call focus primarily on the preservation and promotion of the cultural/natural heritage in the small urban areas and rural areas which are thinly populated and include only small and medium towns which will benefit from the implementation of the project activities by improving their economic stability and recognisability.

11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF

For the purpose of reinforcing the capacity of authorities, Joint Secretariat (JS) members and the Managing Authority (MA) attended several trainings in 2016 organised by Interact (Raising project quality, Financial and Project management, Indicators and data collection, Finance management camp). Also trainings regarding the eMS system were organised for the programme authorities and throughout the year regular meetings with the authorities (JS/MA) from CP Slovenija-Austria and CP Slovenia-Hungary were organised to share the experience and to reinforce the knowledge of programme management.

All the relevant guidelines for the beneficiaries were prepared and detailed information regarding the project implementation, reporting process and regarding the program rules in general were presented to the beneficiaries of the approved projects on the face-to-face meetings and throughout the 1st implementation period the beneficiaries received all the support needed from their JS Contract managers. The implementation of the projects selected within the 1st deadline of the Open Call started in October 2016 and the 1st reporting period ended in March 2017. The first reporting workshop for the beneficiaries was organised by JS in February 2017 and the first reporting workshop for the beneficiaries of the strategic project FRISCO1 was organised on 14 November 2016 together with the reporting workshop for the Slovenian beneficiaries organised by the Slovenian First level control.

11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

The CP Slovenia – Croatia is contributing to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

Within the application, the contribution to the relevant macro-regional strategies has to be described by the project partners. The 4 projects approved within the 1st Open Call of the CP Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia are contributing to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). The approved projects are contributing to the following pillars and priority areas of macro-regional strategies:

Priority areas of macro-regional strategies:

a) EUSDR (Slovenia, Croatia):

Main pillars: Connect the region, Protecting the environment, Strengthening the region, Building prosperity

- PA 03 – Culture and tourism (ENJOY HERITAGE, DETOX, Mala barka 2)*
- PA 05 – Environmental risks (FRISCO 1)*

b) EUSAIR (Slovenia, Croatia):

Main pillars: 1. Blue growth, 2. Connecting the region, 3. Environmental quality, 4. Sustainable tourism

- Topic 4.1 Diversified tourism offers (ENJOY HERITAGE, DETOX, Mala barka 2)*

One example of a project contributing to the EUSDR is the project FRISCO 1, which started in April 2016 and objective is to improve coordinated flood risk management and reduce flood

risks. The main outputs will be sets of joint models, maps and tools for each of the six target transboundary river basins (Kupa/Kolpa, Sutla/Sotla, Drava, Mura, Dragonja and Bregana) with the associated design documentation for optimal structural measures, improved physical alert systems, and the outputs of awareness rising/capacity building activities. The ultimate beneficiary of the project is the affected population in the border area between Slovenia and Croatia. The Project's objectives can only be achieved through cross-border cooperation because, in line with the Floods Directive, the flood risk management planning should be done following the river basin approach in order to determine the optimal measures. The Project is original because of its comprehensiveness, both in terms of the spatial coverage (all transboundary river basins) and in terms of the scope of the measures (all key non-structural measures covering preparedness, prevention and response).

Projects	Main pillars			Planned amounts in Euro/projects/ macro-regional strategy
	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP	
ENJOYHERITAGE	PA 03	Topic 4.1	0	1.038.312
DETOX	PA 03	Topic 4.1	0	772.181
Mala barka 2	PA 03	Topic 4.1	0	1.839.786
FRISCO1	PA 05	0	0	3.460.307
Total – Planned amounts in Euro	7.110.586	3.650.279	0	

11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

n.a.

12. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT PRIORITY AXIS AND PROGRAMME LEVEL (ARTICLES 21(2) AND 22(7) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

For the purpose of assessing progress towards the achievement of milestones and targets set for financial indicators in the years 2018 and 2023, table 4 of Part A of this Annex shall have the following two additional columns:

13	14
Data for the purpose of the performance review and performance framework	
Only for report submitted in 2019: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by	Only for final implementation report: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries by

beneficiaries and certified to the Commission by 31/12/2018 Article 21(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013	31/12/2023 and certified to the Commission Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

PART C

PART C - REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEAR 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (Article 50(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

<i>n.a.</i>

14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN – PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013)

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

<i>n.a.</i>
