



Interreg 
SLOVENIA – CROATIA
European Union | European Regional Development Fund

CITIZEN'S SUMMARY 2018

Cooperation Programme
Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia
for the programme period 2014–2020
May 2019

1. BACKGROUND

The Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovenia-Croatia aims at promoting sustainable, safe and vibrant border area by fostering smart approaches to preservation, mobilization and management of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the people living and working in or visiting the area.

The vision of the programme (connected in green) highlights the overall direction to sustainable development. Primary focus is on seizing its natural and cultural values to deliver innovative, smart and effective solutions that help preserve and improve the quality of environment and its diverse identity on one hand, and activate its socio-economic potentials on the other. Ensuring safe and vibrant area is of outmost importance for the people and is addressed by increasing the capacities for institutional cooperation at all levels.

This is the fourth 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 2018.

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 2018 on the 8th MC meeting held on 4 June 2019.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

All programme structures and both Member States, Slovenia and Croatia were in the year 2018 very much involved in the implementation of the Cooperation Programme.

In 2018, the implementation of the programme ran very actively with approving 19 additional projects (17 projects approved within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call and 2 approved strategic projects FRISCO), sending the payment requests to the European Commission (EC) etc. The MA and JS met three times with the programme partners (National Authorities (NAs), Certifying Authority (CA), First Level Control (FLC)) at the Bilateral technical meetings (BTM) to discuss topics related to the programme implementation.

On 13 and 14 June 2018, the MC members met at their 6th meeting in order to decide on the project applications received within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call. **17 projects (12 projects in the frame of priority axis 2 and 5 projects in the frame of priority axis 3) in the amount of 16.950.225,51 EUR ERDF funds were approved in 2018 for co-financing.** With the approval of the 17 projects within the 3rd deadline all available funds within the Open Call were allocated. On the 6th MC meeting the AIR for 2017 was discussed and approved. Also the discussion regarding the strategic project FRISCO 2.2 containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Mura took place on the 6th MC meeting. The MC members agreed that after the completion of the assessment the decision regarding the project will be

taken via written procedure. On 23 August 2018 MC members approved **FRISCO 2.2. project within the 7th written procedure in the amount of 2.545.915,91 EUR ERDF.**

The 7th MC meeting was organised on 12 December 2018 where MC members approved the fourth and final strategic project under Priority axis 1 – Integrated flood risk management in transboundary river basins **FRISCO 2.3 containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Drava and Kolpa in the amount of 2.593.585,45 EUR ERDF.** The ceremonial signing of the contract took place on 15 February 2019.

In order to assure a smooth implementation of the programme on all levels, the MA and JS organised the presentation of the new version of the electronic Monitoring System to the representatives of the Group of Auditors (GoA) on 7 November 2018. Also the International training for the use of the Arachne Risk Assessment Tool for representatives of national control units from Croatia, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia was organised by the MA/JS on 4 July 2018

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

By the end of 2018 38 projects were approved and are implementing activities which will improve the quality of life in the programme area. Six transboundary river basins with joint tools, models and maps for flood risk management will be developed, 4 transboundary river basins with flood risk reduction measures will be implemented and more than 1600 people are planned to benefit from flood protection measures that will be implemented through FRISCO projects. From the approved projects within the PA2 289.732 increase in expected number of visits to cultural or natural heritage sites is expected, 69 small scale investments in visitor infrastructure and preservation of natural and cultural heritage is planned, 62 new or improved cross-border sustainable products will be developed and almost 8.000 persons will participate in capacity building activities. 32.433 ha of surface area of habitats is planned to attain a better conservation status and 650 persons will gain improved practical skills and competences for implementation of biodiversity protection measures and valorization of ecosystem services. Within the PA3 it is planned that 104 institutions will participate in new cross-border structures and 1724 persons will gain improved skills and competences in CB service delivery.

In the next two to three years, citizens in the involved regions should benefit from concrete results of the implemented activities covering the programme indicators.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

With the approval of the projects from the 3rd deadline of the Open Call and approval of FRISCO 2.2. and FRISCO 2.3 projects all available programme funds were allocated and committed meaning that Subsidy contracts for all 38 approved projects (altogether 34 approved projects within the 1st, 2nd and 3rd deadline of the Open Call and 4 strategic projects) were signed.

On 19 July 2018 the ceremonial signing of the first Subsidy contracts for the approved projects within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call was organized and by the end of September 2018 all 17 contracts were signed. For the beneficiaries of these projects the workshop on reporting for the projects approved in the frame of the 3rd deadline was held on 28 November 2018 in Ljubljana.



Ceremonial signing of the first Subsidy contracts for the approved projects within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call



Workshop on reporting for the projects approved in the frame of the 3rd deadline of the Open Call

| 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 2018 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 and other FRISCO projects 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 FRISCO 1 project was not completely in line with the plan several meetings were 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 in order to improve the project implementation.</p> <p>In 2018 also FRISCO 2.1 project containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Sotla and FRISCO 2.2 project containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Mura started with the implementation. After the initial delays in the</p> |

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|-----|---|--|
| | | <p>implementation of the FRISCO2.1 project due to the problems regarding the public procurement the works on the river Sotla started in December 2018. The works on the river Mura within the FRISCO 2.2 project have also started in December 2018 meaning that the Key implementation step (Transboundary river basins where works have started) for 2018 was successfully reached and even exceeded due to the fact that works have started in 2 river basins in 2018.</p> <p>As already described in 2018 the project FRISCO 2.2 containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Mura was approved within the 7th written procedure in the amount of 2.545.915,91 EUR ERDF and the contract was signed on 13 December 2018.</p> <p>On the 7th MC meeting on 12 December 2018 the fourth and final Strategic project FRISCO 2.3 containing structural flood risk reduction measures on the river Drava and Kolpa in the amount of 2.593.585,45 EUR ERDF was approved. The ceremonial signing of the contract took place on 15 February 2019.</p> <p>Altogether by the end of 2018 4 projects were approved in the amount of 10.026.555,11 EUR ERDF which represents 100% of available funds within the priority axis (PA) 1.</p> |
| A.2 | 2. Preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources | <p>In 2018 the final decision on the project applications received in the frame of the 3rd deadline for submission was reached by the MC. 10 projects were approved, within the Investment priority 6c in the amount of 9.487.428,92 EUR ERDF and 2 projects within the Investment priority 6d in the amount of 4.154.719,78 EUR ERDF.</p> <p>Within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call in 2018 all 12 approved projects started with the implementation under this priority axis. The contracted ERDF amount for those 12 projects is 13.642.148,70 EUR ERDF. Altogether by the end of 2018 26 projects were contracted and in implementation in the amount of 28.045.826,82 EUR ERDF (99,9 % of available funds). Among these 22 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>At this stage no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of the PA 2.</p> |
| A.3 | 3. Healthy, safe and accessible border areas | <p>In 2018 the final decision on the project applications received in the frame of the 3rd deadline for submission was reached by the MC. 5 projects were approved within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call within the priority axis 3 and have started with the implementation. The contracted ERDF amount for those 5 projects is 3.308.076,81 EUR. Altogether by the end of 2018 8 projects were contracted in the amount of 4.995.655,63 EUR ERDF (99,9 % of available funds).</p> <p>At this stage no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of the PA 3.</p> |
| A.4 | 4. Technical assistance | <p>The allocation of the TA funds aims at ensuring the efficient and</p> |

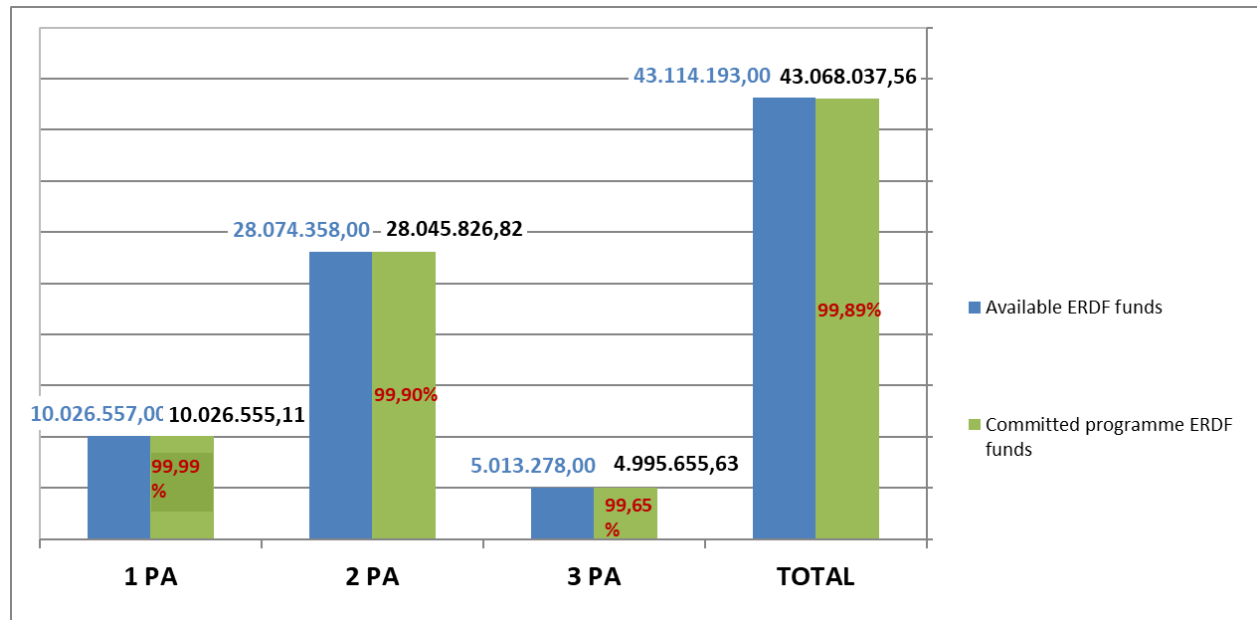
smooth implementation of the cooperation programme and at a proficient operation of all bodies which are needed for the frictionless and successful programme implementation, e.g. MA, JS, FLC in Slovenia and Croatia, CA, Audit Authority (AA) in Slovenia/Audit Body in Croatia (AB), NA in Slovenia and NA in Croatia. The TA is divided into 6 projects and the total ERDF amount for all TA projects is 3.000.000 EUR.

In 2018 the following activities were implemented within the TA projects:

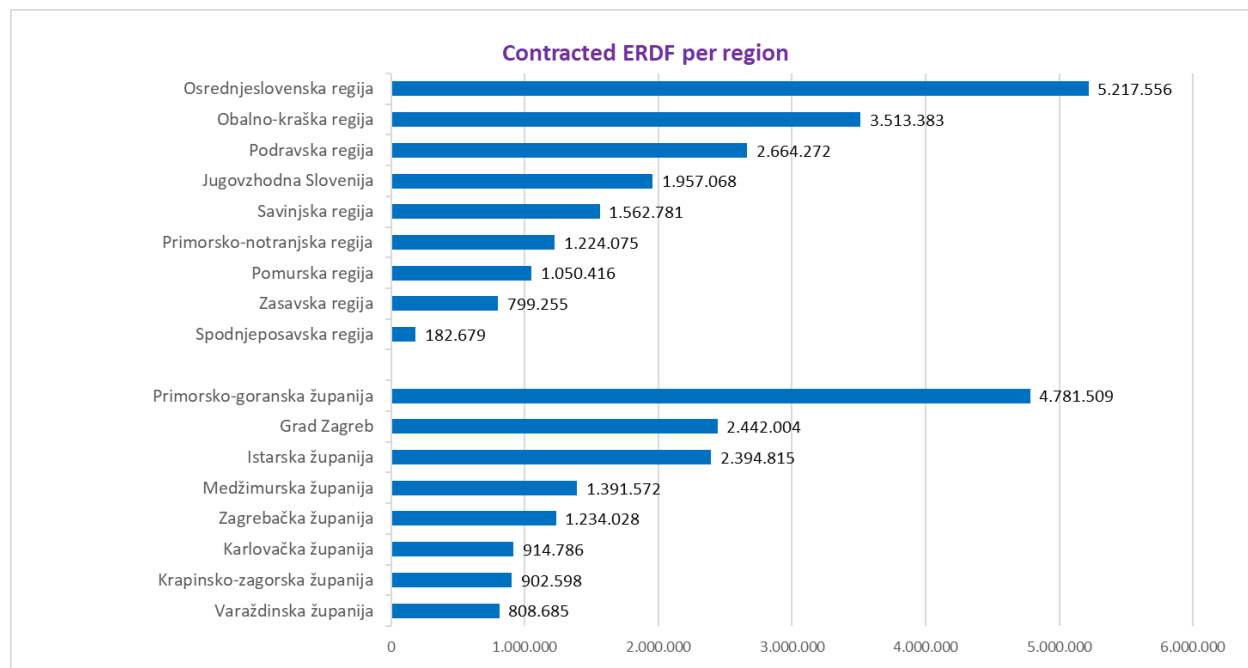
- implementation, management and monitoring of the programme,
- organisation of two MC meetings (approval of projects, update on the current stage of programme implementation, Annual Implementation Report 2017, irregularities, audits, update on information and publicity activities - EC Day 2018, etc.),
- one workshop for reporting was carried out,
- trainings for the use of the eMS information system for were organised,
- three BTM meetings, namely on 18 January 2018 in Vuglec Breg, on 8 May 2018 in Ljubljana and on 10 October 2018 in Donja Stubica, to discuss topics related to the programme implementation were organised,
- "Enjoying cultural heritage" event was organised under the auspices of the EC Day initiative (26 September 2018),
- advising/support to partners of already submitted project applications and face-to-face meetings with Lead Partners (LPs)/Project Partners (PPs) of approved projects,
- advising/supporting the LPs/PPs of the implementing projects and checking the LPs progress reports,
- site visits for the approved projects were carried out according to the Site visit plan for 2018,
- preparation of three written procedures for the MC,
- preparation or update of programme documents,
- 17 Subsidy contracts have been prepared and signed for the approved projects of the 3rd deadline of the Open Call,
- Ceremonial signing of the contracts for projects approved within the 3rd deadline of the Open Call was organised on 19 July 2018 in Ljubljana.
- closure activities for the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013,
- the programme website has been updated with news, FAQs, information on programme and project implementation, etc.

At this stage, no significant problems have been identified in the implementation of the PA 4 (Technical Assistance).

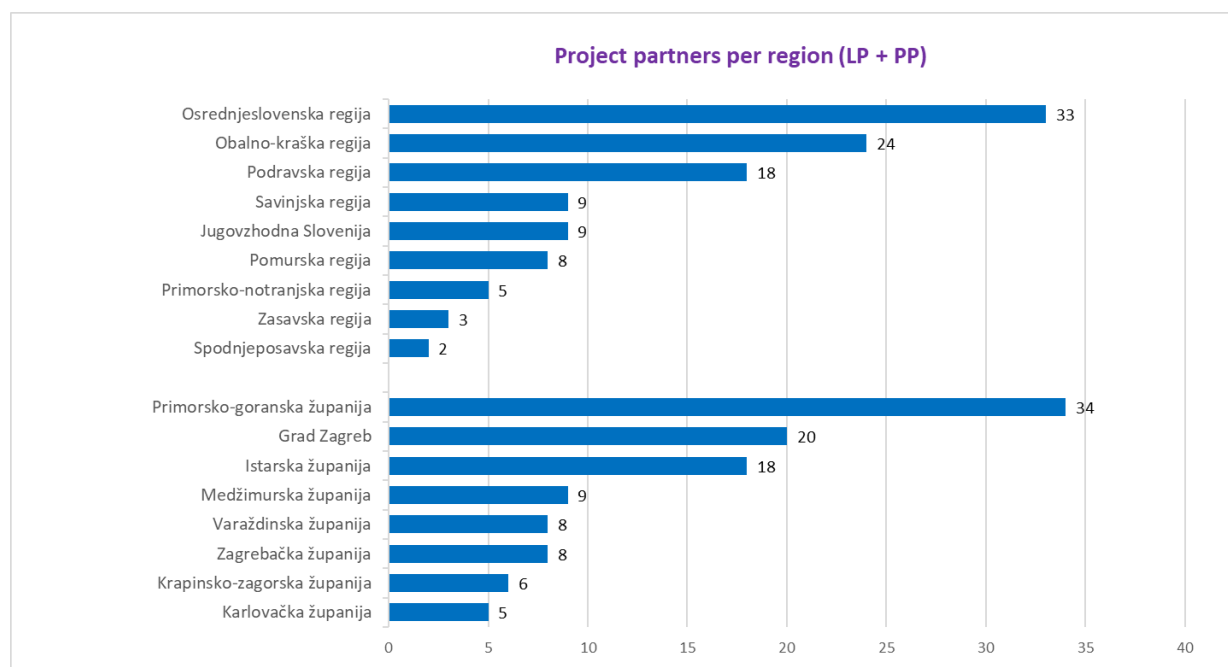
Share of the programme ERDF funds committed within the 1st and 2nd, 3rd deadline of the Open Call (PA2 and PA3) and strategic FRISCO projects (PA1)



ERDF funds committed (34 approved projects within the Open Call) per region



Number of project partners per region in 34 approved projects within the Open Call



4. OTHER INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MEASURES IN 2018

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 26 September 2018 in the frame of the European Cooperation Day 2018. The event promoted the joint cultural heritage from Slovenia and Croatia. The aim was to present the successful cross-border projects dealing with the preservation of the cultural heritage that are implemented with ERDF funds. More than 100 participants from Slovenia and Croatia which arrived with organised bus transportation had a closer look at the projects that are being implemented within the programme (Riviera4Seasons 2 and Mala barka 2). Also a short video of the 2018 EC day was made which can be seen on the following link: <http://www.si-hr.eu/si2/2018/10/16/ob-dnevu-evropskega-sodelovanja-2018-smo-uzivali-kulturno-dediscino-kratek-film-utrinkov-dogajanja/>.

In the frame of the programme's website 50 news on activities, events and relevant information were published in 2018. Also the additional section was added to the programme website where the news on project activities and results are published.



European Cooperation Day 2018

5. REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

By 15 February 2019 altogether 38 Subsidy contracts (37 signed by the end of 2018 and 1 on 15 February 2019) in the amount of 43.068.037,56 EUR ERDF funds were signed which represents 99,9 % of the funds available for projects. Including the Technical Assistance (TA) projects the programme has committed 99,9 % of all available funds.

In relation to the financial data total eligible expenditure incurred by beneficiaries and paid by 31.12.2018 and certified to the Commission amount to 10.358.728,49 EUR. By the end of 2018 three projects fully implemented the activities. All other approved projects are still in implementation.

MORE INFORMATION

The latest programme news and information on events implemented within the programme are available on the programme website:

www.si-hr.eu



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