



**ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT  
2017**

Cooperation Programme  
Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia  
for the programme period 2014–2020  
June 2018

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## PART A - DATA REQUIRED EVERY YEAR ("LIGHT REPORTS") (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

### 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB029
<b>Title</b>	Cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Reporting year</b>	2017
<b>Date of approval of the report by the Monitoring Committee</b>	14 June 2018

### 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 third 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 2017.

The report was prepared by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, acting as the Managing Authority (MA) of the programme in cooperation with the Joint secretariat (JS) and programme partners. The Monitoring Committee (MC) discussed and approved the Annual Implementation Report 2017 on the 6<sup>th</sup> MC meeting held on 13 and 14 June 2018.

All programme structures and both Member States, Slovenia and Croatia were in the year 2017 very much involved in the implementation of the Cooperation Programme.

In 2017, the implementation of the programme ran very actively with approving 12 additional projects, getting the positive opinion on the designation of the MA/Certifying Authority (CA), sending the first payment request to the European Commission (EC), closing the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline for submission of project applications, etc. The MA and JS met three times with the programme partners (National Authorities (NAs), CA, First Level Control (FLC)) at the Bilateral technical meetings (BTM) to discuss topics related to the programme implementation.

On 9 and 10 May 2017, the MC members met at their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in order to decide on the project applications received within the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline for submission. **12 projects (11 projects in the frame of priority axis 2 and 1 project in the frame of priority axis 3) in the amount of 11.485.027,19 EUR ERDF funds were approved in 2017 for co-financing.** On 4 July 2017 the ceremonial signing of Subsidy contracts for the co-financing with funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was organised and all 12 contracts were signed. For the beneficiaries of these projects the workshop on reporting for the projects approved in the frame of the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline was held on 26 October 2017 in Karlovac. On the 4<sup>th</sup> MC meeting also the AIR for 2016 was discussed and approved and the date for the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline of the Open Call for submission of the applications was set for 27 September 2017.

The 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting was organised on 28 November 2017 where the MC members approved the Strategic project under Priority axis 1 – Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins FRISCO 2.1 containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Sotla in the amount of 1.426.746,25 EUR ERDF. The contract was signed on 21 December 2017. At the 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting also the Final implementation report for the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 was discussed and approved and the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> programme evaluation were presented.

Within the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline for the submission of projects which closed on 27 September 2017 two workshops intended for potential applicants were carried out on 13 June 2017 in Postojna and on 20 June in Marija Bistrica. In the frame of the workshops the MA and JS presented the participants the Cooperation Programme, information concerning the Open Call, the Rules on the eligibility of the expenditure, the requirements concerning information and communication, the annexes to the application form, the electronic Monitoring System (eMS) and most common mistakes of the previous two deadlines and how to prepare good/quality projects. By the set deadline 88 project applications were received.

In order to assure a smooth implementation of the programme on all levels, the MA and JS organised the training on the use of the eMS information system for all national control units on 21 March 2017 and the workshop on eMS for auditors from both countries on 31 May 2017.

### **Designation process**

On 8 March 2017 the programme received the positive opinion on the designation of the MA and CA.

### **Other information and publicity measures**

In line with the Communication strategy along with the workshops for applicants and ceremonial signing of contracts for the approved projects also one major annual event of the programme was carried out on 23 September 2017 together with two other CBC programmes (Slovenia-Austria and Slovenia-Hungary) in the frame of the European Cooperation Day 2017. The event was organised as a hike over the Pohorje hill of Maribor, Slovenia. The aim was to present the projects and programmes that are implemented with funds from the ERDF. A group of 350 participants from Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Austria which arrived with organised bus transportation had a closer look at the projects that are being implemented. On 3 February 2017 also the ceremonial opening of the JS branch office in Krapina was organised.

In the frame of the programme's website 50 news on activities, events and relevant information were published in 2017.

### **Reimbursement of funds**

By the end of 2017 altogether 19 Subsidy contracts in the amount of 20.978.310,69 EUR ERDF funds were signed which represents 46 % of the funds available for projects. Including the Technical Assistance (TA) projects the programme has committed 52 % of all available funds.

In relation to the financial data 453.676,25 EUR ERDF (in total 574.337,03 EUR) funds were certified by CA. In 2017 two payment requests were sent to the EC in the amount of 321.515,80 EUR ERDF. All approved projects are still in implementation therefore in relation to the indicator data the progress can be measured only on the level of the selected projects (see table 2). None of the projects fully implemented the activities by the end of 2017.

### 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	<p>In 2017 within Priority axis 1 the strategic project containing non-structural flood risk reduction measures with the acronym FRISCO1 which was approved in 2016 was in full implementation. The implementation of the FRISCO 1 project was closely monitored by the MA/JS, National Authorities and Monitoring Committee regarding the progress in performing the activities and also regarding the achievements of the financial plan. Due to the fact that the progress of the project was not completely in line with the plan several meetings including the site visit was organised by the MA/JS in order to discuss the reasons for the deviations from the plan. The partnership of the project presented the solutions and also minor changes to the project were made in order to improve the project implementation.</p> <p>In 2017 on the 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting first Strategic project containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Sotla with the acronym FRISCO 2.1 was approved in the amount of 1.426.746,25 EUR ERDF. The contract was signed on 21 December 2017.</p> <p>Altogether by the end of 2017 <b>2 projects</b> were contracted in the amount of <b>4.887.053,75 EUR ERDF</b> which represents 49% of available funds within the priority axis (PA) 1.</p>
A.2	2. Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources	<p>In 2017 the final decision on the project applications received in the frame of the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline for submission was reached by the MC. 11 projects were approved, within the Investment priority 6c, 9 projects in the amount of 8.975.295,11 EUR ERDF and 2 projects within the Investment priority 6d in the amount of 1.778.102,66 EUR ERDF.</p> <p>Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call in 2017 all 11 approved projects started with the implementation under this priority axis. The contracted ERDF amount for those 11 projects is 10.753.397,77 EUR ERDF. <b>Altogether by the end of 2017 14 projects were contracted and in implementation in the amount of 14.403.678,12 EUR ERDF.</b> Altogether 12 projects are within the Investment priority 6c which shows very high interest of projects in conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>On 27 September 2017 the 3rd deadline closed. Altogether 88 project applications were received out of which 65 belonged to PA 2. The final decision on those projects is planned to be taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in June 2018.</p> <p>At this stage no significant problems have been identified in the</p>

		implementation of the PA 2.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>3. Healthy, safe and accessible border areas</b>	<p>One project was approved within the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call within the priority axis 3 in 2017 and has started with the implementation. The contracted ERDF amount for this project is 731.629,42 EUR. <b>Altogether by the end of 2017 3 projects were contracted in the amount of 1.985.386,86 EUR ERDF.</b></p> <p>Within the received projects in the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline of the Open Call 23 out of received 88 projects belong to priority axis 3. The final decision on those projects is planned to be taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in June 2018.</p> <p>At this stage no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of the PA 3.</p>
<b>A.4</b>	<b>4. Technical assistance</b>	<p>The allocation of the TA funds aims at ensuring the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme and at a proficient operation of all bodies which are needed for the frictionless and successful programme implementation, e.g. MA, JS, FLC in Slovenia and Croatia, CA, Audit Authority (AA) in Slovenia/Audit Body in Croatia (AB), NA in Slovenia and NA in Croatia. The TA is divided into 6 projects and the total ERDF amount for all TA projects is 3.000.000 EUR.</p> <p>In 2017 the following activities were implemented within the TA projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implementation, management and monitoring of the programme,</li> <li>- organisation of two MC meetings (approval of projects, update on the current stage of programme implementation, Annual Implementation Report 2016, results of the 1st evaluation of the programme, anti-fraud, conflict of interests, irregularities, audits, update on information and publicity activities - EC Day 2017, etc.),</li> <li>- three workshops, two intended for potential applicants and one for reporting were carried out,</li> <li>- on 21 March 2017 the training on the use of the eMS information system for all national control units and on 31 May 2017 the workshop on eMS for auditors from both countries were organised,</li> <li>- three BTM meetings, namely on 28 February 2017 in Stična, on 3 July 2017 in Zagreb and on 18 October in Ljubljana, to discuss topics related to the programme implementation were organised,</li> <li>- "Pohorje tour" event was organised under the auspices of the EC Day initiative (23rd September 2017),</li> <li>- advising/support of potential applicants, partners of already submitted project applications and face-to-face meetings with Lead Partners (LPs)/Project Partners (PPs) of approved projects,</li> <li>- advising/supporting the LPs/PPs of the implementing</li> </ul>

	<p>projects and checking the LPs progress reports,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- site visits for all 5 approved projects from the 1<sup>st</sup> deadline of the Open Call were carried out,</li> <li>- preparation of the corrigendum and related documentation of the Open Call,</li> <li>- assessment of the project applications submitted in the frame of the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline of the Open Call,</li> <li>- preparation of two written procedures for the MC,</li> <li>- preparation or update of programme documents,</li> <li>- 13 Subsidy contracts have been prepared and signed,</li> <li>- Ceremonial signing of the contracts for projects approved within the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call was organised on 4 July 2017 in Slovenska Bistrica.</li> <li>- 453.676,25 EUR ERDF (in total 574.337,03 EUR) have been certified,</li> <li>- two payment requests were sent to the EC,</li> <li>- closure activities for the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013,</li> <li>- the programme website has been updated with news, FAQs, information on programme and project implementation, etc.</li> </ul> <p>At this stage, no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of the PA 4 (Technical Assistance).</p>
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### 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	2016	2017 <sup>1</sup>	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 %	6,47 %							Frequency of reporting 2018, 2020, 2023
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	4,911,583							Frequency of reporting 2018, 2020, 2023
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	2,050							Frequency of reporting 2018, 2020, 2023
6dRI2	Average degree of conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in programme area-habitat	Number	Habitat CS: 2,070	2014	Habitat CS: 2,072	2,070	2,070	2,070	2,070							Frequency of reporting 2018, 2020, 2023
11RI	Level of	Average	2,22	2015	3,33	2,22	2,22	2,22	2,22							Frequency of

<sup>1</sup> No data is available for the year 2017 because the first reporting will be done in 2018.

	cooperation quality in the field of health, social care, safety and mobility services within the programme area	score from 0 to 5											reporting 2018, 2020, 2023
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**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	953							
F															
S	5b-1	Transboundary river basins with joint tools, models and maps for flood risk management developed	Number	6	0	0	6	6							The target value set in the CP is already reached (plan in the selected projects).
F															
S	5b-2	Transboundary river basins with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures implemented	Number	4	0	0	0	1							
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	20							The target value set in the CP is already reached (plan in the selected projects).
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	203,300							The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded due to the high expected

															number of visits (plan in the selected projects).	
F																
S	6c-1	Small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage	Number	15	0	0	17	45								<i>The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded (plan in the selected projects).</i>
F																
S	6c-2	New or improved cross-border sustainable tourism products and destinations integrating natural or cultural heritage	Number	20	0	0	13	40								<i>The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded (plan in the selected projects).</i>
F																
S	6c-3	Persons participating in capacity building activities	Number	500	0	0	600	5539								<i>The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded due to the high number of expected persons participating in capacity building activities (plan in the selected</i>



		measures and valorisation of ecosystem services																	selected projects).
F																			
S	11-1	Institutions participating in cross-border structures	Number	45			20	53											The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded (plan in the selected projects).
F					0	0													
S	11-2	Persons representing institutions and stakeholders from the programme area with improved skills and competences in CB service delivery	Number	300			536	826											The target value set in the CP is already reached and exceeded due to the high expected number of persons with improved skills and competences (plan in the selected projects).
F					0	0													
S	TA-1	Joint CB projects implemented and concluded	Number	57			0	0											No of projects concluded in 2017.
F					0	0													

S	TA-2	Joint CB informational and publicity events	Number	10	0	5	7	10							
F															
S	TA-3	Employees whose salaries are co-financed by the technical assistance	FTE (Full Time Equivalent)	12	0	4,8	11,67	11,67							
F															
S	TA-4	e-Monitoring System established	Number	1	0	1	1	1							
F															
S	TA-5	First level controllers established	Number	2	0	0	2	2							
F															
S	TA-6	Programme evaluation plan prepared and approved by Monitoring Committee (MC)	Number	1	0	0	1	1							
F															
S	TA-7	Programme communication plan prepared and approved by MC	Number	1	0	1	1	1							
F															
S	TA-8	Guiding document addressed to applicants and beneficiaries	Number	1	0	0	2	2							
F															
S	TA-9	Information, consultation and training measures for applicants and beneficiaries	Number	8	0	0	5	8							
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	138,736.47							Certified and declared amount to the EC in 2017 is stated.
1	Output	5b-2	Transboundary river basins with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures implemented	Number	0	4	0	0	0	0							Within the approved project FRISCO 2.1 there is 1 river basin with pilot structural flood risk reduction measures in implementation. The value will be reported after the completion of project covering this indicator.
1	Key	5bK	Transboundary	Number	1	4	0	0	0	1							Within the approved project FRISCO 2.1



	impleme- ntation step	I	river basins where works have started																there is 1 river basin where works should start in 2018 but it was approved in 2017.
2	Financial	6FI	Payments: certified total amount of eligible expenditure	EUR	3,963,43 9 EUR	33,028,657 EUR	0	0	0	135,975.05									Certified and declared amount to the EC in 2017 is stated.
2	Output	6c-1	Small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage	Number	0	15	0	0	0	0									Within the approved projects there are 45 small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage planned. The value will be reported after the completion of projects covering this indicator.
2	Key impleme- ntation step	6cKI	Restoration or construction works at heritage sites or at supporting visitor infrastructure started	Number	5	15	0	0	10	44									Planned value in the approved projects for 2018.
2	Output	CO2 3	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status	Hectares (ha)	0	31,000 ha	0	0	0	0									Within the approved projects there are 221.82 ha of surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status. The value will be reported after the completion of projects covering this indicator.

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	221.82							
3	Financial	11-FI	Payments: certified total amount of eligible expenditure	EUR	707,757 EUR	5,897,975 EUR	0	0	0	17,917.29							Certified and declared amount to the EC in 2017 is stated.
3	Output	11-1	Institutions participating in cross-border structures	Number	3	45	0	0	0	0							Within the approved projects there are 53 institutions participating in cross-border structures. The value will be reported after the completion of projects covering this indicator.

### 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 1011/2014<sup>2</sup> [Model for transmission of financial data]<sup>3</sup> and table 16 of model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

Priority Axis	Fund	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations
<b>A.1</b>	ERDF	Total	11.795.950,00	85,00%	5.749.475,00	48,74%	5.749.475,00	163.219,39	1,38%	2
<b>A.2</b>	ERDF	Total	33.028.657,00	85,00%	16.961.173,00	51,35%	16.559.766,48	201.133,30	0,61%	14
<b>A.3</b>	ERDF	Total	5.897.975,00	85,00%	1.985.386,86	33,66%	1.971.572,01	48.795,54	0,83%	3
<b>B.1</b>	ERDF	Total	4.968.331,00	60,38%	4.968.331,00	100,00%	4.968.331,00	230.092,84	4,63%	6
<b>Total</b>			<b>55.690.913,00</b>	<b>82,80%</b>	<b>29.664.365,86</b>	<b>53,27%</b>	<b>29.249.144,49</b>	<b>643.241,07</b>	<b>1,16%</b>	<b>25</b>

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.*

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 286, 30.9.2014, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 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**

Priority axis	Fund	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	Thematic priority dimension	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (€)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (€)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Nr. of operations selected
1	ERDF	087	01	02	07	05	22	HR041	4.070.950,00	4.070.950,00	163.219,39	1
1	ERDF	087	01	03	07	05	22	SI021	1.678.525,00	1.678.525,00	0,00	1
2	ERDF	085	01	02	07	06	22	HR041	579.177,40	550.532,88	0,00	1
2	ERDF	086	01	03	07	06	22	HR036	1.528.377,29	1.476.212,14	0,00	1
2	ERDF	091	01	02	07	06	23	SI011	829.360,00	730.869,62	0,00	1
2	ERDF	091	01	02	07	06	23	SI021	1.524.792,25	1.452.712,18	0,00	1
2	ERDF	092	01	01	07	06	23	SI024	840.187,80	819.851,55	0,00	1
2	ERDF	093	01	02	07	06	23	SI012	1.221.544,00	1.221.544,00	45.328,89	1
2	ERDF	093	01	02	07	06	23	SI021	1.593.700,00	1.562.950,00	0,00	1
2	ERDF	094	01	01	07	06	23	HR031	2.164.455,00	2.164.455,00	45.335,98	1
2	ERDF	094	01	02	07	06	23	HR046	988.743,19	988.743,19	0,00	1
2	ERDF	094	01	02	07	06	23	SI011	836.515,00	799.624,00	0,00	1
2	ERDF	094	01	02	07	06	23	SI012	926.678,47	897.052,72	0,00	1
2	ERDF	094	01	02	07	06	23	SI021	1.779.988,15	1.779.988,15	0,00	1
2	ERDF	094	01	03	07	06	23	SI012	908.448,50	908.448,50	110.468,43	1
2	ERDF	094	01	03	07	06	23	SI017	1.239.205,95	1.206.782,55	0,00	1
3	ERDF	112	01	01	07	11	20	HR031	860.740,50	860.740,50	0,00	1
3	ERDF	112	01	02	07	11	21	SI024	712.938,99	699.124,14	29.791,59	1
3	ERDF	119	01	02	07	11	21	SI024	411.707,37	411.707,37	19.003,95	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		18	HR041	59.500,00	59.500,00	274,25	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		18	SI	322.581,00	322.581,00	15.081,00	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		18	SI017	350.000,00	350.000,00	16.479,98	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		18	SI021	2.745.750,00	2.745.750,00	151.630,19	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		24	HR041	715.500,00	715.500,00	14.603,29	1
4	ERDF	121	01	07	07		24	SI021	775.000,00	775.000,00	32.024,13	1
<b>Total</b>									<b>29,664,365.86</b>	<b>29,249,144.49</b>	<b>643,241.07</b>	<b>25</b>

**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 <sup>4</sup>	0	0	0	0

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

<sup>4</sup> 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 of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia (August 2017) was performed by an external evaluator. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme implementation with a focus on processing the 1st and partly the 2nd deadline of the Open Call for proposals. The main goal was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme structures and programme procedures, the achievement of the foreseen simplification and harmonization, the progress of the programme towards achieving the targets of the specific objectives and the progress in implementing the communication strategy and the set objectives.

The analysis was mainly based on monitoring data provided by the Joint Secretariat, data from the application forms (in the electronic Monitoring System, eMS) and data available on the programme website. In addition, data was collected through a survey and through interviews. The survey was carried out with Lead Partners who applied in the frame of the 1st deadline of the Open Call. Project partners cooperating in projects approved in the 1st deadline have reported for the first time. Therefore the scope of the analysis was extended to collect feedback also from the representatives of the first level control units (FLCs). The assessment of the progress towards the achievement of the programme specific objectives was made on the basis of the expected contributions of the approved projects since the implementation is still in the early phase.

**The main findings of the evaluation:**

The programme bodies operate effectively within the framework established for the programme implementation. Personnel of the MA, JS, NAs and FLC is appointed. In terms of the current needs, the personnel seem sufficient apart from IT manager whose resources allocated to the programme could have been increased. Needs for support with regard to performance of eMS were substantial in particular at the beginning of the application processes.

Most of the JS personnel is new however able to take on the job effectively with the support of the Head of JS who has experience from the previous programme. Separation of functions between the project support and project assessment within the staff of the JS is secured and respected. The MA and National Authorities are well experienced and can provide sound support to applicants.

The MC meetings seem to be effective, both countries organise preparatory meetings at national level which is a good practice.

Programme procedures related to the application, assessment and selection of projects and procedures regarding reporting and financial controls are set and respected. The overall cooperation between the programme bodies seems effective. In terms of support to applicants, the communication between NAs and JS was well established.

The support in project development was well accessible to applicants. The beneficiaries assessed the quality of received services relatively good. Based on the range and quality of received applications further needs for support exist.

The user friendliness of the application form and of the assessment and selection procedure is much reduced compared to the previous programme in particular due to a very strict administrative compliance and eligibility check (AB check) and rather complex financial part of the application form. On the other hand the postponement of projects is considered more user friendly as it gives the project partnerships a second chance.

The overall support provided to applicants was appropriate. The MA/JS and NAs followed up identified weaknesses and within possibilities offered additional support (e.g. additional workshop for applicants under 6-d, improvements of eMS).

The project application pack published on the programme website comprises relevant information needed to develop a project proposal and submit an application. The Implementation manual for beneficiaries is well structured into key contents/phases and offers sound guidance to applicants and beneficiaries which was also reflected in the LP-survey feedbacks.

The LP-survey and the feedback of the JS/NAs revealed further needs of support to applicants: improving the competence for establishing proper intervention logic aligned with the one of the programme understanding methodologies for more complex indicators especially under 6c and 6d understanding the State Aid.

The AB check procedure was simplified compared to the 2007-2013 period and a greater responsibility for management of investments and provision of financial and organisational capacities was given to applicants. Difficulties in working with the eMS and exclusion of the possibilities to deal with formal mistakes was a step away from user friendly procedures for applicants. MC has slightly alleviated the procedure for applicants from 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline onwards (one request for supplement is possible).

Quality assessment showed that assessors harmonised the approach to assessment very well what was reflected in relatively small differences in majority of assessments as estimated by the JS. Results of the assessment indicate that the quality of projects in general is quite low, approximately half of the assessed projects did not reach the threshold.

**Regarding the progress of the programme towards achieving targets of specific objectives the following can be seen from the evaluation:**

The programme is due to a relatively long programming period in a very early phase of implementation. The actual progress towards the achievement of targets of specific objectives cannot be assessed yet. The assessment was made on the basis of expected contributions of the approved projects to targets of the programme output indicators.

Based on the expected project outcomes the programme is likely to progress very well in all PAs except for some specific areas or types of cooperation that have so far not been addressed yet or addressed to a lesser extent. Most challenging to achieve seem targets related to the improvement of the conservation status of habitats in PA2-6d. Projects addressing the safety and connectivity in PA3 were not yet approved while the progress in engaging SMEs in sustainable tourism development is also moderate.

Geographical distribution of the PPs is relatively balanced on the Croatian side and quite concentrated on the Slovene side with most PPs located in Osrednjeslovenska region (after 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline). Concentration of the Slovene PPs in Osrednjeslovenska region is due to the fact that all relevant Slovene institutions needed for the implementation of the strategic FRISCO projects are located in Osrednjeslovenska region but all the activities of the projects are implemented in the cross-border area and also have influence directly on the cross-border area and not on the Osredneslovenska region.

**PA1: Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins**

PA1 - 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 allocated to the PA1 were committed to the first strategic project which deals with flood risk management in the areas designated by the CP. The project contribution to the programme indicators 5b-1 and 5b-3 is expected to fulfil the set targets. The second project, which is expected to contribute to the achievements measured by indicators CO20 and 5b-2 was in a time of the evaluation still in preparation (was approved in December 2017). Project development was monitored by the MC.

**PA2: Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources**

51.3 % of ERDF allocation to PA2 is committed to 14 projects.

PA2 - Specific objective (SO) 2.1: Active heritage preservation through sustainable tourism

The projects addressing SO2.1 are most represented in the programme. Already the first 3 projects approved under the 1<sup>st</sup> deadline are expected to contribute substantially or even lead to exceeding the targets of the programme output indicators. Another 9 projects from the 2<sup>nd</sup> round will contribute further. The partnerships have so far to a large extent included small investments. It seems that prospects for the development of new or improved CB-tourist products are also good.

Specific objective 2.2: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and promoting ecosystem services - compared to the SO 2.1 the pool of potential applicants with capacities to engage in projects addressing biodiversity and ecosystem services is smaller and the expected programme results on the other hand quite specific and targeted.

The progress in achievement of most targets looks promising despite that no project was approved in the 1<sup>st</sup> and that only two were approved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

Considering the share of funds already committed in the PA2 the targets of the CO23 seem difficult to achieve.

**PA3: Healthy, safe and accessible border areas**

Specific objective 3.1: Building partnerships among public authorities and stakeholders for healthy, safe and accessible border areas

33.7 % of the ERDF allocation to PA3 is committed to 3 approved projects which are likely to exceed both output targets. This also indicates that targets were set in a modest manner.

In terms of sectors targeted so far only cooperation initiatives in social and health areas were successful whereas safety and connectivity/accessibility challenges remain unaddressed even after the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of project selection. What is notable is rather poor quality of applications (e.g. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round two thirds of assessed projects did not reach the threshold).

The programme output indicators are selected well in terms of the PA objectives. Based on the contents of approved projects the outcomes are likely to go beyond what is being monitored with indicators.

**PA4: Technical Assistance**

Specific objective 4.1: Provide the efficient and frictionless enforcement of the cooperation programme

Achievement of the output indicators shows that the programme was effectively set up for the implementation and that services regarding support activities and programme promotion are also progressing well.

The achievement of objectives of the Communication strategy is progressing well. Activities have been implemented in line with the envisaged phases of communication. The programme has effectively communicated the opportunities for participation in the programme what has been reflected both in the attendance of the workshops and received applications. The general public so far has been addressed to a lesser extent.

The programme website as the main communication tool is structured in a meaningful way and regularly updated with news that mainly target potential applicants and beneficiaries.

Visits to the programme website exceeded the targets for 2023 by 244% only in one year what indicates that these were set in a very modest manner. Targets for other indicators in the communication strategy were set more realistically and their achievement is progressing well.

The evaluation also included recommendations for the work of the programme authorities and the implementation of procedures which can be seen as concrete directions for the implementation of the current 2014-2020 period and the period after that. The majority of the



recommendations are related to: the transfer of experiences and the recommendations of the Joint Secretariat based on the presentation of practical examples, upgrades of the eMS, considering the practical needs of users and raising the competence of applicants / partners to work with eMS, meeting the criteria of administrative suitability of received applications and intensifying assistance to applicants in the development of the intervention logic of the project users.

High number of applications received under the 1st and 2nd deadline confirms the big interest of Slovenian and Croatian partners for cross-border cooperation.

## 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 2017 there were no specific direct problems which would endanger the performance of the programme. The first projects continued with the implementation of their activities and another 12 projects from the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call and 1 strategic project with structural measures were approved by the MC and the projects started with the implementation.

However we had to address some challenges regarding the number of ineligible applications after the administrative assessment within the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call. Because of the high number of administratively ineligible applications in the 1<sup>st</sup> deadline the following measures were taken for the second deadline and also for the third deadline: implementing additional functionalities in the eMS, preparation and publishing the most common mistakes of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline on the programme web page and more emphasis was put on the workshops on the mistakes that occurred in the first two deadlines 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. With the actions taken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline of the Open Call the number of administratively eligible applications has improved but on the 4<sup>th</sup> MC meeting the MC members agreed that for the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline during the administrative and eligibility check for one mistake in criterion A.4 (the application pack is compiled in the required language(s)) the Lead Applicant will be asked for a supplement by eMS e-mail within five calendar days in order to further raise the number of administratively eligible applications. The corrigendum of the Open Call was prepared and approved by the MC members. The actions taken have resulted in a much higher number of administratively eligible applications in the 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline of the Open Call.

The implementation of the FRISCO 1 project was closely monitored by the MA/JS, National Authorities and Monitoring Committee regarding the progress in performing the activities and also regarding the achievements of the financial plan. Due to the fact that the progress of the project was not in line with the plan several meetings including the site visit was organised by the MA/JS in order to discuss the reasons for the deviations from the plan. The partnership of the project presented the solutions and also changes to the project were made in order to improve the project implementation. The progress of the project was also reported by the partnership on Monitoring Committee meetings. Delays of the FRISCO 1 project also affected the readiness, preparation and submission of the Strategic projects containing structural flood risk reduction measures (namely FRISCO 2.1 – river basin Sotla, FRISCO 2.2 – river basin Mura which was submitted in February 2018 and the future project/s for the Drava and Kolpa river basins) which were for that reason also delayed or not completely ready for the

implementation. In order to closely monitor the progress and readiness of the approved and planned Strategic projects containing structural flood risk reduction measures several actions were taken such as regular communication of the JS contract manager with the project partnership, meetings of the MA/JS, National Authorities and project partners where we have discussed the reasons for delays and the actions needed to resolve them, the timeline and the future deadlines for the submission of the next Strategic project/s containing structural flood risk reduction measures were set by the MC, partnership of the FRISCO project/s presented the achievements and planned activities of the approved and planned FRISCO projects on each MC meeting and also on each Bilateral technical meeting the program partners discussed the status of the Strategic projects and agreed on the actions that need to be taken to assure that the planned activities and indicators set in the CP are achieved.

Because of the above described issues that are affecting the implementation of the strategic FRISCO projects we have identified also the risk of not fully achieving the Performance framework financial indicator defined in the CP for the year 2018 within the 1<sup>st</sup> priority axis. All the necessary actions are performed by the Programme structures (as already described above) to achieve the set values.

The year 2017 was also challenging for the programme structures due to the closure activities of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 overlapping the activities of the 2014-2020 programme which was already in full implementation. The closure activities for the 2007-2013 programme were successfully concluded and closure documents were submitted to the EC by the end of March 2018.

Regarding the designation process all activities started already in 2015 and continued in 2016 with the preparation of the Description of Management and Control System (DMCS) and all required Programme guidelines. As provided in the report of the Audit Authority dated on 8 March 2017 the MA and the CA designated for the programme comply with the designation criteria.

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

The citizen's summary is prepared as a separate document and will be uploaded in the SFC and published on the programme's website.

## **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 <sup>5</sup> (if applicable)	Observations (if necessary)

<sup>5</sup> 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).

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Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them.

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Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme

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## 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

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**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

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**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

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#### 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 (%)
<b>A.1</b>	4,887,053.51	48.74%
<b>A.2</b>	716,568.58	2.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,603,622.09</b>	<b>12.15%</b>

#### 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

### 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

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

### 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



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

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

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

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## 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
<b>Data for the purpose of the performance review and performance framework</b>	
<b>Only for report submitted in 2019:</b> <b>Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries and certified to the Commission by 31/12/2018</b> Article 21(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013	<b>Only for final implementation report: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries by 31/12/2023 and certified to the Commission</b> Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

**PART C**

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**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>
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**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>
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