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Evaluation of the Operational Programme Cross-border Cooperation Slovenia-Croatia 2007– 2013

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Audit Authority
AfP	Application for Payment
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	cross-border cooperation
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETS	European Territorial Cooperation
ECP	European Cohesion Policy
EU	European Union
FLC	First level control
GDP	gross domestic product
GIS	geographic information system
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
OP	Operational Programme
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
SWOT	analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TA	Technical assistance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2016, the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Development and European Cohesion Policy (the Contracting Authority) ordered an evaluation of the Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013. The evaluation was carried out on two levels. The interim evaluation report was submitted to the Contracting Authority by 15 September 2016 and the final evaluation report by 15 November 2016. The main objectives of the evaluation are to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 and the co-financed projects, as well as to identify the expected benefits of the programme and the projects for the programme area, the border population, project partners and other target groups.

The Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was designed on the basis of bilateral cooperation between Croatia and Slovenia. The cooperation area, which shares great resemblance in socio-economic structure and in structural problems, included seven statistical regions in Slovenia (Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Spodnjeposavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Notranjsko-kraška and Obalno-kraška), seven Croatian counties (Međimurje, Varaždin, Krapina-Zagorje, Zagreb, Karlovac, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istra) and the adjacent NUTS III Osrednjeslovenska region in Slovenia and the City of Zagreb in Croatia¹.

The key strategic objective of the programme was to support and promote sustainable development of the whole cross-border area between Slovenia and Croatia. To achieve the strategic objective, the programme set three priorities:

1. Economic and Social Development (59 approved projects within all three calls);
2. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (36 approved projects within all three calls);
3. Technical Assistance.

The total financial allocation for the period 2007–2013 was EUR 44,774,910 in IPA/ERDF funding, and EUR 7,901,475 in national co-financing from Slovenia and Croatia (Technical Assistance funds included).

The main statistical information about the programme:

- 521 project applications received, 95 projects approved (18% success rate).
- In total, 520 partners from 338 institutions participated in the programme, of which 263 (51%) were from Slovenia and 257 (49%) from Croatia.
- Most of the projects (53%) were approved in the 3rd Call for Proposals.
- The region with the highest number of partners was Croatia's Istra county with 60 partners (12% of all partners), followed by Slovenia's Obalno-kraška region with 55 project partners (11% of all partners).

¹ The eligible area of this Operational Programme was extended to Osrednjeslovenska region in Slovenia and the City of Zagreb in Croatia by applying the 20% flexibility rule.

- ↳ Most of the approved projects focused on Priority 1: Economic and Social Development (62%), with the biggest share of them applying for the measure Development of Entrepreneurship (34%).
- ↳ The available funds for the programme were relatively equally distributed between the two priorities (49% for Priority 1 and 51% for Priority 2).
- ↳ By state, 58% of the funds was allocated to project partners from Slovenia and 42% to project partners from Croatia.
- ↳ The highest share of the OP funding was granted under Measure 1.1: Tourism and Rural Development (27%), followed by Measure 2.1: Environmental Protection (26%), Measure 2.2: Preservation of Protected Areas (19%), Measure 1.2: Development of Entrepreneurship (17%) and Measure 1.3: Social Integration (11%).

The main results of the programme:

- ↳ 140 gross jobs created for project implementation (65% went to women).
- ↳ 30,875 participants in joint education or training activities, out of which 49% were women.
- ↳ 138 new cross-border tourist services.
- ↳ 23 new cross-border tourism destinations.
- ↳ 161 new natural and cultural assets integrated into sustainable tourism offer.
- ↳ 152 joint cultural events supported by the programme.
- ↳ 39 projects increasing cooperation between civil-society associations.
- ↳ 367 organisations included in awareness-raising campaigns in the field of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.
- ↳ 57 joint plans in the field of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.
- ↳ 93 rehabilitated waste-disposal sites.
- ↳ 25 organised promotional events within Technical Assistance.

The programme activities successfully addressed the needs of the programme area and benefitted tourism workers, entrepreneurs, research & development organisations, cultural organisations and institutions, public institutions, NGOs, as well as the general public.

The programme was effective in the following areas:

- ↳ stimulating sustainable tourism;
- ↳ promoting business cooperation;
- ↳ facilitating the creation of a common cultural and social space in the Slovenian-Croatian border region;
- ↳ reducing environmental pollution in cross-border sensitive areas;
- ↳ preserving and revitalising natural and cultural resources as a basis for strengthening regional identity and diversity, as well as ensuring sustainability.

The most visible achievements of the programme within Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development) were in the development of tourism and entrepreneurship. The programme achieved measurable results in development of tourism

infrastructure, and established new destinations for different types of tourists with a strong emphasis on natural and cultural heritage, which can ensure long-term sustainability of the achieved results. The programme also achieved positive results in promoting business. The most sustainable results were in transfer of know-how, exchange of information and cooperation of education and research & development institutions. Using various exchange platforms, online and smart-phone applications for exchange of knowledge, ideas and networking, many new companies were established, creating new jobs. Positive results were also achieved in social integration, as the implemented projects enhanced intercultural and institutional cooperation and raised awareness about cultural differences by organising many cultural exchanges and events.

The most evident results of the programme within Priority 2 (Sustainable Management of Natural Resources) were in environmental protection and preservation of natural and cultural assets. The implemented projects addressed the problems of illegal waste disposal and established efficient monitoring systems, which can also be used as model examples in other regions. The awareness of the public about proper waste disposal has improved. Activities for the preservation of biodiversity and indigenous vegetation and animal breeds resulted in a revitalisation of the entire cross-border area.

Programme indicators show a high level of achievement². 29 out of 37 indicators were achieved or exceeded (at an average of 936%), and only 8 indicators were not achieved (their average realisation was 55%). The general realisation of all indicators was almost 80%, which may be attributed to the fact that only 95 projects were approved, while 165 were envisaged. Nevertheless, given that the number of approved projects was only 58% of the target value, the projects fared well above average with respect to programme indicators, since most of them were achieved (and also exceeded). Based on this fact, we can conclude that the approved projects were very consistent with programme indicators.

In the implementation phase, a significant difference in the duration of the three calls for proposals was observed. The first Call was open for four months, while the second and the third one were only open for 2.5 months, which is – according to the beneficiaries – not enough time for potential beneficiaries to get acquainted with the documentation of a call and, together with partners, develop joint activities, define project outcomes and the budget, and prepare the documents needed in the application procedure. In the new programme period 2014–2020, predictability of call deadlines is guaranteed. This will help potential beneficiaries in developing project ideas and the submission of applications. The period from the submission of applications to the start of the projects also varied between the calls. On average, it took 15 months³. Such long periods delayed the

² The data on achievement are based on the data obtained from the JTS, which includes achievement values for 45 projects from the 1st and 2nd call and 18 projects from the 3rd call. For 32 projects, the indicated planned values were used, as the JTS had not received their final reports by the cut-off date 8 November 2016.

³ Within the 1st Call of the new programme period, 7 months passed from the deadline for submission to the start of the projects, which is a significant improvement, but we have to take

transfer of funds to beneficiaries. A delayed start of a project can also hinder its implementation and lead to many financial changes to the project.

The added value of the programme can be seen in successful cross-border partnerships, as also concluded in the European Commission's ex-post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007–2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Successful cooperation between partners was a result of identifying common challenges in the programme area, as well as the exchange of best practices in policies and project implementation. The successful cross-border partnerships that were established will have positive long-term effects on the programme area, as many beneficiaries want to continue working with their partners to either follow up on their projects or start new projects in the cross-border area.

Most of the beneficiaries claim that the results of the projects are still in use after the conclusion of the project. However, it should be noted that they are not used and distributed as intensely as during the projects' lifetime. Two thirds of lead partners believe that their projects generated additional results that were not initially planned or foreseen in the application forms. A further review of their records indicates that almost half of their project goals are still appropriate for addressing the strategic problems in the light of new economic circumstances.

into consideration that the procedure for submission of applications and their selection were different.

IZVRŠNI POVZETEK

Aprila 2016 je Služba Vlade Republike Slovenije za razvoj in evropsko kohezijsko politiko (naročnik) naročila končno poročilo Operativnega programa Slovenija-Hrvaška 2007-2013. Vrednotenje se bo izvajalo na dveh ravneh. Vmesno poročilo vrednotenja je bilo naročniku predloženo 15. septembra 2016, končno poročilo vrednotenja pa 15. novembra 2016. Glavni cilji evalvacije so oceniti učinkovitost izvajanja OP Slovenija-Hrvaška 2007-2013 in sofinanciranih projektov, kot tudi opredeliti pričakovane koristi programa in projektov za programsko območje, mejno prebivalstvo, projektne partnerje in druge ciljne skupine.

Operativni program Slovenija-Hrvaška 2007-2013 je bil oblikovan na podlagi dvostranskega sodelovanja med Hrvaško in Slovenijo. Območje sodelovanja, ki si je zelo podoben v socialno-ekonomski strukturi in v strukturnih problemih, je sestavljeno iz sedmih statističnih regij v Sloveniji (Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Spodnjeposavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Notranjsko-kraška in Obalno-kraška), sedmih hrvaških županij (Međimurska, Varaždinska, Krapinsko-zagorska, Zagrebška, Karlovska, Primorsko-goranska in Istrska) in pridruženih NUTS III regij Osrednjeslovenska regija v Sloveniji in mesto Zagreb na Hrvaškem⁴.

Strateški cilj programa je bil podpirati in spodbujati trajnostni razvoj celotnega čezmejnega območja med Slovenijo in Hrvaško. Da bi se dosegli strateški cilji je program zastavil tri prednostne naloge:

1. Gospodarski in družbeni razvoj (59 odobrenih projektov v vseh treh razpisih);
2. Trajnostno upravljanje z naravnimi viri (36 odobrenih projektov v vseh treh razpisih);
3. Tehnična pomoč.

Skupno je bilo za obdobje 2007-2013 dodeljeno EUR 44.774.910,00 IPA/ERDF sredstev in EUR 7.901.475,00 nacionalnih javnih sredstev Slovenije in Hrvaške (vključno s tehnično pomočjo).

Glavne značilnosti programa so:

- 521 prejetih prijav in 95 odobrenih projektov (18% stopnja uspešnosti).
- Skupno je v programu sodelovalo 520 partnerjev iz 338 institucij, od tega 263 (51%) iz Slovenije in 257 (49%) iz Hrvaške.
- Večina projektov (53%) je bilo odobrenih na 3. javnem razpisu.
- Regija z največjim številom partnerjev je Istarska županija na Hrvaškem s 60 partnerji (12% vseh partnerjev), sledi pa ji Obalno-kraška regija v Sloveniji s 55 projektnimi partnerji (11% vseh partnerjev).
- Večina odobrenih projektov se je osredotočila na prvo prednostno nalogo Gospodarski in družbeni razvoj (62%), največji delež njih se je prijavil na ukrep Razvoj podjetništva (34%).

⁴ Upravičeno območje tega Operativnega programa je bilo po pravilu 20% fleksibilnosti razširjeno tudi na Osrednjeslovensko regijo v Sloveniji in na mesto Zagreb na Hrvaškem.

- ↳ Sredstva za program so bila relativno enakomerno porazdeljena med prednostnima nalogama (49% za 1. prednostno nalogo in 51% za 2. prednostno nalogo).
- ↳ Glede na državo je bilo 58% sredstev dodeljenih območju Republike Slovenije in 42% območju Republike Hrvaške.
- ↳ Največji delež sredstev OP je bil dodeljen ukrepu 1.1 Razvoj turizma in podeželja (27%), sledijo mu ukrep 2.1 Varstvo okolja (26%), ukrep 2.2 Ohranjanje območij varstva narave in kulturne dediščine (19%), ukrep 1.2 Razvoj podjetništva in ukrep 1.3 Socialna integracija.

Glavni dosežki programa so:

- ↳ 140 delovnih mest ustvarjenih za namen izvedbe projektov (65% za ženske).
- ↳ 30.875 udeležencev v skupnih dejavnostih izobraževanja in usposabljanja, od tega je bilo 49% žensk.
- ↳ 138 novih čezmejnih turističnih storitev.
- ↳ 23 novih čezmejnih turističnih destinacij.
- ↳ 161 novih naravnih in kulturnih dobrin, ki so bile vključene v trajnostno turistično ponudbo.
- ↳ 152 skupnih kulturnih dogodkov, podprtih s strani programa.
- ↳ 39 projektov, ki so povečali sodelovanje med združenji civilne družbe.
- ↳ 367 organizacij, vključenih v ukrepe za ozaveščanje na področju trajnostnega upravljanja naravnih virov.
- ↳ 57 skupnih načrtov na področju trajnostnega upravljanja naravnih virov.
- ↳ 10 projektov na področju skupnega upravljanja z vodnimi viri.
- ↳ 93 saniranih odlagališč odpadkov.
- ↳ 25 organiziranih promocijskih dogodkov v okviru tehnične pomoči.

Programske aktivnosti so uspešno obravnavale potrebe programskega območja in koristile turističnim delavcem, podjetnikom, raziskovalnim in razvojnim organizacijam, kulturnim organizacijam in institucijam, javnim institucijam, nevladnim organizacijam, kot tudi širši javnosti.

Program je bil učinkovit na naslednjih področjih:

- ↳ spodbujanje trajnostnega turizma;
- ↳ spodbujanje poslovnega sodelovanja;
- ↳ omogočanje oblikovanja skupnega kulturnega in socialnega prostora v slovensko-hrvaškem obmejnem območju;
- ↳ zmanjšanje onesnaževanja okolja v čezmejnih občutljivih območjih;
- ↳ ohranjanje in oživljanje naravnih in kulturnih virov kot osnove za krepitev regionalne identitete in raznolikosti, kot tudi zagotavljanje trajnosti.

Najbolj prepoznavni dosežki programa v okviru prednostne naloge 1 Gospodarski in družbeni razvoj so na področju razvoja turizma in podjetništva. Program je dosegel merljive rezultate na področju razvoja turistične infrastrukture in ustvaril nove destinacije za različne tipe turistov z močnim poudarkom na naravni in kulturni dediščini, ki lahko zagotovi dolgoročno trajnost doseženih rezultatov. Program je dosegel tudi pozitivne rezultate na področju spodbujanja

podjetništva. Največji trajnostni rezultat je bil na področju prenosa znanja, izmenjave informacij in sodelovanja med izobraževalnim sektorjem in sektorjem za raziskave in razvoj. Prek različnih platform za izmenjavo, spleta in aplikacij za izmenjavo znanja, idej in mreženje je bilo ustanovljenih veliko novih podjetij, ki so ustvarila nova delovna mesta. Pozitivni rezultati so bili doseženi tudi na področju socialne integracije, saj so izvedeni projekti z organizacijo številnih kulturnih izmenjav in dogodkov okrepili medkulturno in institucionalno sodelovanje in povečali ozaveščenost o kulturnih razlikah.

Najbolj prepoznavni rezultati programa v okviru prednostne naloge 2 Trajnostno upravljanje naravnih virov so na področju varstva okolja in ohranjanja naravnih in kulturnih dobrin. Izvedeni projekti so obravnavali problematiko nezakonitega odlaganja odpadkov in vzpostavili učinkovite sisteme za spremljanje, ki bi jih lahko uporabili tudi kot vzorčne primere v drugih regijah. Izboljšala se je javno zavest o odlaganju odpadkov. Aktivnosti za ohranjanje biotske raznovrstnosti in avtohtonih rastlinskih in živalskih vrst so pripomogle k revitalizaciji celotnega čezmejnega območja.

Programski kazalniki kažejo visoko stopnjo uspešnosti⁵. 29 od 37 kazalnikov je bilo doseženih in preseženih (v povprečju za 936%), in le 8 kazalnikov ni bilo doseženih (njihova povprečna realizacija je bila 55%). Splošna realizacija vseh kazalnikov je bila skoraj 80%, kar je lahko posledica dejstva, da je bilo odobrenih le 95 od načrtovanih 165 projektov (57%). Toda kljub temu, da je bilo število odobrenih projektov le 57,58% ciljne vrednosti (165 projektov), so se projekti odrezali nadpovprečno glede na programske kazalnike, saj jih je bila večina doseženih (in tudi preseženih). Na podlagi tega dejstva lahko sklepamo, da so bili odobreni projekti zelo skladni s programskimi kazalniki.

V fazi izvajanja je bila odkrita velika razlika v trajanju treh razpisov. Prvi razpis bil odprt štiri mesece, medtem ko sta bila drugi in tretji razpis odprta le 2,5 meseca, kar glede na komentarje upravičencev ni dovolj časa da se potencialni upravičenci seznanijo z dokumentacijo, skupaj s partnerji oblikujejo skupne aktivnosti, opredelijo učinke, proračun, ter pripravijo potrebno dokumentacijo za oddajo projektne vloge. V novem programskem obdobju 2014-2020 je zagotovljena predvidljivost rokov za prijave na posamezni razpis. To bo potencialnim upravičencem olajšalo razvoj projektne ideje in prijave projektov na razpis. Obdobje od oddaje vloge do začetka projektov se je tudi razlikovalo pri posameznih razpisih. V povprečju je to obdobje trajalo 15 mesecev⁶. Tako dolgo obdobje je odložilo prenos sredstev upravičencem. Preložen začetek projekta je lahko tudi ovira njegovo izvajanje in vodi do številnih finančnih sprememb projekta.

⁵ Podatki o doseženih vrednostih kazalnikov so pridobljeni s strani STS. Navedene vrednosti odražajo dosežene vrednosti vseh projektov v okviru 1. in 2. javnega razpisa ter 18 projektov v okviru 3. javnega razpisa. Za preostalih 32 projektov so upoštevane načrtovane vrednosti, saj STS do presečnega datuma 8.11.2016 še ni prejel njihovih končnih poročil.

⁶ V okviru prvega roka za predložitev projektne predloge v okviru novega programskega obdobja je od izteka roka za oddajo projektov do pričetka izvajanja projektov preteklo 7 mesecev kar je pomembna izboljšava, vendar moramo upoštevati tudi dejstvo, da gre za drugačen postopek prijave projektov in njihovega izbora.

Dodana vrednost programa so uspešna čezmejna partnerstva, kar je zaključila tudi Evropska komisija v naknadnem vrednotenju programov kohezijske politike v obdobju 2007-2013 s poudarkom na Evropskem skladu za regionalni razvoj in Kohezijskem skladu. Uspešno sodelovanje med partnerji je bilo posledica opredelitve skupnih izzivov na programskem območju, kot tudi izmenjave najboljših praks v politikah in izvajanju projektov. Grajenje uspešnih čezmejnih partnerstev bo imelo dolgotrajen pozitiven učinek na programskem območju, saj mnogi upravičenci želijo nadaljevati sodelovanje s partnerji z nadgraditvijo svojih projektov ali pa z novimi projekti na čezmejnem območju.

Večina vodilnih partnerjev trdi, da so rezultati projektov še vedno v uporabi tudi po zaključku projektov. Kljub temu je treba dodati, da se ti rezultati ne uporabljajo in delijo tako intenzivno kot v času trajanja projektov. Dve tretjini vodilnih partnerjev meni, da je njihov projekt ustvaril dodatne rezultate, ki niso bili prvotno načrtovani ali predvideni v prijavnem obrazcu. Nadaljnji pregled njihovih evidenc kaže, da je skoraj polovica njihovih ciljev projekta še vedno primerna za reševanje strateških problemov v luči novih gospodarskih razmer.

IZVRŠNI SAŽETAK

U travnju 2016. godine, Ured Republike Slovenije za razvoj i europsku kohezijsku politiku (Ugovorno tijelo) naredio je završnu evaluaciju Operativnog programa Slovenija-Hrvatska 2007-2013. Evaluacija je provedena na dvije razine. Privremeno evaluacijsko izvješće podneseno je Ugovornom tijelu 15. rujna 2016. godine, a završno evaluacijsko izvješće 15. studenog 2016. godine. Glavni ciljevi evaluacije su procijeniti učinkovitost provedbe OP Slovenija-Hrvatska 2007-2013, te sufinanciranih projekata, kao i identifikacija očekivanih koristi programa i projekata za programsko područje, stanovništvo pograničnog područja, projektne partnere i druge ciljne skupine.

Operativni program Slovenija-Hrvatska 2007-2013 je kreiran na temelju bilateralne suradnje između Hrvatske i Slovenije. Područje suradnje, koje dijeli veliku sličnost u socio-ekonomskoj strukturi i u strukturnim problemima, uključivao je sedam statističkih regija u Sloveniji (Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Spodnjeposavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Notranjsko-kraška i Obalno-kraška), sedam županija u Hrvatskoj (Međimurska, Varaždinska, Krapinsko-zagorska, Zagrebačka, Karlovačka, Primorsko-goranska i Istarska) i dodatne pridodane NUTS III; Osrednjeslovenska regija u Sloveniji i Grad Zagreb u Hrvatskoj⁷.

Ključni strateški cilj programa bio je podupirati i promicati održivi razvoj cijelog prekograničnog područja između Slovenije i Hrvatske. Za postizanje strateškog cilja program je postavio tri prioriteta:

1. Gospodarski i društveni razvoj (59 odobrenih projekata u okviru sva tri poziva);
2. Održivo upravljanje prirodnim resursima (36 odobrenih projekata u okviru sva tri poziva);
3. Tehnička pomoć.

Ukupna financijska alokacija za razdoblje 2007-2013 bila je 44.774.910 EUR unutar IPA/ERDF financiranja, čemu je pridodano još 7.901.475 EUR nacionalnog sufinanciranja iz Slovenije i Hrvatske (sredstava za Tehničku pomoć su uključena).

Najznačajnije činjenice programa su:

- 521 zaprimljena projektna prijava, 95 projekata odobreno (18.23% stopa uspjeha).
- Ukupno 520 partnera iz 338 institucija sudjelovalo u programu, od kojih je 263 (51%) bilo iz Slovenije i 257 (49%) iz Hrvatske.
- Većina projekata (53%) je odobreno u 3. pozivu na dostavu projektnih prijedloga.

⁷ Prihvatljivo područje ovog Operativnog programa bilo je prošireno na Osrednjeslovensku regiju u Sloveniji i Grad Zagreb u Hrvatskoj primjenom pravila fleksibilnosti od 20%.

- Regija s najvećim brojem partnera u Hrvatskoj je Istarska županije s 60 partnera (12% od svih partnera), a prati ju u Sloveniji Obalno-kraška regija s 55 projektnih partnera (11% od svih partnera).
- Većina od odobrenih projekata usmjerena je na Prioritet 1: Gospodarski i društveni razvoj (62%), a najveći dio njih prijavio se na mjeru „Razvoj poduzetništva“ (34%).
- Dostupna sredstva za programa su relativno ravnomjerno raspoređena između dva prioriteta (49% za Prioritet 1 i 51% za Prioritet 2).
- Po državama, 58% sredstava alocirano je na teritoriju Slovenije i 42% na teritoriju Hrvatske.
- Najveći dio sredstava OP dodijeljen je za Mjeru 1.1: Turizam i ruralni razvoj (27%), a prate ju Mjera 2.1: Zaštita okoliša (26%), Mjera 2.2: Očuvanje zaštićenih područja, ekološki značajnih područja i kulturne baštine (19%), Mjera 1.2: Razvoj poduzetništva (17%) i Mjera 1.3: Društvena integracija (11%).

Glavna postignuća programa su:

- 140 bruto stvorenih radnih mjesta u svrhu provedbe projekta (65% žena).
- 30,875 sudionika u zajedničkim edukacijama ili aktivnostima osposobljavanja, od kojih su 49% bile su žene.
- 138 novih prekograničnih turističkih usluga.
- 23 novih prekograničnih turističkih destinacija.
- 161 novih prirodnih i kulturnih dobara integriranih u održivu turističku ponudu.
- 152 zajednička kulturna događaja podržana od strane programa.
- 39 projekata povećanja suradnje između udruga civilnog društva.
- 367 organizacije uključenih u aktivnosti podizanja svijesti u području održivog upravljanja prirodnim resursima.
- 57 zajedničkih planova u području održivog upravljanja prirodnim resursima.
- 93 ponovno uspostavljena mjesta za odlaganje otpada.
- 25 organiziranih promotivnih događanja u okviru Tehničke pomoći.

Programske aktivnosti uspješno su detektirale potrebe programskog područja i pogodovala turističkim radnicima, poduzetnicima, organizacijama za istraživanje i razvoj, kulturnim organizacijama i institucijama, javnim ustanovama, nevladinim organizacijama, kao i široj javnosti.

Program je bio učinkovit u sljedećim područjima:

- poticanje održivog turizma;
- promicanje poslovne suradnje;
- olakšavanje stvaranja zajedničkog kulturnog i društvenog prostora u slovensko-hrvatskom graničnom području;
- smanjenje onečišćenja okoliša u prekograničnim osjetljivim područjima;
- očuvanje i revitalizacija prirodnih i kulturnih resursa kao temelj jačanja regionalnog identiteta i raznolikosti kao i osiguravanja održivosti.

Najprepoznatljivija programska postignuća u okviru prioriteta 1 Gospodarski i društveni razvoj su u području razvoja turizma i poduzetništva. Program je postigao mjerljive rezultate u području razvoja turističke infrastrukture i utjecao na pojavu novih destinacija za različite tipove turista s naglaskom na prirodnu i kulturnu baštinu koja može osigurati dugoročnu održivost postignutih rezultata. Program je također postigao pozitivne rezultate u području poslovne promocije. Najveći održivi rezultat bio je u području prijenosa znanja, razmjene informacija i suradnje između obrazovanog sektora i sektora za istraživanja i razvoj. Kroz razne platforme razmjene, internet i aplikacije na pametnim telefonima za razmjenu znanja, ideja i umrežavanje, osnovane su mnoge nove tvrtke koje su stvorile nova radnja mjesta. Pozitivni rezultati također su postignuti na području društvene integracije, kao provedeni projekti koji su poboljšali interkulturalnu i institucionalnu suradnju i podigli svijest o kulturnim različitostima organiziranjem brojnih kulturnih razmjena i događaja.

Najprepoznatljiviji programski rezultati unutar prioriteta 2 Održivo upravljanje prirodnim resursima su u području zaštite okoliša i očuvanja prirodnih i kulturnih dobara. Provedeni projekti su detektirali probleme ilegalnog odlaganja otpada i uspostavili učinkovite sustave praćenja, što također može biti korišteno kao model primjera u drugim regijama. Svijest javnosti o zbrinjavanju otpada je poboljšana. Aktivnosti za očuvanje biološke raznolikosti i autohtone vegetacije i životinjskog pasmina rezultirale su revitalizacijom cijelog prekograničnog područja.

Programski pokazatelji pokazuju visoku razinu postignuća⁸. 29 od 37 pokazatelja je postignuto ili premašeno (u prosjeku od 93,6%), a samo 8 pokazatelja nije postignuto (njihova prosječna realizacija bila je 55%). Opća realizacija svih pokazatelja bila je gotovo 80%, što može biti zbog činjenice da je samo 95 od ciljanih 165 projekata (57%) odobreno. No ipak, uzimajući u obzir da je broj odobrenih projekata bio samo 58% od ciljane vrijednosti (165 projekata), projekti su bili znatno iznad prosjeka u odnosu na pokazatelje programa, s obzirom da je većina od njih postignuta (i premašena). Temeljem te činjenice, možemo zaključiti da su odobreni projekti bili u skladu s programskom pokazateljima.

U fazi provedbe, otkrivena je značajna razlika u trajanju tri poziva na dostavu projektnih prijedloga. Prvi poziv je bio otvoren četiri mjeseca, dok su drugi i treći bili otvoreni samo 2,5 mjeseca, što, prema komentarima korisnika, nije dovoljno vremena za potencijalne korisnike da se upoznaju s dokumentacijom poziva i da, zajedno sa partnerima, razviju zajedničke aktivnosti, definiraju ishode projekta, proračun i pripreme potrebnu dokumentaciju povezanu s procedurom podnošenje projektne prijave. U novom programskom razdoblju 2014-2020, predvidivost rokova poziva je zajamčena. To će olakšati razvoj projektnih ideja i podnošenje prijave potencijalnim korisnicima. Razdoblje od podnošenja prijave do početka projekata također je variralo između poziva. U prosjeku, to razdoblje je bilo 15

⁸ Podaci za postignute vrijednosti temelje se na podacima dobivenim od ZTT-a, gdje postignute vrijednosti odražavaju postignute vrijednosti od 45 projekata iz 1. i 2. poziva te 18 projekata iz 3. poziva. Za 32 projekta naznačene planirane vrijednosti su uzete u obzir jer ZTT nije dobio svoje završno izvješće zaključno s danom 8.11.2016.

mjeseci⁹. Takva duga razdoblja odgađala su prijenos sredstava na korisnike. Odgođen početak projekta također može ometati njegovu provedbu i dovesti do mnogih financijskih promjena u projektu.

Dodana vrijednost programa bilo je uspješno prekogranično partnerstvo, koje je također bilo sklopljeno u ex-post evaluaciji Europske komisije Programa kohezijske politike 2007-2013, s naglaskom na Europski fond za regionalni razvoj i Kohezijski fond. Uspješna suradnja između partnera bila je rezultat identifikacije zajedničkih izazova u programskom području, kao i razmjene najbolje prakse u politikama i provedbi projekta. Izgradnja uspješnih prekograničnih partnerstava imat će dugotrajan pozitivan učinak na programskom području, s obzirom da mnogi korisnici žele nastaviti suradnju sa svojim partnerima kako bi nadogradili svoje projekte ili pokrenuli nove projekte u prekograničnom području.

Većina korisnika tvrdi da su rezultati projekata još uvijek u uporabi nakon završetka projekta, međutim treba napomenuti da se ne koriste i distribuiraju tako intenzivno kao tijekom trajanja projekata. Dvije trećine vodećih partnera vjeruje da je njihov projekt stvorio dodatne rezultate koji nisu bili u početku planirani ili predviđeni u prijavnim obrascu. Daljnji pregled njihovih zapisa pokazuje da je gotovo polovica njihovih projektnih ciljeva i dalje prikladna za definiranje strateških problema u svjetlu novih gospodarskih okolnosti.

⁹ U okviru 1. poziva novog programskog razdoblja, 7 mjeseci je prošlo od dana podnošenja do početka projekata, što je značajan napredak, ali moramo uzeti u obzir različite procedure za podnošenje prijava i njihov odabir.

1. PURPOSE, PROGRESS AND EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 is performed on the basis of Articles 47, 48, 67 and 68 of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down the general provisions of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, and the repealed Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999, as well as on the basis of provisions of the Operational Programme (Chapter 12.6: Monitoring and evaluation) and the Communication Plan of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide useful information for assessing the effects of the programme for the Managing Authority (MA), Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), and other programme bodies. Apart from these, the main audience of the evaluation report are the European Commission, project partners (beneficiaries of the programme) and other interested subjects.

The main objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, which includes a review and explanation of the (socio-economic) elements that had an impact on the effectiveness of programme/project implementation and the deviations from the targeted objectives/indicators on the programme level.
- To verify the effectiveness of programme/project implementation.
- To identify the expected benefits of the programme/projects for the programme area, the border population, project partners and other target groups.

The evaluation results will also be available on the programme website.

The evaluation is carried out in two steps:

- Step 1 – An interim evaluation report was prepared and submitted to the Contracting Authority by 15 September 2016. This report analyses the implementation of the programme, the achieved results and indicators. An assessment was prepared for socio-economic factors and effects of the projects, how many projects fell within adjacent regions (20%), priorities, measures, types of partnerships, etc.
- Step 2 – The final evaluation report was prepared by 15 November 2016, and consists of an evaluation of the programme with an emphasis on programme results using indicators on the project level, evaluation of programme communication activities, and evaluation of the programme structures.

The evaluation, is focused on the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the programme for achieving results and

effects in accordance with programme objectives. Moreover, special stress is put on key programme issues during the implementation phase, and the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the management structure. The evaluation is aimed at assessing whether all programme objectives and indicators from programme documents have been achieved, as well as showing the planned and above all the achieved results of individual projects co-financed from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance / European Regional Development Fund.

The final report was drawn up based on the proposed evaluation plan and consists of six main chapters:

- ↳ The first part briefly introduces the programme and its structure, and then focuses on the relevance of the programme strategy in the light of the new circumstances and on the relevance of programme activities for the needs of the area, analysing whether project activities correspond with the planned programme activities. This section aims to answer questions such as: Is the strategy still relevant in the new circumstances, and have the strategic objectives been achieved? To what extent have the strategic and specific objectives been achieved?
- ↳ The second part analyses the programme implementation and the results achieved on the programme level. First, we present the main milestones in the implementation of the programme, and then we analyse the progress of the programme from the perspectives of the implementation process, financial indicators and physical indicators (outcomes and outputs on the programme level).
- ↳ The third part focuses on the project level and on the evaluation of project results in order to provide a review of the achievements of the programme. This section aims to present findings in the following areas: how the projects addressed horizontal policies; which projects can be regarded as good practices; the structure of partnerships; the added value of the approved projects and their sustainability.
- ↳ The fourth part evaluates the communication plan and communication activities within the programme. It seeks to answer the following questions: How are the indicators of the communication plan related to the general objective? Were the communication activities efficient? Which promotional measures could be strengthened? Were the communicational tools appropriate and effective?
- ↳ The fifth part focuses on the programme structures and presents the findings of an evaluation based on a triangulation of their level of cooperation, implementation efficiency and contribution to the successful completion of projects.
- ↳ The sixth part concludes the final evaluation report by summarising the main findings and presenting key recommendations for the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology and data sources

Different methods and techniques were used for evaluating different levels of the programme (collecting information/data, data analysis), taking into account our past experience and the Commission's instructions for the preparation of appropriate programme evaluations.

The choice of evaluation methods mainly depended on the evaluation objectives and the evaluation plan, which was drafted by the Contracting Authority.

Data collection included the use of primary sources acquired directly from the JTS, as well as own research (questionnaires, meetings with the MA and the JTS) as secondary sources, official statistical records and other documents received from the MA/JTS or obtained independently.

As secondary sources of information, official statistical sources (national statistics offices and other Slovenian and Croatian institutions) were used for assessing the socio-economic circumstances to test the relevance of the programme strategy with respect to the new circumstances.

The methods used in the analysis can be divided in three categories:

- for organising the evaluation: the basic methods used for forming programmes and the logical framework of the evaluation;
- for analysing changes in the field: the methods aimed at monitoring the changes resulting from the procedures (questionnaires, desk analysis);
- for expressing opinion or classification: expert opinion based on the performed analysis.

The following basic methods were used in preparing the final report:

- **Desk analysis** – a review of programme documents and the literature listed in chapter 10. The review included information from texts and documents of the Community, national and local documents, programme documents, annual reports and other data acquired from the JTS. The review of the literature and documents provided the structure for the theory of change. Subsequently, the results allowed a triangulation of findings in synergy with other data typologies.
- **Meetings** – two meetings were held with key programme stakeholders (the MA and the JTS) to clarify specific parts of the programme. Interaction with the Contracting Authority also took place via email and telephone.
- **Statistical data analysis** – context-based statistical data and data acquired from the JTS related to the geographical, thematic and financial distribution of the approved projects.
- **Interviews** – a survey was conducted among the lead partners to obtain the first results about the impact of the projects in the programme area and information about the added value of the partnerships in the projects.

- ↳ **Questionnaires** were sent to the programme structures, using the contacts provided by the JTS. The questionnaires contained forms for evaluating other structures and for identifying projects of good practice.

Cartographic displays were prepared using GIS tools.

2.2 Survey among lead partners

The purpose of the survey was to obtain the first information about the cost-effectiveness of the projects, the cross-border effect of the financed projects, the added value of the established partnerships and project sustainability. All lead partners of the financed projects were taken as the sample of the survey.

Before the e-survey was distributed, the JTS sent a notification to all lead partners that the evaluation of the programme by an external contractor had started so that the beneficiaries were notified that they would be contacted. 73.68% of all lead partners responded to the survey by filling out the questionnaire, which is a highly representative sample.

Table 1: The procedure of the e-survey among lead partners

Sample	Date of notification by the JTS	Date of sending out the e-survey	Date of last response	Number of respondents	% of lead partners responding
95	19.7.2016	2.8.2016	6.9.2016	70	73.68%

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

The e-survey was conducted using 1ka, a free online survey tool.

2.3 Interviews with beneficiaries

Interviews with beneficiaries were conducted from mid-August to the end of October 2016. Based on prior agreement with each lead partner and a confirmation e-mail, which they also forwarded to project partners as a formal invitation, in-depth interviews were conducted, lasting approximately two hours, depending on the number of project partners and the comments from the beneficiaries. At each meeting, an attendance list was signed, which can be acquired from the author.

The interview covered questions related to five main topics: project and programme indicators, programme strategy, communication activities, programme structures, and an in-depth conversation aimed at identifying examples of good practice. A total of 94 interviews were conducted (the lead partner of the project HERITAGE LIVE refused to be interviewed) but the number of interviewees is much higher (a complete list is presented in Annex 2), since many of the interviews included not only project leaders but also coordinators of activities, administrators, accountants, partners, etc.

After the interviews, we analysed the collected quantitative and qualitative data and the results are presented in this report.

2.4 Questionnaires for programme structures

The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information about the experience of programme structures regarding their participation in the programme and their cooperation with other programme structures.

In September 2016, we sent a questionnaire to all the programme structures, using the contacts provided by the JTS. The questionnaire consisted of the following three parts (presented in Annex 3):

- In the first part, the programme structures had to evaluate the level of cooperation of other programme structures on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 was the highest grade).
- In the second part, the programme structures had to evaluate the level of implementation efficiency of other programme structures on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 was the highest grade).
- In the third part, the programme structures had to name good practices of other programme structures and also the problems they faced when working with them.

We have obtained input from all of the programme structures except the Croatian Info Point, which ceased to exist in September 2015.

2.5 Limitations of the evaluation

There were no major hindrances in the evaluation of the OP, apart from the following limitations.

In some projects that were concluded a few years ago, the project manager or coordinator could not participate in the interview as they no longer work for the lead partner.

Because the projects were concluded a long time ago, some of the interviewees could not remember some of the details about the project they were asked about.

Not all beneficiaries were prepared to participate in the interviews, so we could only interview 94 out of 95 lead partners.

Some of the programme structures were reorganised in the meantime and have replaced some of the staff involved in the implementation of the programme. As already mentioned, the Croatian Info Point ceased to exist in September 2015, so the questionnaire for structures was not sent to them.

3. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RELEVANCE OF PROGRAMME RESULTS

3.1 Draft programme

The Slovenia-Croatia Operational Programme 2007–2013 was approved by Commission Decision C (2008) 739 on 27 February 2008. In its implementation, the OP combined funding from the European Regional Development Fund available to Slovenia as an EU Member State and IPA funds available to Croatia as an EU Candidate Country, merged in a single IPA programme allocation.

The programming phase started in 2005, when a bilateral working group was established. It included Slovenian (Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy) and Croatian representatives (Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds).

In addition to the consultations on the national level, bilateral working group meetings were held. Moreover, the programming phase also included a consultative process for a wide range of stakeholders from the national, regional and local level in both countries. The consultations concluded with an agreement on the strategic objectives, strategic themes and a SWOT analysis.

In spring 2006, a questionnaire for project ideas was sent to potential beneficiaries in both countries. The feedback from the potential beneficiaries was very helpful in designing the strategic part of the OP.

Parallel to the elaboration of the OP, an ex-ante evaluation was carried out in close coordination, both in terms of timing and content. The recommendations of the ex-ante evaluators were largely incorporated into the OP.

After the approval of the Application Pack by the Joint Monitoring Committee, the final version of the Application Pack was prepared, including the Practical Implementation Manual. The Managing Authority launched the 1st Call for Proposals on 20 June 2008, the 2nd Call was launched on 16 April 2010, and the 3rd Call on 3 February 2012.

In October 2011, a mid-term evaluation of the OP IPA Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was prepared, which focused mainly on the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the OP as well as recommendations for further implementation of the programme. The recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the OP IPA Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 were adopted and incorporated in the 3rd Call for Proposals.

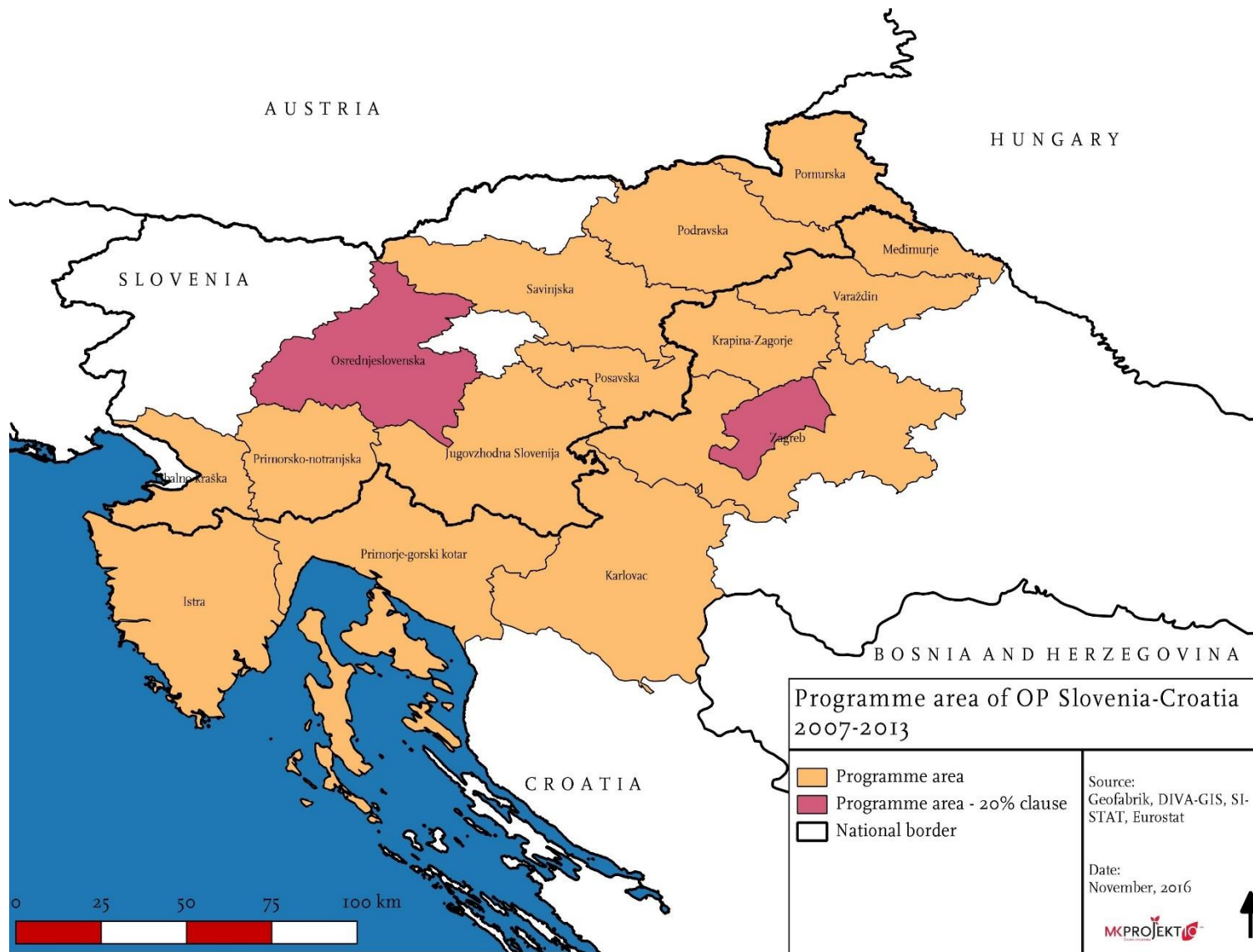
The OP was revised twice. On 26 July 2012, the OP was revised by Commission Decision C (2012) 4980. The main change was in the financing plan, which increased significantly from EUR 28,946,970 in 2009 to EUR 42,703,502 in 2012. In 2013, the OP was revised again due to Croatia's accession to the European Union. Therefore, all the programme documents had to be revised in accordance

with the new conditions. With the revised OP, approved by the European Commission on 17 December 2013 (by Commission Decision C (2013) 9614), the financing plan was increased to EUR 44.774.910.

The target area of the programme comprised territorial units on the NUTS III level in the area on the Slovenian-Croatian border, including the Slovenian regions of Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Primorsko-notranjska, Obalno-kraška and the Croatian counties Međimurje, Varaždin, Krapina-Zagorje, Zagreb, Karlovac, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istra. The adjacent NUTS III regions Osrednjeslovenska in Slovenia and Grad Zagreb in Croatia fall under the 20% clause in the sense of Articles 88 and 97 of the Commission Regulation (EC) no 718/2007 as adjacent regions.

During the programme period, certain institutional changes occurred. In 2012, the Slovenian Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy ceased to exist and the areas of work related to European cohesion policy and to regional development transferred to the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology. At the same time, the European Territorial Cooperation Department was transformed into the Regional Development and European Territorial Cooperation Directorate. The Managing Authority of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 operated under the Regional Development and European Territorial Cooperation Directorate. In 2014, the areas of work related to European cohesion policy were transferred to the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, while the staff working on the OP Slovenia-Croatia remained mostly the same and acted under European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanism Office. On the Croatian side, initially, the representatives from the Ministry of Foreign affairs and European integration were included in the bilateral working group. From June 2006, this working area was transferred to the Ministry of the Sea, tourism, transport and Development, from January 2008 on to the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management, and, finally, from 22 December 2011 on to the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds.

Map 1: Programme area



3.1.1 Programme objectives

The strategic objective of the programme was to support and promote sustainable development of the whole cross-border area between Slovenia and Croatia. The vision of the programme was to make the cross-border area between Croatia and Slovenia highly competitive, and to create sustainable living conditions and wellbeing for its inhabitants by exploiting development opportunities arising from joint cross-border actions.

The strategy to obtain the programme objective was:

- To enable inhabitants and the economy in the cross-border area to exploit the potential of the EU market;
- To enable local and regional actors to address cross-border challenges jointly with their cross-border counterparts;
- To overcome regional development disadvantages caused by national borders by joint cross-border actions;
- To support the development and promotion of the cross-border area and of a common identity;
- To invest in people, combat social exclusion and create favourable living conditions.

3.1.2 Priorities and measures

To achieve the strategic objective, the programme set three priorities:

1. Economic and Social Development;
2. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources;
3. Technical Assistance.

Technical Assistance is aimed at supporting prompt and smooth implementation of the programme.

Along with the priorities, the programme set down the following two horizontal themes as tools to support the achievement of the objectives of the selected priorities:

1. Human Resources Development;
2. Information Society.

Priority 1: Economic and Social Development was aimed at improving economic growth and competitiveness of SMEs; supporting development of tourism through improved offer, better exploitation of natural and cultural assets, as well as development of new services and products, thus creating new sources of income for rural areas; and encouraging and supporting exchange in cultural and social themes and areas improving the quality of everyday life, services and information sharing in the programme area.

The specific objectives of Priority 1:

- To stimulate sustainable tourism built on a cross-border regional identity and based on natural and cultural assets in order to prolong the tourist

season and generate additional and sustainable income for the local people, especially in rural areas;

- ↳ To promote business cooperation;
- ↳ To facilitate the creation of a common cultural and social space in the Slovenian-Croatian border region.

In order to achieve the objectives of Priority 1, the following three measures were carried out:

Measure 1: Tourism and Rural Development

- ↳ Development and improvement of integrated products and services within different types of tourism offer (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, wellness and health tourism, river tourism, etc);
- ↳ Revitalisation of cultural heritage and integration of cultural heritage into tourism;
- ↳ Establishment and improvement of joint marketing and promotion of tourism and of agriculture products and services;
- ↳ Improvement of recreational and small-scale tourism infrastructure;
- ↳ Stimulation of inclusion of nature values and nature protected areas in the tourist offer.

Measure 2: Development of Entrepreneurship

- ↳ Development of SMEs support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of SMEs;
- ↳ Development of cooperation between SMEs, educational, research & development organisations for improving business innovativeness and technology;
- ↳ Transfer of know-how and exchange of information;
- ↳ Establishment of cross-border networks of employment services as a basic ground for further cooperation.

Measure 3: Social Integration

- ↳ Public awareness-raising on cultural differences;
- ↳ Stimulation of cultural exchanges and events;
- ↳ Stimulation of mobility of artists and of cultural cooperation;
- ↳ Cooperation between institutions (fire brigades, health and protection services, educational and training programs etc.).

Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources was aimed at preserving the environment and safeguarding the natural and cultural assets of the cross-border area; conserving valuable biodiversity for future generations; contributing to improved quality of life by reducing ecological risks, air pollution, improving waste and water management, and reducing soil, forest and other pollution; and establishing cross-border networks in order to ensure environmental protection.

The specific objectives of Priority 2:

- ↳ To improve environmental awareness in the cross-border area;

- ↳ To mitigate environmental risks by joint planning, management and monitoring of natural resources in the cross-border area;
- ↳ To reduce environmental pollution (air, water, soil, forests, etc.) in sensitive cross-border areas;
- ↳ To preserve and revitalise natural and cultural resources as a basis for strengthening regional identity and diversity, as well as ensuring sustainability.

In order to achieve the objectives of Priority 2, the following two measures were carried out:

Measure 1: Environmental Protection

- ↳ Joint awareness raising among polluters and inhabitants on innovative environment protection actions/measures and sustainable use of natural resources;
- ↳ Preparation of joint feasibility studies to improve and monitor air, water, waste and waste water management systems, and reduce soil, forests and other pollution;
- ↳ Joint management and joint preservation of water sources and improvement of quality of water;
- ↳ Identification and sanitation of uncontrolled waste disposal and development of prevention measures;
- ↳ Preparation of technical documentation and construction of waste water treatment plants and of domestic waste, treatment of solid and sewage systems in cross-border sensitive areas;
- ↳ Actions to improve energy efficiency;
- ↳ Actions to improve the quality of air;
- ↳ Joint spatial planning.

Measure 2: Preservation of Protected Areas

- ↳ Establishment of protected areas and their cross-border networks;
- ↳ Stimulation of joint management of existing protected areas;
- ↳ Preservation of biodiversity and landscape diversity;
- ↳ Joint feasibility studies on issues related to nature protection;
- ↳ Preparation of technical documentation for natural-resource protection and/or sustainable development;
- ↳ Awareness-raising on protection of natural and cultural resources;
- ↳ Preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

Table 2: Relations between objectives and priorities

GENERAL VISION	To make the cross-border area between Croatia and Slovenia highly competitive, and to create sustainable living conditions and wellbeing for its inhabitants by exploiting development opportunities arising from joint cross-border actions.	
MAIN OBJECTIVE	To create a dynamic cross-border area with intense interactions of development actors and their stakeholders on both sides of the border towards the jointly defined goals.	
PRIORITIES	Economic and Social Development	Sustainable Management of

		Natural Resources
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	<p>1. To stimulate sustainable tourism built on a cross-border regional identity and based on natural and cultural assets in order to prolong the tourist season and generate additional and sustainable income for the local people, especially in rural areas;</p> <p>2. To promote business cooperation;</p> <p>3. To facilitate the creation of a common cultural and social space in the Slovenian-Croatian border region.</p>	<p>1. To improve environmental awareness in the cross-border area;</p> <p>2. To mitigate environmental risks by joint planning, management and monitoring of natural resources in the cross-border area;</p> <p>3. To reduce environmental pollution (air, water, soil, forests, etc.) in cross-border sensitive areas;</p> <p>4. To preserve and revitalise natural and cultural resources as a basis for strengthening regional identity and diversity, as well as ensuring sustainability.</p>
MEASURES	Tourism and Rural Development	Environmental Protection
	Development of Entrepreneurship	Preservation of Protected Areas
	Social Integration	

Source: OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013.

3.2 Strategy relevance

3.2.1 General characteristics of the programme area

The programme area covers 31,453 km² and has a population of 3.9 million people¹⁰. The Slovenian part of the programme area consists of 7 regions: Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Posavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenia, Primorsko-notranjska and Obalno-kraška (with the adjacent regions to the programme area also including the region of Osrednjeslovenska). The Croatian part consists of 7 counties: Međimurje, Varaždin, Krapina-Zagorje, Zagreb, Karlovac, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istra (with the adjacent region Grad Zagreb).

The cross-border area is characterised by its historical and traditional connectedness (including a low language barrier), similarly weak economy (except for the largest regional centres), the importance of tourism and agriculture, similar negative demographic trends, large areas of protected nature with high biodiversity on the border between four major geographic macro regions: the Mediterranean, the Alps, the Pannonian basin and the Dinaric mountains.

The demographics of programme area are far from encouraging. The population is declining and getting older. Outward migration has become a serious problem, especially in Croatian counties of Zagreb, Krapina-Zagorje, Varaždin, and Primorje-Gorski kotar (see next chapter). The level of employment has dropped dramatically in the wake of the global financial crisis, which mercilessly revealed the internal economic weaknesses on both sides of the border.

The industrial sector is largely concentrated in urban centres. High-tech advancement in industry is insufficiently. Although they are highly concentrated in urban areas, innovation activities are poorly connected and coordinated. The OP has postulated that cooperation in the field of research and innovation is poor both within the industry and the industry and research centres and universities¹¹. Research potentials are poorly used. The OP also outlines entrepreneurship in the programme area as rather weak. It is accompanied by low productivity, lack of risk capital, low export orientation and absence of innovation and industrial cooperation. Small and medium-sized enterprises are burdened with high administrative costs of operation and an unfriendly business climate.

Tourism is one of the leading sectors in the programme area. However, real progress in tourism is hindered by poor infrastructure for inland (non-coastal) tourism, high dependence on seasonal dynamics (particularly on the seaside, but not in spas and health resorts), lack of high-quality accommodation facilities,

¹⁰ Source: Croatian bureau of statistics (data for the last census of 2011) and Statistical office of Republic of Slovenia (data for 2016).

¹¹ Source: MK Projekt, Greta Associati, Metis, B. Radej, M. Dolinšek. 2012. Vrednotenje ukrepov za spodbujanje raziskovalno razvojnih aktivnosti v gospodarstvu in institucijah znanja (Mid-term evaluation of measures for stimulation of research and development activities in companies and in institutions of knowledge). Ljubljana, Final report.

poor connection between tourism and cultural heritage, lack of cross-border cooperation and integrated destination management.

Major obstacles to agriculture growth and rural development are the small size of farms and the aging of their owners, a low education level of the rural population, low productivity and added value, poor marketing of agricultural products, poor management skills and a high share of mixed-status farmers, who combine income from farming non-agricultural employment (“semi-farmers”).

The programme area is rich in natural resources, with one of highest rates of Natura 2000 areas (40.03% of the programme area is covered by the areas of Natura 2000¹²) and great biological diversity, but these remain poorly managed in the absence of strategic approaches and efficient management structures. Environmental protection challenges are mostly related to intensive agriculture and to energy-related challenges; in Croatia, it is also related to poor environmental protection infrastructure, especially communal infrastructure (waste-water treatment plants, landfill sites).

3.2.1.1 Analysis of selected indicators in priority areas of the OP

An analysis of seven key indicators has been conducted to identify general development trends in the priority areas of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013. These indicators have been selected based on their availability from national statistical authorities with the aim to identify the macroeconomic developments in the priority areas of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013. Selected representative indicators cannot measure the OP’s impact on macroeconomic trends nor can it establish causal relationships between policy measures and society-wide impacts of the OP. Most of these indicators have not been made available for the regions/counties in question but only for the national level. Moreover, the financial volume of the OP measures was negligible in macroeconomic terms.

The analysis nevertheless offers a useful evaluation benchmark for assessing the strategic relevance of measures in the priority areas. It also gives some insight into the country-specific results and their uneven regional distribution.

The next table presents summarised results of the analysis (see ANNEX 1: Statistical Appendix for detailed results). The observed indicators have largely deteriorated during the programme period. The most problematic is the high increase in outward migration of young people, in particular in Croatia – the result in the CBC counties is almost twice as unfavourable as in Slovenia in general, with the most negative dynamics in the counties Zagreb, Krapina-Zagorje, Varaždin, and Primorje-Gorski kotar. Expenditure in environmental

¹² Source: data acquainted from Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic, of Slovenia and State Institute for Nature Protection of the Republic of Croatia, elaborated by MK projekt, d.o.o., 2016.

protection has also seen a sharp decrease in Croatia. In Slovenia, a very unfavourable result was in tourism growth.

It can be concluded that the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 addresses highly problematic areas of development in both countries, where the situation continues to deteriorate and which thus deserve special attention of policy makers on both sides of the border.

Table 3: Selected indicators in the priority areas of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, summarised findings

Priorities of the OP	Selected indicators of macro-level impacts	Findings about changes in 2013 compared to 2007	
		Findings	Trend
Priority 1: Economic and Social Development			
Measure: Turism and Rural Development	GDP growth – Agriculture (A)	Sharp decrease, –19.8% (Cro –24.3%; Slo –6.5%), national level	Negative
	GDP growth – Turism (I)	Moderate growth, +4.4% (Cro +2.8%; Slo –8.6%), national level	Positive
Measure: Development of Entrepreneurship	Number of enterprises established and persons employed	Considerable increase in no. of enterprises, +16.9%, but considerable drop in no. of employed, –26.9% (Cro –20.6%, –32.7%; Slo +67.7%, +9.8%, respectively), national level	Positive*
Measure: Social Integration	Demography – Outward migration of young people, number	High increase, 68% (Cro +291%; Slo –26%), national level	Very negative
Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources			
Measure: Environmental Protection	GDP growth – Public utilities (water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities) (E)	Small decrease, –1.2% (Cro –1.9%; Slo –0.1%), national level	Negative
	Investment plus current expenditure in environmental protection	Sharp decrease, –13.9% (Cro –22.4%; Slo +15.1%), national level	Very negative
Measure: Preservation of Protected Areas	Investment plus current expenditure in protection of biodiversity and landscape	Small decrease, –2.9% (Cro –52.0%; Slo +19.2%), national level	Negative

Source: <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Croatia); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slovenia), own calculations. The upper table is based on the latest available comparable official data.

* Decrease in employment in newly established enterprises is partly related to migration of workers from employment to entrepreneurship due to lower labour cost for both the employed and the employer, partly related also to special stimulations for opening new businesses (self-employed entrepreneurs).

In this regard, the priorities of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 remain relevant also in future, with some important adaptations (see next chapter) needed to account for new major challenges in socio-economic and political circumstances.

3.2.2 Major changes in the political and socio-economic circumstances

The adoption of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 coincided with the outburst of the global financial crisis in 2007, which hit the programme area very heavily, revealing major macroeconomic weaknesses in both countries. The OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was adopted still in an atmosphere of high optimism related to renewed economic growth in both countries and very favourable promises of prosperity. The future is now perceived more pessimistically and in certain aspects has a lower starting point than in 2007. New socio-economic circumstances have arisen, in which cohesion programmes are related more than before with macroeconomic stabilisation and restructuring in both countries.

Another major change in the political circumstances in the programme area is Croatia's full EU membership since 2013.

Pronounced structural instability in the EU increases the strategic importance of strengthening cross-border cooperation between Croatia and Slovenia in the future. It may be sensible to consider the possibility of formalising permanent development institutions for cross-border cooperation, irrespective of any specific source of financing and any specific programme, to cover also all other cases of CBC that are not included in financing from CBC funds.

Outward migration, of young people in particular, has reached levels that call for immediate attention and measures aimed at reversing this negative trend. As the border areas in both countries are particularly prone to depopulation, this aspect of CBC between Slovenia and Croatia needs to be strengthened.

Furthermore, new migration transit from the Middle East to Western Europe has become a considerable burden to the population in both countries and a challenge for both national governments. It should be noted that the CBC programme is not intended and does not have sufficient financial resources to notably participate in solving this global challenge. Nevertheless, cross-border cooperation can be a useful tool for improving cooperation of national institutions (especially in the field of civil protection) in managing migration flows. This could be decisively pronounced in the new CBC programming period – in particular in Priority Axis 3: Healthy, safe and accessible border areas.

The need for cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia is increasing in the energy sector, related to efforts to provide a safe energy supply, diversification of energy sources and integration into the European energy market.

Spatial development and territorial cohesion is a precondition for the EU's smart growth strategy by 2020, which suggests emphasising territorial development also through cross-border cooperation – this can be accomplished by strengthening the territorial dimension in all three priorities of the new OP Slovenia-Croatia 2014–2020.

Recommendations:

- *Special emphasis should be given to strengthen the CBC impact on macroeconomic stabilisation and restructuring (employment, demography, growth). Interest of both countries should be to include CBC in strengthening their macroeconomic stability – especially when we consider the fact that the programme area covers approximately one half of Slovenia and one third of Croatia.*
- *For strategic strengthening of development cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia in the future, it may be sensible to establish bilateral development institution that would be responsible for development of programmes that answer to strategic challenges beyond those required by cohesion policy, such as Development Forum or Development Agency. This would enhance the level of development cooperation between the two countries.*
- *To integrate sectoral and territorial policies into the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2014–2020 which are in line with the European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.*

3.2.3 Relevance of the strategy in the light of the new circumstances

The relevance of the programme is assessed by looking at the extent to which the objectives and the design of the programme are consistent with: the challenges and concerns in the programme area, and the needs and priorities of the target groups.

The relevance assessment includes an analysis of whether the priorities and their measures are still appropriate at the time of the evaluation, given that circumstances have significantly changed since the programme was launched.

Based on a socio-economic analysis, the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 defined the needs and opportunities of the cooperation area where the implementation of the programme can generate positive changes. The strategic objective of the programme and the strategy to achieve it were determined in line with the needs of the programme area, which can be confirmed with the findings of the analysis of selected key indicators in the programme area. The specific objectives of the priorities and specific operational goals thus remain relevant after the end of the programme period.

The relevance of Priority 1: Economic and Social Development has notably increased in the light of the deteriorated economic and especially social conditions. The same holds true for its operational measures, Tourism and Rural Development, Entrepreneurship, and Social Integration. In this respect, social integration and inclusive growth further gain in importance in the new development paradigm of smart growth (2014–2020), with inclusive growth as one of its pillars. The strategic emphasis on inclusive growth with equality of opportunity (Article 86 of Regulation (EC) 718/2007), especially if it is labour

intensive, is reasonably expected to have a particularly positive impact on reversing negative migration trends in the programme area.

Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources has also gained in importance, since there are rather reliable indications that the overall spending for environmental awareness raising and preservation of natural and cultural resources in the programme area is diminishing on average. The implemented projects have thus importantly contributed to softening the grip of the financial constraints on progress in these two operational fields.

The programme has outlined two main horizontal themes: Human Resources Development and Information Society. The major changes in the political conditions suggest a need to broaden the horizontal themes with two more issues: Inclusive Growth and Humanitarian and Safety Concerns, related to the East-West migrations.

Recommendations: The priorities of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 have gained in relevance due to the new circumstances. This calls for deepening cooperation in areas of mutual concern (demography, financial instability, inclusive growth). The majority of these areas fall under the jurisdiction of national authorities, but can nevertheless be supported by regionally and locally specific measures, such as by increasing capacities for civil protection, firefighters, humanitarian NGOs etc.

3.2.4 Achievement of the strategic and specific objectives of the programme

Monitoring indicators measure progress on the programme level. Data for the achieved values is based on the data acquainted from the JTS, where achieved values reflect achieved values from all projects from the 1st and the 2nd Call, as well as 18 projects from the 3rd Call (by the cut-off date 8.11.2016). For the other 32 projects the indicated planned values are taken into consideration.

From the analysis of the progress based on the indicators on the programme level and the achievement of targets, we can conclude that the operations show a high degree of meeting cross-border cooperation criteria, since the highest number of projects (90 projects) meet all four criteria. This means that partners in the projects work together successfully in all phases of the project life-cycle.

Indicators of cross-border cooperation are in many instances greatly surpassed: the “number of projects developing collaboration in the field of public services” indicator is exceeded the set target value by almost 3.5 times; the “number of people participating in joint education or training activities” is exceeded 143 times, the “number of projects developing joint use of infrastructure” 4.6 times, the “gross jobs created” indicator 2.72 times, the “number of projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport, ICT networks and services” 1.8 times, the “number of projects with bilingual products” 1.4 times, and the Number of projects encouraging and improving the joint protection and

management of the environment” 1.1 times. The set goal for the number of projects actively involving women and disadvantaged groups of people has not been achieved (for more detailed analysis see chapter 4.4).

Another aspect of evaluation is related to assessing the relevance of measures for meeting **priority strategic goals**. The relevance of measures for strategic goals is presented in Tables 2 and 3 with an assessment of the intersections between measures and goals, also taking into account the new circumstances in the programme area.

Priority 1: Economic and Social Development

Table 4: Relevance of measures for meeting priority strategic goals – Priority 1

Measures and their activities	Strategic objectives of Priority 1			
	Economic growth and competitiveness of SMEs	Development of tourism	Enhance cultural and social exchange	Relevance in the light of the new circumstances
Tourism and Rural Development				
Improvement of integrated products and services		✓		✓
Revitalisation of cultural heritage			✓	
Joint marketing and promotion	✓			
Small-scale tourism infrastructure		✓		
Nature and tourism		✓		
Development of Entrepreneurship				
SME support services	✓			✓
Improving business innovativeness and technology	✓			
Transfer of know-how	✓			
Cross-border networks of employment services	✓			
Social Integration				
Awareness-raising on cultural differences			✓	✓
Cultural exchanges			✓	
Mobility of artists			✓	
Cooperation between institutions	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Internal assessment of the evaluation team

Measures are rather strongly targeted at the specific strategic goals of the priority. This is most obvious for measures intended to boost development of entrepreneurship. The objectives most horizontally affected by the measures

were development of tourism and enhancing cultural and social exchanges, which intersect with the largest number of different measures introduced under Priority 1. Cooperation between institutions appears to be horizontally strongly present, however, there are doubts as to the appropriateness of the design of this measure (see chapter 3.3.2).

The continuation of negative socio-economic trends, especially in social integration and environmental protection (except for the value-added growth in tourism and in development of entrepreneurship), indicates that the adopted strategic goals of the programme are focused on key areas of socio-economic development, which are either progressive or continue to deteriorate.

Measure 1.1: Tourism and Rural Development

The economic crisis did not hit the tourism sector in the programme area severely, which highlights the relevance of the strategy that supporting joint actions in this field might generate positive effects, particularly in rural areas where the potential for tourism is underused.

The adverse economic changes confirmed the relevance of this measure as a stimulus for reversing negative economic trends in rural development.

Status: still relevant. The needs of tourism as a priority sector that is currently growing¹³ could be integrated into other measures aimed at supporting innovative joint cross-border projects (e.g. integrated tourism products, protection of nature, rural development), so they should qualify only when they contribute more compared to joint projects for fulfilling the shared goals on both sides of the border.

Measure 1.2: Development of Entrepreneurship

The financial crisis has revealed serious macroeconomic weaknesses in both countries, which resulted in a contraction of economic activity, especially in the traditional sectors of the economy. In these conditions, increased entrepreneurship activity in the programme area indicates structural changes in favour of an emergence of more vital economic units. The analysis indicates that entrepreneurship promotion measures should intersect more with other priority goals of the programme in the area of tourism, rural development and social economy as support for better social integration.

Status: increasingly relevant¹⁴. It may be necessary to consider linking measures for development of entrepreneurship with measures supporting innovation, especially in SMEs.

¹³ See Annex 1: Statistical appendix.

¹⁴ See Annex 1: Statistical appendix

Measure 1.3: Social Integration

Social integration measures appear to be the most important with respect to future implementation. Austerity-oriented economic policy has considerably burdened social integration in terms of increased unemployment, decreased average incomes and stricter conditions for accessing welfare services. Harsh socio-economic conditions have further spurred non-economic drivers of social disintegration, such as intolerance or unhealthy lifestyles. In these conditions, investment in social (and territorial) integration seems a prerequisite for future progress.

The implemented measures in the area of Social Integration are assessed as the least comprehensive, since they intersect with only one strategic goal of Priority 1. The measures aimed at increasing cooperation between institutions are horizontally poorly designed and cannot effectively contribute to the stated goal.

Status: increasingly relevant. It deserves increased attention and a broader focus – intersecting with other priority goals.

Priority 2 measures (Table 5) are more connected than the measures in Priority 1. Awareness-raising and joint spatial planning are its most horizontal measures. Most measures intersect with the goals of environmental protection and reduction of ecological risks. Preservation of protected areas involves measures that intersect the most with the programme strategic goals.

Table 5: Relevance of measures for meeting priority strategic goals – Priority 2

Measures and their activities	Strategic objectives of Priority 2				Relevance in the light of the new circumstances
	Environmental protection & safeguarding natural and cultural assets	Conserving biodiversity	Reducing ecological risks	CB environ. protection networks	
Environmental Protection					
Awareness-raising	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joint feasibility studies	✓		✓		
Joint management and preservation of water sources	✓				
Rehabilitation of waste disposal sites	✓				
Waste-water treatment	✓				

Measures and their activities	Strategic objectives of Priority 2				
	Environmental protection & safeguarding natural and cultural assets	Conserving biodiversity	Reducing ecological risks	CB environ. protection networks	Relevance in the light of the new circumstances
plants					
Energy efficiency			✓		
Quality of air	✓				
Joint spatial planning	✓	✓	✓		
Preservation of Protected Areas					
Establishment of protected areas and their cross-border networks	✓	✓		✓	
Joint management of existing protected areas				✓	
Preservation of biodiversity and landscape		✓			
Joint feasibility studies on nature protection	✓	✓	✓		✓
Technical documentation	✓				
Awareness on protection of natural and cultural resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Preservation of natural and cultural heritage	✓	✓			

Source: Internal assessment of the evaluation team

Statistical trends in selected representative indicators of the priority goals point to continued deterioration of conditions in priority areas, especially an average decrease in environmental protection expenditure in the programme area (with an enormous difference between Croatia and Slovenia).

Considering the latest available data¹⁵, for this priority as well, a majority of indicators notably exceed the planned targets, e.g. the “number of waste disposal sites rehabilitated” 18.6 times, the “number of natural/cultural resources units revitalized” 12.1 times, the “number of organisations included in awareness-raising actions” 3.5 times, the “number of joint plans” 3.7 times, and “gross jobs created” 2 times. Two indicators related to the number of projects will not be reached (the “number of projects in the field of tourism and rural development” under Priority 1 and the “number of projects in the field of environmental protection” under Priority 2).

4. Environmental Protection Measure

The measures are well designed to intersect and support each other. Extensive funding is needed to provide basic infrastructure in water supply and wastewater treatment, in air protection and in waste management. Even more important for successfully addressing environmental infrastructure challenges is to achieve synergy among all the stakeholders involved. Sustainability of environmental solutions is built precisely on the fact that it depends on economic and social conditions in which it can be appropriately addressed.

Status: increasingly relevant. Achievement of infrastructural goals depends on sufficient financing.

5. Preservation of Protected Areas Measure

The measures are well designed to intersect and support each other for all strategic goals of Priority 2. Apart from financial constraints, the success of this set of measures in achieving its strategic goals also depends greatly on the general ability to resolve legitimate but conflicting demands of stakeholders with respect to nature protection and spatial development.

Status: increasingly relevant, even more so due to increased financial constraints for nature protection in general.

Recommendations: The OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 consists of relevant measures that consistently served the OP’s priority goals well – at least in their design. The changed socio-economic conditions require reconsideration of some selected priorities and measures (see statuses specified above). Although some of the priorities in the OP are even more relevant than at the beginning of the previous programming period, changes need to be considered to increase support for social integration, enhancing permanent forms of cross-border cooperation, management of

¹⁵ Data on achievement are based on the data obtained from the JTS, which includes achievement values for all the projects from the 1st and 2nd Call, as well as 18 projects from the 3rd Call (received by the cut-off date 8 November 2016). For the other 32 projects, the indicated planned values were used.

negative demography trends and supporting macroeconomic needs of both countries (employment, innovation, social economy).

3.3 Compliance of programme activities with the needs of the cooperation area

3.3.1 Priorities, measures and specific objectives and activities of the OP

Priority 1: Economic and Social Development focuses on the support of entrepreneurship (20 projects), as well as on Tourism and Rural Development (22 projects) and Social Integration (17 projects). Within this priority, 59 projects were co-financed as part of three Calls for Proposals, which include 333 lead partners and project partners. The most recognisable programme results are in the field of tourism development, related to entrepreneurship and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage.

According to the analysis of implemented projects, progress has been achieved especially in the field of cross-border tourism destination management, as well as connecting the tourism of the coastal areas with the hinterland. With the aim of revitalising the hinterland of Istria, tourist info points have been set up on both sides of the border. The implemented measures initiated the development of new tourism products linked to the existing tourism offer. Additional value is provided in the development of a joint cross-border tourism offer. Project activities contributed to the establishment of a cross-border rural destination and development of cross-border tourism products, while also providing visibility for Istria regardless of state borders. Sustainable tourism also provides new opportunities for work. Projects in Development of Entrepreneurship were targeted mainly at young people who already entered or will soon enter the labour market, promoting among them entrepreneurship and the possibilities it provides. Focus was put on cross-border business cooperation and transfer of knowledge from educational institutions and entrepreneurs with an emphasis of new (green) technologies. Positive results were also achieved in the field of social integration, as the implemented projects enhanced intercultural and institutional cooperation and raised awareness about cultural differences by organising many cultural exchanges and events.

Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources is supported through activities in the field of Environmental Protection (21 projects) and activities in the field of Preservation of Protected Areas (15 projects). Within this priority, 36 projects were co-financed as part of the three calls, which included 185 lead partners and project partners.

The main achievements of the projects/partnerships under this priority are the cooperation, joint implementation of activities, exchange of knowledge and experience. The main results are visible in the field of environmental protection and preservation of natural and cultural assets. The implemented projects

addressed the problems of illegal waste disposal and established efficient monitoring systems, which can also be used as model examples in other regions. Some of the project partners are also continuously asked by the representatives of other local or regional bodies to present their experience, so the results of the projects are also disseminated after their conclusion. The awareness of the public about proper waste disposal and the possibilities of recycling and reuse has improved. Joint management approaches raised awareness among policy makers in the field of waste-water management and preservation of water resources. Activities for the preservation of biodiversity and indigenous vegetation and animal breeds resulted in a revitalisation of the entire cross-border area.

Table 6: Approved projects by priority measure

	No. of projects	Lead partners		Total no. of partners
		From Croatia	From Slovenia	
Priority 1	59	20	39	332
Measure 1.1	20	5	15	123
Measure 1.2	22	9	13	134
Measure 1.3	17	6	11	75
Priority 2	36	16	20	188
Measure 2.1	21	12	9	113
Measure 2.2	15	4	11	75
Total	95	36	59	520

Altogether, 520 partners from 16 regions/counties in the programme area were involved in the implementation of 95 approved projects.

Recommendations: There is a need to strengthen regional development institutions in the Programme area to create a possibility for more balanced absorption of funds between countries, which is in the hand of national policies.

3.3.2 Comparison of programme needs and approved projects

This chapter brings an assessment of the relevance and balance in the selection of projects with respect to the strategic programme goals as defined in the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 for each of the five measures. Classification of projects under specific goals was not always straightforward. It would be recommendable to code each project by the goals of the measures. Furthermore, project scopes are often mixed, so they address different goals, which is certainly welcome (smartness principle), but this makes it harder to perform a structured assessment in a conventional way (vertically). Classification of projects presented in the following tables was made on the basis of project matrix that was prepared by the evaluation team where each project is sorted by its scope of activities.

In many of the analysed measures, the content of the approved projects is consistent with the OP and to a somewhat lower degree with its strategic goals. Therefore, their relevance is generally higher on the priority level (relevance of projects for the OP) than on the level of the implemented measures (relevance for the specified measures). A detailed review can be seen in the Tables below.

Table 7: Approved projects under Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development), Measure 1.1 – Tourism and Rural Development

Strategic goals	No. of projects	Implemented projects
Development and improvement of integrated products and services within different types of tourism offer (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, wellness and health tourism, river tourism, etc.)	5	Parenzana II, Revitas, Wellness 3 plus, Wellnes Istra, Pedo Tour
Revitalisation of cultural heritage and integration of cultural heritage into tourism	4	Rokic-Drom, Marijina romarska pot, 365 Dni Riviere, Mala Barka
Establishment and improvement of joint marketing and promotion of tourism and of agricultural products and services	5	Pot medicarstva in lectarstva med Krškim in Zagrebom, Brodarji idej ob Muri, Malvasia TourIstra, Spoznavajmo in uživajmo, Revitas II
Improvement of recreational and small-scale tourism infrastructure	3	Mura-Drava.Bike, Parenzana Magic, Ride&Bike
Stimulation of inclusion of natural assets and nature protected areas in the tourism offer	3	Curs Colapis, Ekomuzej Mura, Zeleno Podeželje

Source: Project applications provided by the JTS

The relevance of the projects for Measure 1.1 with respect to strategic goals can be confirmed, as well as a balance in project coverage. In the case of Measure 1.2, the projects focused more on the first and second goal, so the third and fourth goal (“transfer of know-how and exchange of information” and “establishment of cross-border networks of employment services as a basis for further cooperation”) were covered only by a quarter of all projects under Measure 2.1.

Table 8: Approved projects under Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development), Measure 1.2 – Development of Entrepreneurship

Strategic goals	No. of projects	Implemented projects
Development of SME support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of SMEs	9	Slohra Globalnet, Sprint, Fides, Maraton, Hint-Lab, OSIPPPIT, Mala šola podjetnikov SI-HR, Inovaloca, Creative Startup
Development of cooperation between SMEs, educational, research & development organisations for improving	7	MladiEkoin, Edu-preneur, Pom, IR-OVE, Bioregio, BioHeatLocal, CrossBench

business innovativeness and technology		
Transfer of know-how and exchange of information	4	Interino, Napredek, Spirit CrossBench
Establishment of cross-border networks of employment services as a basis for further cooperation	2	Socpod, Slohra Socionet

Source: Project applications provided by the JTS

The lowest project relevance among all measures under Priority 1 and the poorest project coverage was achieved for Measure 1.3. One of the goals set down in the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 was not covered by a single project (»stimulation of mobility of artists and of cultural cooperation«). Despite this, we do not claim that this topic was not at least partially included in other projects (projects like DMNPG, 3M Mura-Media-Minority, Medgen borza, Igraj se and Rok4.). Furthermore, evaluation did not assess refused projects. Another priority»stimulation of cultural exchanges and events« was only addressed by one project (3M Mura-Media-Minority) but was also partially included in some other projects also from other measures (such as New Media Cross-Border and Rokic-Drom).

The largest share of all projects (almost 60%) was related to the goal »cooperation between institutions«. Cooperation between institutions is such a general goal that it includes all projects, so it does not have a specific focus. The implemented projects do not, in any case, fall outside the broad scope of this priority measure, but they nevertheless do not give firm ground for assessing the success in achieving this specific goal. This is also evident in the specific indicators of most of the implemented projects, which do not show how improved cooperation contributes to social integration. Improved cooperation is usually not the main achievement of these projects; the main achievement is usually incorporated in title of each project thus indicating the thematic scope of the project.

The reason for a poorer balance in coverage is that the strategic goals for Measure 1.3 are not optimal – they emphasise cultural content instead of social inclusion – although the cultural content is a factor of social integration.

Table 9: Approved projects under Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development), Measure 1.3 – Social Integration

Strategic goals	No. of projects	Implemented projects
Public awareness-raising on cultural differences	6	Heritage live, Beri, City Volunteers, New Media Cross-Border, Omnpm/DmnpG, pHisCulture
Stimulation of cultural exchanges and events	1	3M Mura-Media-Minority
Stimulation of mobility of artists and of	0	-

cultural cooperation		
Cooperation between institutions	10	Iris, Zaščita in Reševanje, Šport Akt, Rok4, Medgen Borza, Cloud, PTO, Igraj Se, Histur, INKUB

Source: Project applications provided by the JTS

For Priority 2, the distribution of the projects is less balanced that for Priority 1. The largest share of the projects were related to awareness-rising and especially to improving water quality.

Table 10: Approved projects under Priority 2 (Sustainable Management of Natural Resources), Measure 2.1 – Environmental Protection

Strategic goals	No. of projects	Implemented projects
Joint awareness-raising among polluters and inhabitants on innovative environment protection actions/measures and sustainable use of natural resources	4	Viri življenja, Z glavo za naravo, ZOOB, 48 UR
Preparation of joint feasibility studies to improve and monitor air, water, waste and waste-water management systems, and reduce soil, forest and other pollution	1	Remedisanus
Joint management and joint preservation of water sources and improvement of water quality	6	KUP, Pijemo isto vodo, Dobra voda za vse, Istra-Hidro, ŽIVO!, Škocjan-Risnjak
Identification and sanitation of uncontrolled waste disposal and development of prevention measures	4	ONS, DIVA, IMBY, PORETEKS
Preparation of technical documentation and construction of waste water treatment plants and plants for treatment of domestic and solid waste, and sewage systems in sensitive cross-border areas	1	OHS/OKP – Uređaj za prečiščavaje – fekalna stanica
Actions to improve energy efficiency	2	Varčuj, EUpeR
Actions to improve the quality of air	1	Stop CO2
Joint spatial planning	2	Rural Design, PUT-UP Istre

Source: Project applications provided by the JTS

The imbalanced distribution of the approved projects is most evident in Measure 2.2, where four strategic goals had no projects: “establishment of protected areas and their cross-border networks”, “stimulation of joint management of existing protected areas”, “joint feasibility studies on issues related to nature protection”, and “preparation of technical documentation for natural-resource protection and/or sustainable development”. Despite this fact, there were projects that carried out certain activities in addressing these strategic goals (such as DE-PARK, Od vijeglavke do soka, Viri življenja and Škocjan-Risnjak). These are not only important areas of CB cooperation but represent areas of mutual efforts for achieving shared goals that should be given the greatest emphasis in CBC in the future.

Table 11: Approved projects under Priority 2 (Sustainable Management of Natural Resources), Measure 2.2 – Preservation of Protected Areas

Strategic goals	No. of projects	Implemented projects
Establishment of protected areas and their cross-border networks	0	-
Stimulation of joint management of existing protected areas	0	-
Preservation of biodiversity and landscape diversity	5	Od vijeglavke do soka, APRO, LOL, LOKNA, Green4Grey
Joint feasibility studies on issues related to nature protection	0	-
Preparation of technical documentation for natural-resource protection and/or sustainable development	0	-
Awareness-raising on protection of natural and cultural resources	2	Sožitje, KULT PRO
Preservation of natural and cultural heritage	8	Prebujena kulturna dediščina Rast Istre, KAMEN-MOST, Rojstvo Evrope, DE-PARK, EE CULTURE, CLAUSTRA, Oživljen kras

Source: Project applications provided by the JTS

***Recommendations:** Classification of projects by strategic objective of each measure would facilitate monitoring of programme results (especially its concrete results) and enable more structural assessment of results. Better design of the measure »cooperation between institutions«, for instance as enhancing institutional capacity, transfer of organisational know-how, enhancing human resources in leadership and management. Emphasis should be given to intrinsic CBC projects with shared CBC goals and impact (joint implementation, destination management, transfers, permanent forms of cooperation).*

3.4 Consistency of the programme with macro-regional strategies

The programme was designed by Slovenia and Croatia to address their common problems and exploit shared potentials in the seven-year period between 2007 and 2013. We have analysed the consistency of the programme with the two main macro-regional strategies relevant for the two countries: the Danube Strategy and the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy, which were approved in 2010 and 2014, respectively. Even though the programme was designed before the two strategies

were approved, we wanted to investigate whether its main goals are in line with the aims of the strategies.

3.4.1 Danube Strategy

The main goals of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (the Danube Strategy) are socio-economic development, improved competitiveness, better environmental management and resource-efficient growth, as well as modernised security and transport corridors in the Danube Region.

The Danube Strategy proposes an Action Plan as an integrated response to the identified opportunities for the Danube region, which emphasises better and more intelligent connections for mobility, trade and energy; action on environment and risk management; and cooperation on security. In this respect, four pillars were set up in order to address the major issues. The aims of the first pillar, Connecting the Danube Region, are to improve mobility and multimodality, encourage more sustainable energy, and to promote culture and tourism, and people-to-people contacts. The second pillar, Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region, aims to restore and maintain the quality of waters, manage environmental risks, and to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils. The third pillar, Building Prosperity in the Danube Region, aims to develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies, support the competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development, and to invest in people and skills. The fourth pillar, Strengthening the Danube Region, aims to step up institutional capacity and cooperation, and to build cooperation in promoting security and tackle organised and serious crime.

The programme aims to achieve the objective of supporting and promoting sustainable development of the entire cross-border area between Slovenia and Croatia by supporting the types of operations that will contribute to the achievement of the objectives under the following two priorities: Economic and Social Development, and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. All the programme measures are consistent with the objectives of the Danube Strategy, more specifically with its pillars 1, 2 and 3.

The first and the third measure of the programme's Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development) are Tourism and Rural Development, and Social Integration. The former strives for sustainable economic development of the programme area by connecting and integrating tourism and agricultural products, and by securing additional income sources, while the latter is aimed at supporting local actors in rebuilding the cultural and social ties in the border region to create a coherent and vibrant cross-border area. Both measures are consistent with the first pillar of the Danube Strategy, Connecting the Danube Region, aimed at promoting culture, tourism, and people-to-people contacts. Almost a third of all 95 projects within the programme included activities in the field of tourism and rural development, and 12 projects included activities in the field of social integration.

The second measure of the programme's Priority 1 (Economic and Social Development) is Development of Entrepreneurship, which is designed to contribute considerably to the economic growth and competitiveness of the programme area. As it aims to promote cross-border business cooperation of SMEs and cross-border trade, it is consistent with the third pillar of the Danube Strategy, Building Prosperity in the Danube Region, aimed at supporting competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development. More than a third of all projects within the programme, 35, included activities in the field of cooperation between SMEs and research and development organisations, and 27 projects included activities for increasing cross-border trade.

The second programme priority, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, is in line with the second pillar of the Danube Strategy, Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region. The strategic objectives were addressed with activities within two measures. The first measure, Environmental Protection, is based on the richness of natural resources in the programme area, and was aimed at strengthening and increasing the awareness about environmental protection among the local population, but also at diminishing both environmental risks and pollution. The second measure, Preservation of Protected Areas, was aimed at strengthening the regional identity through preservation and revitalisation of natural and cultural resources of the cross-border territory by managing and developing them in a sustainable way. Both measures are consistent with the second pillar of the Danube Strategy that strives to restore and maintain the quality of waters, manage environmental risks, and to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils. Moreover, the first measure, Environmental Protection, is also in line with the first pillar of the Danube Strategy, Connecting the Danube Region, as it also encourages more sustainable energy. In total, 29 projects within the programme included activities in the field of environmental protection, 27 projects were related to preservation and revitalisation of natural and cultural assets, 10 projects were involved in joint management of water resources, and 15 projects involved activities for eco-efficiency, energy efficiency, and use of renewable energy sources.

Table 12: Consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2013–2017 with the Danube Strategy

Danube Strategy Pillars	Programme Priority 1: Economic and Social Development			Programme Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	
	Tourism and Rural Development	Development of Entrepreneurship	Social Integration	Environmental Protection	Preservation of Protected Areas
Pillar 1: Connecting the Danube Region	✓		✓		
Pillar 2: Protecting the				✓	✓

Environment in the Danube Region					
Pillar 3: Building Prosperity in the Danube Region		✓			
Pillar 4: Strengthening the Danube Region					

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

3.4.2 Adriatic-Ionian Strategy

The general objective of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy) is to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity in the region through growth and jobs creation, and by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity, while preserving the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems.

The strategy is structured around four interdependent pillars of strategic relevance: Blue Growth, Connecting the Region (transport and energy networks), Environmental Quality, and Sustainable Tourism. The objective of the first pillar, Blue Growth, is to drive innovative maritime and marine growth in the region by promoting sustainable economic development and jobs and business opportunities in blue economy, which includes fisheries and aquaculture. The objective of the second pillar, Connecting the Region (transport and energy networks), is to improve transport and energy connectivity in the region and with the rest of Europe, as interlinked and sustainable transport and energy networks are needed to develop the region. The objective of the third pillar, Environmental Quality, is to address environmental quality through cooperation at the level of the region. It aims to contribute to good environmental status for marine and coastal ecosystems, reducing pollution of the sea, limiting, mitigating and compensating soil sealing, reducing air pollution and halting loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems. The objective of the fourth pillar, Sustainable Tourism, is to develop the full potential of the region in terms of innovative, sustainable and responsible quality tourism. It aims to boost business and create jobs by diversifying tourism products and services along with addressing seasonality.

Most of the programme measures are consistent with the Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, but not all.

First, the programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship is in line with the strategy, more specifically with the first pillar, Blue Growth, aimed at promoting sustainable economic development and jobs and business opportunities in blue economy, which includes fisheries and aquaculture.

Although the programme measure is not strictly bound to blue economy, it includes the following activities that contribute to economic development: development of SME support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of SMEs; development of cooperation between SMEs, educational, research & development organisations for improving business innovativeness and technology; transfer of know-how and exchange of information; and establishment of cross-border networks of employment services as a basis for further cooperation.

Second, the programme measure Tourism and Rural Development aligns with the fourth strategy pillar, Sustainable Tourism, as it aims to diversify and improve the quality of the tourism offer by developing and improving integrated products and services within different types of tourism (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, wellness and health tourism, river tourism, etc.). Other activities under this measure (such as revitalisation of cultural heritage and integration of cultural heritage into tourism; establishment and improvement of joint marketing and promotion of tourism and of agricultural products and services; improvement of recreational and small-scale tourism infrastructure; and stimulation of inclusion of natural assets and nature protected areas in the tourism offer) are also contributing to the development of the full potential of the tourism sector in the cross-border area.

Apart from the measures in the first priority, both programme measures of the second priority, Environmental Protection and Preservation of Protected Areas, are consistent with the third strategy pillar, Environmental Quality, as they aim to address environmental quality through cross-border cooperation. Other strategic objectives of the measures are also in line with the strategy, since they aim to preserve the environment and safeguard the natural and cultural assets of the cross-border area, conserve valuable biodiversity for future generations, as well as to contribute to improved quality of life by reducing ecological risks, air pollution, improving waste and water management, and reducing soil, forest and other pollution.

The only measure of the programme outside the scope of the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy is the measure Social Integration, as the strategy is mostly focused on transport and energy networks, and not so much on strengthening social networks.

Table 13: Consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2013–2017 with the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy

Adriatic-Ionian Strategy Pillars	Programme Priority 1: Economic and Social Development			Programme Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	
	Tourism and Rural Development	Development of Entrepreneurship	Social Integration	Environmental Protection	Preservation of Protected Areas
Pillar 1: Blue Growth		✓			
Pillar 2: Connecting the Region					
Pillar 3: Environmental Quality				✓	✓
Pillar 4: Sustainable Tourism	✓				

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

3.5 Consistency of the programme with national documents

3.5.1 RDP of the Republic of Slovenia 2007–2013

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the Republic of Slovenia 2007–2013 is a policy document for rural development on the entire territory of the Republic of Slovenia. The general objective of the RDP is sustainable rural development.

The national priorities of the RDP cover measures under four axes: improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector (axis 1); improving the environment and rural areas (axis 2); improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy (axis 3); and LEADER (axis 4).

Measures under axis 1 are aimed at improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, and include competence boosting and strengthening of human potential in agriculture and forestry, restructuring of physical capital in agriculture and forestry, promoting innovation and improving the quality of agricultural production and products. Axis 2 is aimed at improving the environment and the countryside by preserving agriculture in underprivileged areas and enhancing nature-friendly agricultural practices. The main goal of axis 3 is to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to promote economic diversification by improving employment opportunities in the countryside, as well as the quality of life in the countryside. The fourth axis aims to enhance local development initiatives by implementing local development strategies, introducing local action groups and encouraging cooperation, as well as promoting inter-territorial and transnational cooperation.

Some of the programme measures align with the RDP, but not all. First, the programme priority Economic and Social Development is consistent with the third axis of the RDP, improving the quality of life in rural areas and economic diversification, as it, among other things, aims to stimulate sustainable tourism built on a cross-border regional identity and based on natural and cultural assets in order to prolong the tourist season and generate additional and sustainable income for the local people, especially in rural areas. Programme measure Tourism and Rural Development is consistent with the first RDP measure of the third axis, improving employment opportunities and quality of life in the countryside, as it promotes development of the tourism offer and joint marketing and promotion of tourism and of agricultural products and services. Moreover, the same programme measure is also in line with the second specific objective, improving the quality of life in the countryside by implementing specific actions in the field of tourism and rural development, and preservation and revitalisation of natural and cultural heritage. The programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship is also consistent with the first RDP measure of the third axis, as it promotes development of SME support services for improving business cooperation, transfer of know-how and exchange of information, as well as cross-border networks of employment services for further cooperation.

Second, the programme is consistent with all the measures of the RDP's fourth axis, LEADER. The programme is consistent with the first RDP measure of the fourth axis, implementing local development strategies, by carrying out activities for increasing cooperation between local and regional players in both countries in the field of common spatial planning. Furthermore, the programme supports the second measure of the fourth axis, local action groups and encouraging cooperation, by implementing actions in the field of cooperation between civil-society organisations. Finally, the entire programme is in line with the third measure of the fourth axis, as all the measures aim to promote inter-territorial and transnational cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia. The programme strives to develop joint actions and to use more effective approaches to solving problems that have to be faced on both sides of the border.

However, the second programme priority, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, is not entirely aligned with the RDP. Even though the title of the measure is in line with the second RDP axis, improving the environment and the countryside, it is not specifically aimed only at the countryside. The two measures under the second programme priority aim to preserve the environment and safeguard natural and cultural assets, conserve valuable biodiversity, contribute to improved quality of life by reducing ecological risks, air pollution, improving waste and water management, and reducing soil, forest and other pollution, as well as to establish cross-border networks in order to ensure environmental protection. But the programme actions in the field of environmental protection, eco-efficiency/energy efficiency and the use of renewables do not include compensatory allowances to farmers in underprivileged areas and agri-environmental payments, which are envisaged under the second axis of the RDP.

Table 14: Consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2013–2017 with the RDP of the Republic of Slovenia 2007–2013

RDP Axes	Programme Priority 1: Economic and Social Development			Programme Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	
	Tourism and Rural Development	Development of Entrepreneurship	Social Integration	Environmental Protection	Preservation of Protected Areas
Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector					
Axis 2: Improving the environment and rural areas					
Axis 3: Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	✓	✓	✓		
Axis 4: LEADER	✓	✓	✓		

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

A high level of consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 with the RDP of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2007-2013 is on the one hand a good sign of possible high synergy effects, but on the other hand also poses a potential threat for double funding.

3.5.2 Regional Competitiveness OP of the Republic of Croatia

The main aim of the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme (RCOP) is achieving the strategic priority of promoting social and economic cohesion within Croatia, based on improved overall competitiveness. The RCOP consists of three Priority Axes of which two are investment-related, while the third one contains Technical Assistance for RCOP management issues.

Priority Axis 1: Improving the development potential of the regions lagging-behind strives to contribute to cohesion by helping Croatia's regions with slower development to catch up with the national development levels. Priority Axis 2: Enhancing the competitiveness of the Croatian economy aims to contribute to the

overall competitiveness of the Croatian economy by focusing on the support essential to unlocking the potential in strategic growth areas and by improving the quality of the institutional support infrastructure key to economic competitiveness.

Since the RCOP is primarily focused on the improvement of the Croatian economy, only one programme measure is fully consistent with the RCOP, namely Development of Entrepreneurship. The rest of the programme measures are not directly aligned with the RCOP, which is understandable due to the wider focus of the programme, which includes development of tourism and rural development, improving social integration and sustainable management of natural resources. However, the rest of the programme measures are indirectly beneficial for the national economies of both countries, as they strive to make the cross-border area between Croatia and Slovenia highly competitive, and to create sustainable living conditions and wellbeing for its inhabitants by exploiting development opportunities arising from joint cross-border actions.

Programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship aligns with the RCOP's Priority Axis 1 (Improving the development potential of the regions lagging behind) and its specific objective to support the creation and growth of SMEs by expanding and improving accompanying services. The programme measure encourages growth of entrepreneurship and offers entrepreneurs and investors quality support and services; it is especially aimed at developing SME support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of SMEs, and establishing cross-border networks of employment services as a basis for further cooperation.

Furthermore, programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship is also consistent with the RCOP's Priority Axis 2 (Enhancing the competitiveness of the Croatian economy), and its two specific objectives. To be more precise, the measure aligns with the first specific objective of the second Priority Axis of the RCOP to enhance SME competitiveness by improving key elements ensuring a positive business climate and effective public support for businesses at all levels, as it supports SME support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of SMEs, transfer of know-how and exchange of information.

The afore mentioned programme measure also supports the second specific objective, to enhance the contribution of technology and R&D to economic development, as it aims to develop cooperation between SMEs, educational, research & development organisations for improving business innovativeness and technology by implementing activities in the field of cooperation between SMEs and R&D organisations.

	Programme Priority 1: Economic and Social Development	Programme Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
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RDP Priority Axes	Tourism and Rural Development	Development of Entrepreneurship	Social Integration	Environmental Protection	Preservation of Protected Areas
Priority Axis 1: Improving development of the lagging behind regions		✓			
Priority Axis 2: Enhancing the competitiveness of the Croatian economy		✓			

Table 15: Consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2013–2017 with the Regional Competitiveness OP of the Republic of Croatia

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

3.5.3 OP for Strengthening Regional Development Potentials 2007–2013

The main goal of the Operational Programme for Strengthening Regional Development Potentials 2007–2013 (OP SRDP) is to pursue the core objectives defined in Slovenia's National Strategic Reference Framework, namely fostering the country's competitiveness while ensuring a balanced regional development across the country.

The key aim of the OP SRDP is to achieve the following goal: Innovative, dynamic and open Slovenia, with developed regions and a competitive, knowledge-based economy. Apart from technical assistance, the OP SRDP consists of four development priorities: 1. Competitiveness and research excellence, 2. Economic development infrastructure, 3. Integration of natural and cultural potentials, and 4. Development of regions.

Two CBC programme measures are consistent with the OP SRDP. The measures Social Integration, Environmental Protection and Preservation of Protected Areas are outside the scope of the development priorities in the OP SRDP.

First, the programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship is consistent with the first OP SRDP priority, Competitiveness and research excellence. To be more specific, it is in line with the first measure of this OP SRDP priority, Encouraging the competitive potential of enterprises and research excellence, as it aims to develop cooperation between SMEs, educational, research & development organisations for improving business innovativeness and technology. Moreover, it is also consistent with the second measure of the first OP SRDP priority, Promotion of entrepreneurship, as it promotes development of SME support services for improving business cooperation and joint marketing of

SMEs, transfer of know-how and exchange of information, and establishment of cross-border networks of employment services as a basis for further cooperation.

Second, the programme measure Tourism and Rural Development is consistent with the third OP SRDP priority, Integration of natural and cultural potentials. It is in line with its first measure, Increasing tourism competitiveness, as it supports the development and improvement of integrated products and services within different types of tourism (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, wellness and health tourism, river tourism, etc.), revitalisation of cultural heritage and integration of cultural heritage into tourism, establishment and improvement of joint marketing and promotion of tourism and of agricultural products and services, improvement of recreational and small-scale tourism infrastructure, and stimulation of inclusion of natural assets and nature protected areas in the tourism offer.

Table 16: Consistency of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2013–2017 with the OP for Strengthening Regional Development Potentials 2007–2013

OP SRDP development priorities	Programme Priority 1: Economic and Social Development			Programme Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	
	Tourism and Rural Development	Development of Entrepreneurship	Social Integration	Environmental Protection	Preservation of Protected Areas
Priority 1: Competitiveness and research excellence		✓			
Priority 2: Economic development infrastructure					
Priority 3: Integration of natural and cultural potentials	✓				
Priority 4: Development of regions					

Source: MK projekt, d.o.o., September 2016

MAIN FINDINGS

The programme is consistent with the main macro-regional strategies that were adopted after the approval of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2014 (the Danube Strategy and the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy) and national documents (RDP of the Republic of Slovenia 2007–2013, Regional Competitiveness OP of the Republic of Croatia, OP for Strengthening Regional Development Potentials 2007–2013). The programme measure Development of Entrepreneurship aligns with all

these documents, while the measure Tourism and Rural Development aligns with all but one strategic document. The programme is consistent not only with the strategic documents for the period 2007–2013, but also with the more recent macro-regional strategies.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ACHIEVED RESULTS

In this chapter, we analyse the selection procedures and the allocation of funds with respect to the priorities and measures and their comparison to immediate outputs and programme results.

We will present the comparison between the programme objectives and results in terms of:

- thematic scope of approved projects,
- geographical scope of partners,
- cross-border impact of the implemented projects,
- composition and added value of the partnerships within the approved projects,
- cost-efficiency of the implemented projects,
- sustainability of the implemented projects.

4.1 Programme implementation

On 20 June 2008, the first Call for Proposals was published on the website of the SVLR¹⁶ (since the programme website was only set up in 2009) and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. Due to certain changes to the application documentation, a corrigendum of the Application Pack was published on 3 October 2008 and the final parts of the corrigendum were published on 10 and 14 October 2008. The deadline for submission of project applications was 20 October 2008. The selection process (administrative review, requests for missing documents and quality assessments of the applications) took place in the following year and was concluded on 12 November 2009, when the subsidy contracts for the first projects were signed in the Croatian town of Novi Vinodolski

On 16 April 2010, the second Call for Proposals was published on the programme website and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. The deadline for submission of project proposals was 30 June 2010. The administrative review and selection process were concluded in spring 2011, and in May the first contracts for the approved projects within the second Call were signed.

The last (3rd) Call for Proposals within the CBC programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was published on 3 February 2012 on the programme website and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. The deadline for submission of project proposals was 16 April 2012. The selected projects were approved in December 2013 and the contracts were signed later on because the JTS (as a consequence of the long period between the submission of the project proposals

¹⁶ The Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, known today as the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GOSP).

and the end of the selection procedure¹⁷) was receiving a lot of requests for project revisions. Therefore, the JMC has given the MA/JTS a mandate to approve the reallocation of over 20% of the initial value among budget lines and among project partners where this was justified and to approve extensions of up to 3 months for so-called soft projects (without investments related to construction work) and up to 6 months for projects involving investments.

Apart from the procedures described above, the managing structures (namely the MA and the JTS) prepared a kick-off event of the programme on 15 September 2008 and a series of events (informative and educational workshops) and individual consultations to inform and instruct potential beneficiaries how to present their project proposals.

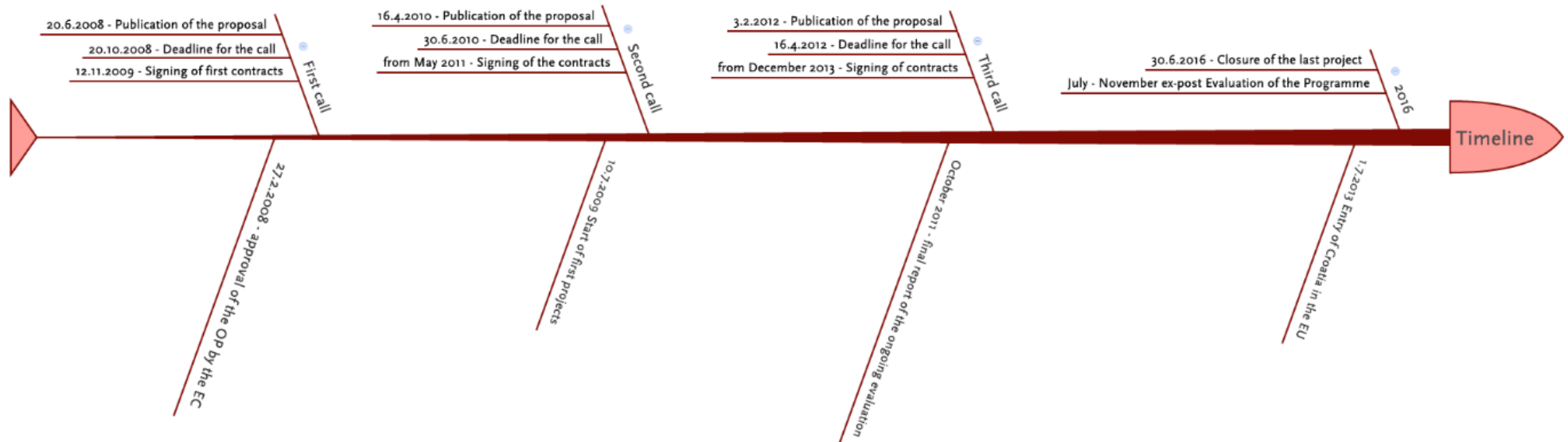
All 95 projects approved within the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 have already concluded. In the period of 2014–2016, most of the efforts of the programme structures were focused on monitoring of the projects and checking of their reports, closure of projects and programme, its promotion and programming of the OP for the new financial perspective. In this sense, many events were organised for beneficiaries, such as reporting workshops and annual events, different promotion materials (USB sticks, T-shirts, eco shopping bags, cups) and supporting documentation was published (manuals and forms).

Starting in 2008, the Managing Authority of the programme prepared an annual implementation report in cooperation with its programme partners, which was then reviewed and approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

In accordance with Chapter 12.6.2 of the OP, a detailed on-going evaluation of the programme was conducted by an independent external institution in October 2011. Its findings, with an emphasis on the efficiency and the effectiveness of the programme implementation were presented to the JMC.

¹⁷ The main reasons for such a long period were fluctuation of its employees, severe shortage of personnel, transition to the new government body and blockage on the absorption of funds related to the Technical Assistance.

Graph 1: Implementation timeline of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013



Source: OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, programme web page.

4.2 Progress in terms of procedure

This chapter presents the analysis of procedural data of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013. It provides an important review of the approved projects by priority and measure, with a special emphasis on the geographical distribution of funds and project partners.

There was a significant difference in the duration of the three calls. The first Call was open for four months, while the second and the third one for only 2.5 months. The evaluation group agrees with the statements of beneficiaries, that 2.5 months is not a sufficient time for potential beneficiaries to get acquainted with the documentation of the call, application forms, especially considering that the elaboration of cross-border projects requires more extensive preparation and coordination among project partners. When we compare these periods to similar calls in comparable CBC programme we can see that average duration of the call within the OP Slovenia-Hungary 2007-2013 was 167 calendar days. Therefore, we assess that more time could be given to the applicants in order to prepare project proposals of good quality. In the new programme period the predictability of the Call deadlines within the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2014-2020 is guaranteed in a form of open call system. This will facilitate development of project ideas and the submission of applications by potential beneficiaries.

The period from the submission of applications to the signing of contracts also varied between the calls. On average, that period was 15 months (11.5 months for the 1st Call, 9.3 months for the 2nd Call and 24.2 months for the 3rd Call). Such long periods, which were a consequence of institutional changes as well as significant personnel fluctuation and shortage on the JTS, delayed the allocation of funds to beneficiaries. A delayed start of the project can also hinder its implementation and lead to many financial changes to the project¹⁸.

Table 17: Duration of call procedures

Call	Number of calendar days	
	From the publication of the call to deadline for submission of applications	From the submission of applications to the signing of contracts*
1	122	343
2	75	280
3	73	727
Average	90	450
* Average		

Source: Data acquired from the JTS, project contracts, call documentation

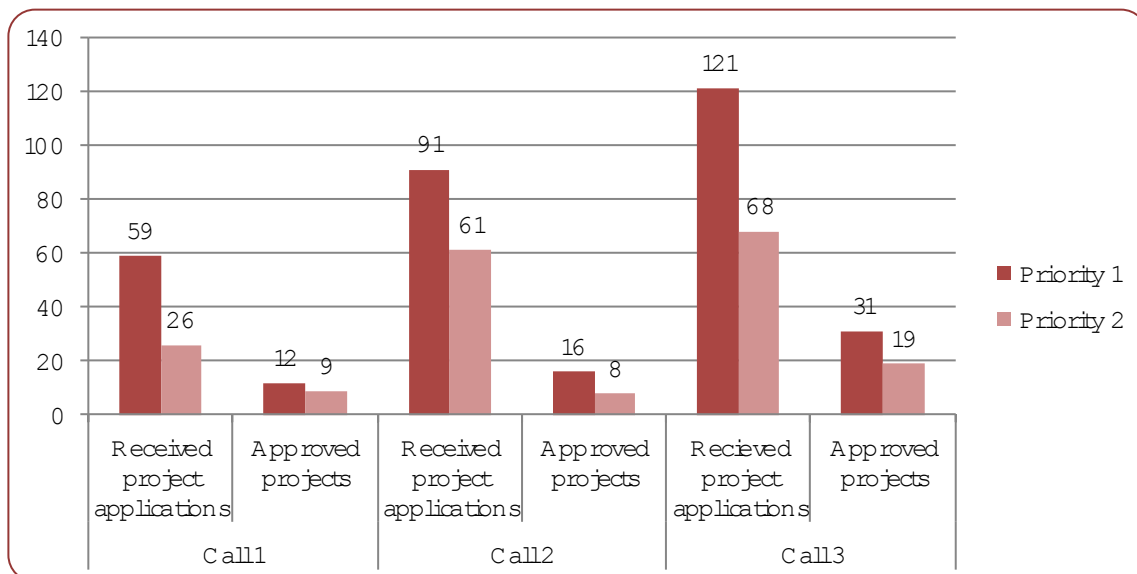
¹⁸ Within the first Call of the new programme period, 7 months have passed from the date of submission to the start of the projects, which is a significant improvement, but we have to take into consideration different application procedure for submission of applications and their selection.

For the first Call, the JTS received 112 applications within the deadline, out of which 111 were properly sealed and marked and therefore passed on to the administrative compliance and eligibility check. 85 (76.6%) met the administrative conditions and passed on to the quality check where they were scored by assessors and then ranked according to their average score. Out of the 85 applications, 59 (69.41%) were for Priority 1 and 26 (30.59%) for Priority 2.

In the second Call, the JTS received 185 applications, out of which 181 were submitted on time and in a properly marked envelope. 152 applications (84%) were administratively compliant and eligible and therefore passed on to the quality check. Out of these, 91 (59.87%) were for Priority 1 and 61 (40.13%) for Priority 2.

In the last (third) Call for Proposals, the JTS received the highest number of applications – 232, out of which 228 were submitted on time and in a properly marked envelope. 189 applications (82.9%) met the administrative conditions and passed on to the quality check. Out of these, 121 (64.02%) were for Priority 1 and 68 (35.98%) for Priority 2.

Graph 2: Distribution of project applications and approved projects by call



Source: Assessment and selection procedure minutes and other data obtained from the JTS

Within the three published calls, a total of 529 project proposals were submitted to the JTS, out of which 520 (98.3%) were received within the deadline and properly marked. A total of 453 (87.11%) of these were administratively compliant and passed on to the quality check.

If we analyse the distribution of project proposals by call, the most applications were submitted for the 3rd Call (41.72%), followed by the 2nd Call (33.55%) and the 1st Call (24.72%). With respect to the thematic scope of all project applications that passed to the quality check, a majority, 271 (63.62%), were for Priority 1 and 155 (36.38%) for Priority 2. The highest success rate was in the 3rd Call (26.46%),

where 16.4% Priority 1 projects were approved and 10.5% Priority 2 projects. The reason for a higher share of approved projects within the last Call is a lower amount of funds requested per project, which meant that more of them could be approved for funding. Generally, the success rate was higher for projects under Priority 1 (an average of 13.68% for all three calls) than for Priority 2 (average of 8.63%). The approved projects were quite unequally divided among the two priorities since 56 (63.62%) projects were approved for Priority 1 and 36 (36.38%) for Priority 2.

Within the CBC programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, 338 institutions participated (lead partners and project partners), of which 170 (50.30%) were from Slovenia and 168 (49.70%) from Croatia. Out of the total of 95 lead partners, 59 (62.10%) were from Slovenia and 36 (37.89%) from Croatia.

In total, 520 project partners participated in the programme, out of which 95 were lead partners. The region with the highest number of partners is Croatia's Istra county with 60 partners (11.54% of all partners), of which 10 were lead partners (10.53% of all lead partners), followed by Slovenia's Obalno-kraška region with 55 project partners and with the highest number of lead partners – 15 (15.79%). Other regions and counties with relatively high numbers of partners and lead partners were: Croatian county Primorje-Gorski kotar (41 project partners and 8 lead partners), Slovenian Savinjska region (35 project partners and 13 lead partners) and Podravje region (34 project partners and 9 lead partners), Croatian county Varaždin (35 project partners and 2 lead partners), the Međimurje county (30 project partners and 6 lead partners) and the Slovenian region of Pomurje (27 project partners and 8 lead partners). The regions with the lowest number of representative institutions were the Karlovac county in Croatia (9 project partners and 3 lead partners) and the Slovenian Primorsko-notranjska region (7 project partners and 1 lead partner).

Maps on the following pages show the geographical dispersal of the number of lead and project partners, as well as their total number per region; the number of projects per region; and the number of projects per measures per region in the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013.

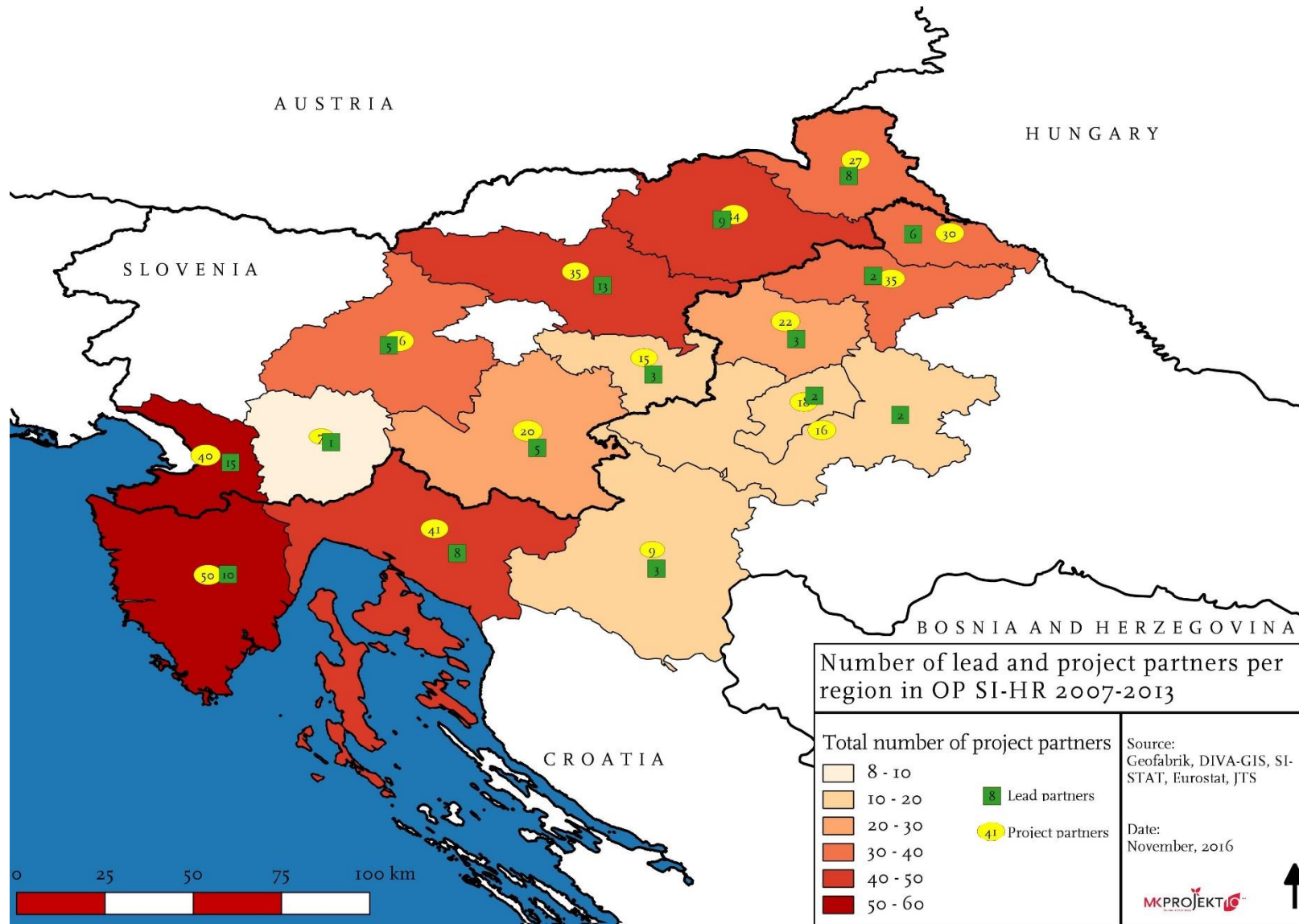
Map 2 represents the number of lead and project partners per region. The highest number of project partners was in Istra county in Croatia (60), followed by the Obalno-kraška region in Slovenia (55). The least project partners were in the region Primorsko-notranjska in Slovenia (8).

Map 3 represents the number of projects per region. The most projects were implemented in the Savinjska region in Slovenia (30). The highest number of projects in Croatia was implemented in Varaždin and Istra county (26). The least projects were implemented in Primorsko-notranjska region in Slovenia (7) and in Karlovac county in Croatia (8).

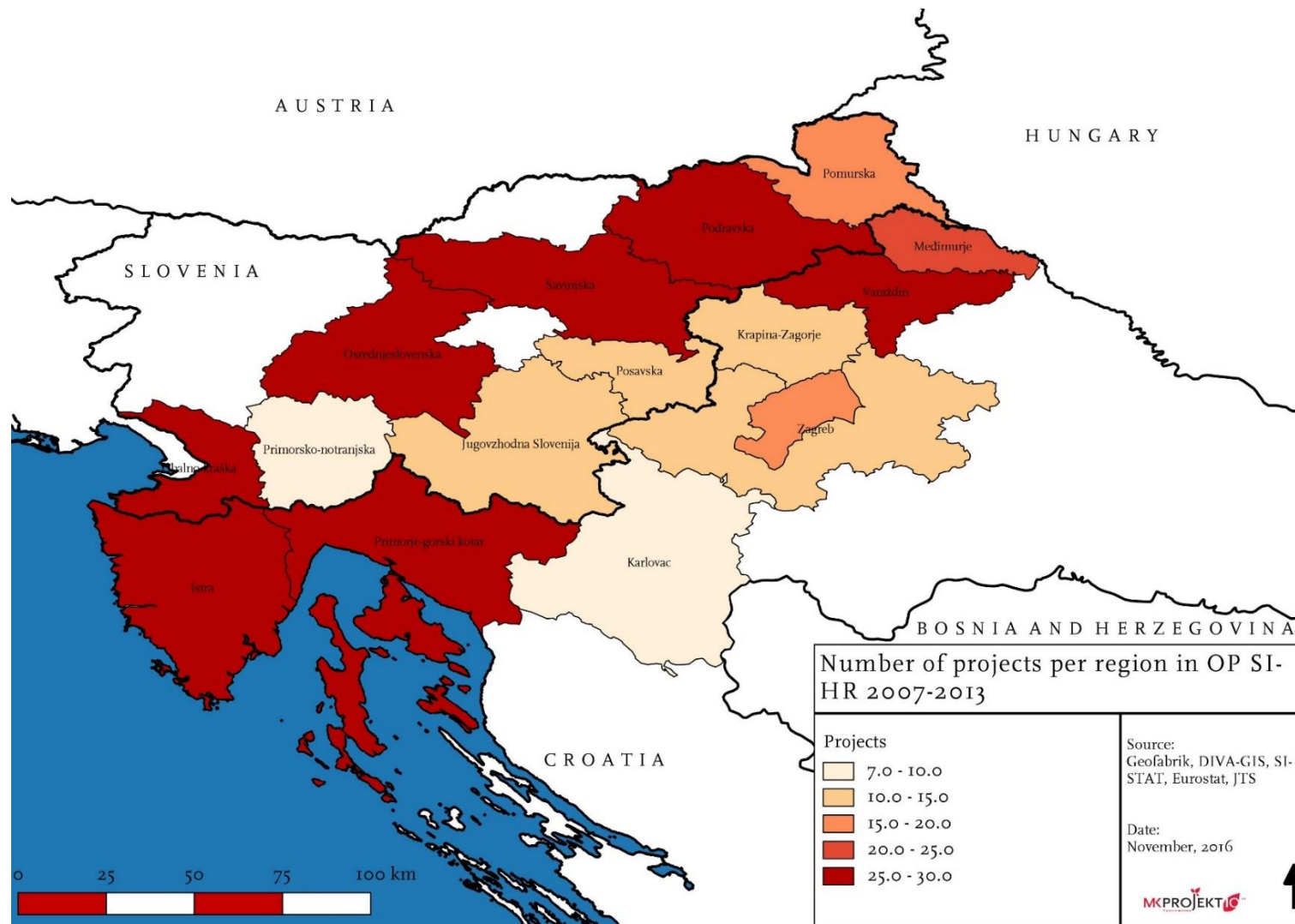
Map 4 represents the number of projects per measures per region. The most projects in the field of Measure 1.1 Tourism and Rural Development were

implemented in Istra county in Croatia and Obalno-kraška region in Slovenia (both 23), and the least in Primorsko-notranjska region (none). The most projects in the field of Measure 1.2 Development of Entrepreneurship were implemented in Varaždin county in Croatia (18), and the least in Primorsko-notranjska region (3). The most projects in the field of Measure 1.3 Social Integration were implemented in Međimurje county in Croatia, as well as in Obalno-kraška and Savinjska region in Slovenia (9), while no project in this field were implemented in Posavska region in Slovenia and in Grad Zagreb in Croatia. The most projects in the field of Measure 2.1 Environmental Protection were implemented in Istra county (17), and the least in Grad Zagreb and Karlovac county in Croatia (2). The most projects in the field of Measure 2.2 Preservation of Protected Areas were implemented in Primorje-Gorski Kotar county in Croatia (12), while no projects in this field were implemented in Karlovac county in Croatia and in Primorsko-notranjska region in Slovenia.

Map 2: Number of lead and project partners per region



Map 3: Number of projects per region



Map 4: Number of projects per measures per region

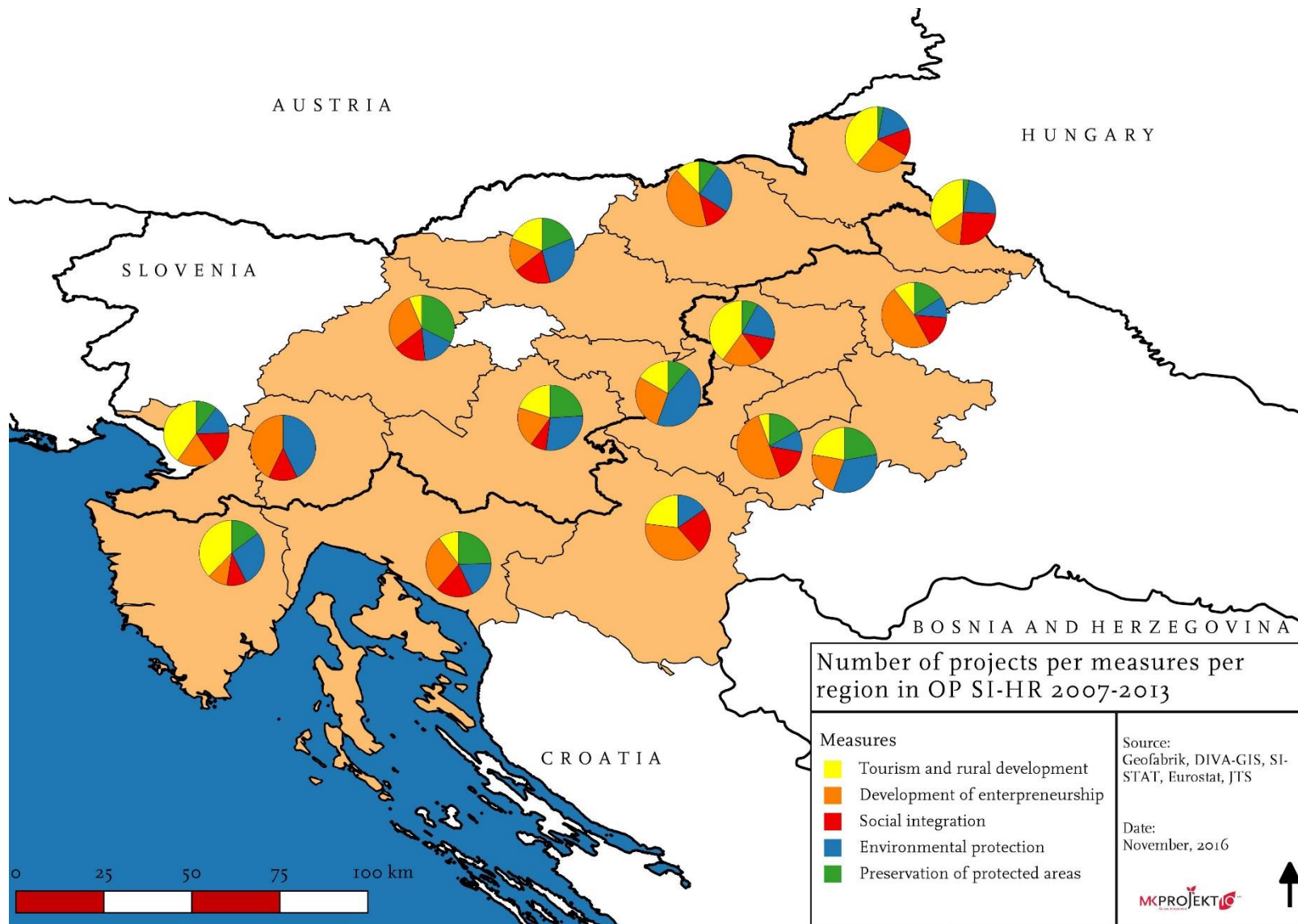


Table 18 Involvement in projects and share of granted funds per region

Region	Share of population (%)	Involvement in projects (%)	Share of funds granted to beneficiaries (%)
Pomurska	3.01	5.66	6.84
Podravska	8.36	8.81	7.12
Savinjska	6.59	9.43	10.65
Posavska	1.96	3.46	3.34
Jugovzhodna Slovenija	3.69	4.40	9.91
Primorsko-notranjska	1.36	2.20	1.40
Obalno-kraška	2.93	8.81	12.79
Ostrednjeslovenska	13.92	8.49	5.54
Medmurska	3.07	7.23	6.04
Zagrebačka	8.47	3.77	4.53
Krapinsko-zagorska	3.50	4.72	3.96
Karlovčka	3.48	2.52	2.35
Varaždinska	4.68	8.18	4.02
Primorsko-goranska	7.98	8.49	7.49
Istarska	5.54	8.18	11.40
City of Zagreb	21.47	5.66	2.62
Total	100	100	100

Source: SI-STAT (2016), DZS (2016), data acquired from the JTS.

When assessing the involvement of regions and counties in the projects, we should take into consideration what share of the programme area's population they represent, not only the number of partners or the share of funds granted to them. The Obalno-kraška region in Slovenia was granted the highest funding per capita (EUR 48.7), as it was granted almost 13% of all available funds even though it represents only 3% of the population of the entire programme area. The Obalno-kraška region is followed by Jugovzhodna Slovenija, which was granted EUR 29.9 per capita. This region was granted almost 10% of the available funding and it also represents less than 4% of the population of the programme area. The most successful region in Croatia was the Istra county, which was granted EUR 22.9 per capita. It received 11.4% of the total funding and represents 5.5% of the population of the programme area. The least successful region in this respect was the City of Zagreb in Croatia, which represents more than a fifth of the total population of the programme area and was granted 2.6% of the total funding or EUR 1.4 per capita. The least successful region in Slovenia was the Osrednjeslovenska region, which represents almost 14% of the population and was granted only 5.5% of the total funding, which amounts to EUR 4.5 per capita.

The Obalno-kraška region in Slovenia was also involved in the biggest share of projects per capita – participating in 5.9% of all the approved projects – followed by the Međimurje county in Croatia, which participated in 4.2% of the projects and represents 3% of the total population of the programme area. The City of Zagreb was the least successful in this respect, as it only participated in 2.6% of the projects. In Slovenia, the Podravska region was the least involved in projects, as it participated in 8.8% of the projects (it represents 8.4% of the population of the programme area).

The following graph shows the timing of the projects, showing the intensity of the programme, as well as the number of project partner reports that were in the process of review, indicating the scope of work for employees of programme structures (mainly JTS, CU and CA).

Graph 3: Number of projects and reports in given time

NOTE: Not all project reports have been concluded by the date that this evaluation report was submitted. Cut off date for these values is 8.11.2016.

Source: Data acquired from the JTS, elaborated by MK projekt, d.o.o.

As it can be seen from the graph, there were two peaks in the process of project implementation within the programme. The first lasted from June to August 2011 when 45 projects were in the process of implementation, which is a result of simultaneous implementation of projects under the first and the second call for proposals. The second peak was recorded in the period from February to March 2015, when 49 projects selected under the third calls for proposals were in the process of implementation. In the period from May until the December 2013 no projects were being implemented. This is due to the expiry of the projects approved under the first and the second call for proposals, as well as an extremely long duration of the assessment and selection within the third call for proposals, which resulted in the delay of the beginning of the implementation of projects in the last call.

The average duration of the project amounted to 21.48 months.

The graph of the number of implemented projects and the graph of the number of project partner reports in the process of review have two peaks. The first peak and the highest absolute value was in June 2012 when 246 project reports were in the checking process. This peak is a consequence of two factors. The first share of reports are the final reports of the project partners from the first call, and the second are the first reports from the project partners from the second call. At this point it is important to note that besides the checking of the reports, the assessments of project applications from the third call was also underway in June 2012. The second peak occurred in September 2015 when 226 project reports were in the checking process. This peak also has two factors that have

contributed to such a high value. The first share of reports are the initially approved projects from the third call, some of which are already final reports, and the second share are the first reports of the beneficiaries from the projects of the third call that were approved additionally, as a consequence of the budget clearing of the initially approved projects from the third call,

The average duration of the project report to be reviewed by the national controllers and send to the JTS was 3.54 months.

Since 91 projects partners were involved in more than one project, on average, each partner was involved in 1.6 projects. The institution with the highest participation in projects was Istra county which participated in 9 projects.

Out of 95 projects, there are 75 lead partners which means that on average, one lead partner was leading 1.25 project. 16 lead partners were involved in the coordination of more than one project and the institution with the highest number of leaded projects was Istra county, which was the lead partner in 4 projects.

A total of 44 project partners (10.35%) and 7 lead partners (7.37%) were located in the two regions that are included in the programme area based on the flexibility clause. In the Slovenian Osrednjeslovenska region, 26 project partners and 5 lead partners, and in Croatia's Grad Zagreb, 18 project partners and 2 lead partners.

4.3 Financial results

Within the programme, over EUR 40m in EU funding was available for project activities. EUR 14,152,158 was available within the 1st Call, EUR 11,900,115 within the 2nd Call and EUR 10,817,946 within the 3rd Call, as well as EUR 3,808,000 of funds on the programme level that remained unused (including the funds that remained due to incomplete financial realisation of concluded projects approved in the 1st and 2nd Call). Combined with national funding, this means that over EUR 47m was available. By the cut-off date 8 November 2016, EUR 28,298,933.17¹⁹ of IPA/ERDF programme funding (Technical Assistance excluded) was paid out to the beneficiaries of 95 projects (21 in the 1st Call, 24 in the 2nd Call and 50 in the 3rd Call).

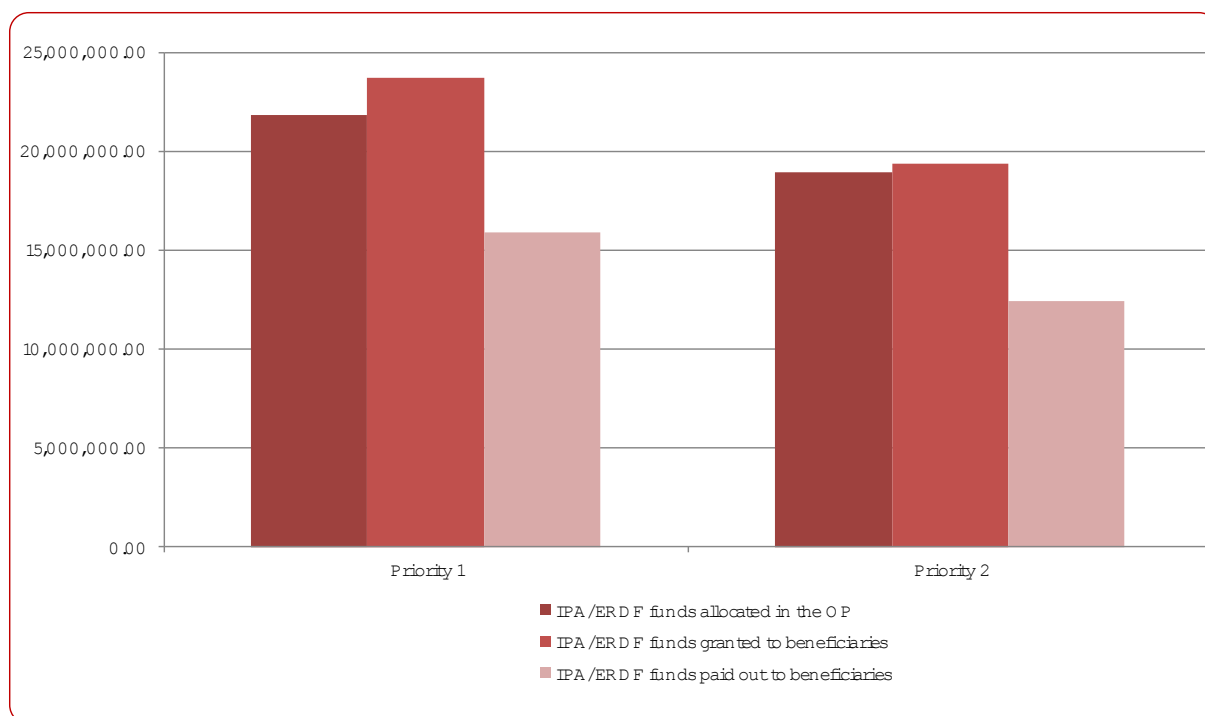
The total financial allocation for the 2007–2013 period was EUR 44,774,910 in EU funding, matched by another EUR 7,901,475 in national co-financing from Slovenia and Croatia (Technical Assistance funds included).

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¹⁹ Source: data acquired from the JTS.

In the programme period, 97 operations (including 2 TA projects) were granted programme funding, of which 95 projects have finished and 2 TA projects will finish by the end of 2016. Within the three Calls for Proposals, 521 applications were received and 95 contracts were signed (the last one on 17 September 2015).

The next graph shows the difference between the financial support that was allocated in the OP, the funds that were actually granted to the approved operations and the amounts that were paid out to beneficiaries by the cut-off date 8 November 2016 under each priority.

Graph 4: Allocated, granted and paid out IPA/ERDF funds by priority

Source: OP SI-HR 2007–2013, Annual implementation reports and data acquired from the JTS

The biggest difference between the funding envisaged in the OP and the actually granted funds was in Priority 1, exceeding the planned amount by 8.75%, followed by Priority 2, where it was exceeded by 2.5%. In the OP, EUR 40.7m was planned, but a total EUR 51.3m was granted to 95 projects (technical assistance excluded). The reason for the higher total value of funds granted to beneficiaries than the funds allocated in the OP is the incomplete financial realisation of the concluded projects within the 1st and 2nd Call. The undisbursed funds were available and allocated to projects within the 3rd Call, therefore the actual use of funds will not be higher than the amount allocated in the OP.

As regards the distribution of the allocated funds by priority, more funds were granted under Priority 1 (EUR 23.7m for 59 projects) than Priority 2 (EUR 19.37m for 36 projects). As a result, more money was paid out²⁰ to the beneficiaries that implemented projects under Priority 1 (EUR 15.9m) than to those that implemented projects under Priority 2 (EUR 12.4m). The higher number of projects within Priority 1 compared to Priority 2 can be attributed to the foreseen activities within their measures, which meant that the share of potential projects was higher for Priority 1. However, the approved projects under Priority 2 had a higher average value of the approved (EUR 538,191.60) and disbursed funding (EUR 344,700.64 by the cut-off date 8 November 2016) per project compared to Priority 1, where the average approved funding was EUR 401,790.54 and an average of EUR 269,317.12 was paid out (by the cut-off date 8 November 2016).

²⁰ By the cut-off date 8 November 2016.

Next, we take a more detailed look at the distribution of funds among the five measures. A breakdown of funding by measure and region is prepared as a comparison between the IPA/ERDF funds granted to the approved projects (data based on the amounts in the contracts) and the validated funding on the cut-off date 8 November 2016 (where data was provided by the JTS). The validated funding is the closest approximation to the final financial realisation of the programme as it represents how much money has been paid out to the beneficiaries plus the funding validated by national controllers on the Croatian and the Slovenian side plus the validated funds for two projects for which all the reports have not yet been submitted. The final realisation is expected to be slightly lower due to the actual amount in project reports and possible reductions due to reviews and revisions.

The highest share of OP funds was granted to the Measure 1.1: Tourism and Rural Development (27.24% of all programme funds granted to projects), which had 20 projects (21.05% of all projects). In total, EUR 10,552,666.72 was validated for the projects within Measure 1.1. The average absorption rate by the cut-off date 8 November 2016, based on the validated amounts, was 89.9%.

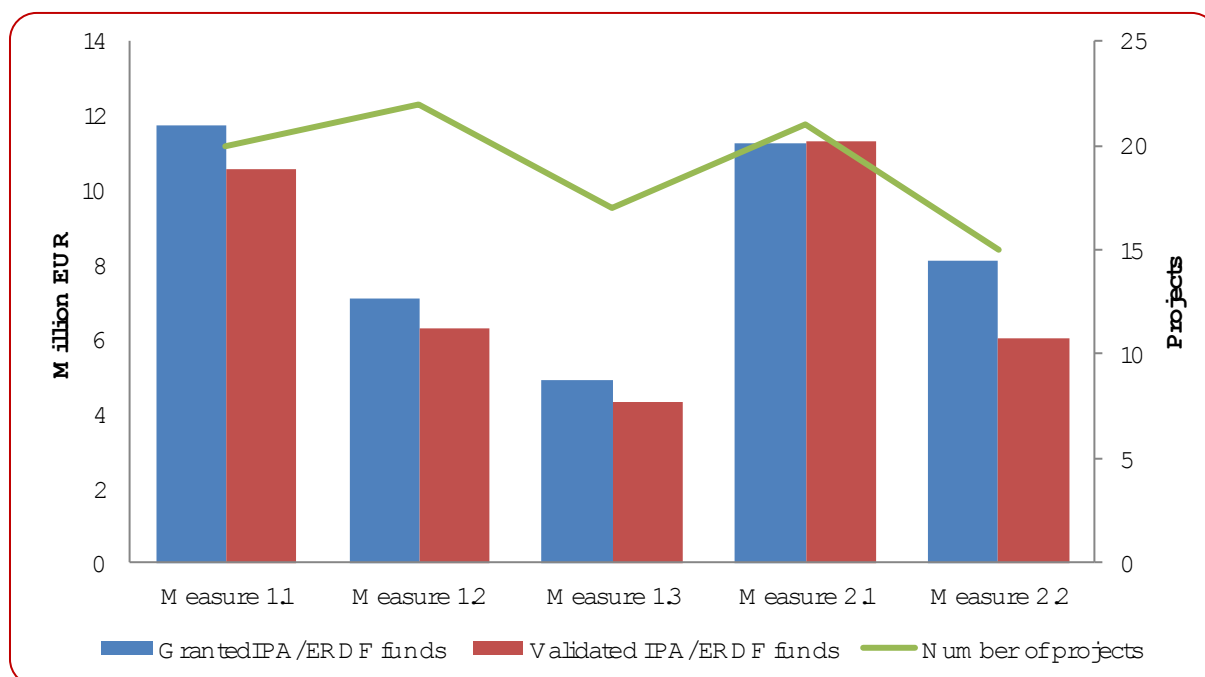
The measure with the second highest share of granted funds was Measure 2.1: Environmental Protection, where 26.19% of OP funds was granted for 21 projects (22.11% of all). That is one more project than within Measure 1.1. A total of EUR 11,306,349.27 was validated for the projects within Measure 2.1. The average absorption rate by the cut-off date 8 November 2016, based on the validated amounts, was 87.2%.

18.79% of OP funds was granted under Measure 2.2: Preservation of Protected Areas, which had 15 projects (15.79% of all). In total, EUR 6,007,754.71 was validated for the projects within the Measure 2.2. The average absorption rate by the cut-off date 8 November 2016, based on the validated amounts, was 92.3%.

Under Measure 1.2: Development of Entrepreneurship, 16.40% of the funds was granted for 22 projects, which is also the highest number of projects (23.16%). In total, EUR 6,273,716.84 was validated for the projects within this measure. The average absorption rate by the cut-off date 8 November 2016, based on the validated amounts, was 87.8%.

The lowest share of OP funds was granted under Measure 1.3: Social Integration, where 11.38% of all funds was granted for 17 projects (17.89%). In total, EUR 4,317,127.80 was validated for the projects within the Measure 1.3. The average absorption rate by the cut-off date 8 November 2016, based on the validated amounts, was 92.2%.

A visual representation of the distribution of funds and projects by measure is shown in the following graph.

Graph 5: Granted and validated IPA/ERDF funds and number of projects by measure

*Note: Validated IPA/ERDF funds represent data by the cut-off date 8 November 2016

Source: Data acquired from the JTS

The graph above shows the IPA/ERDF funds granted to approved projects in all five measures. The distribution of funds is quite uneven and the differences among regions are fairly big. The distribution of the granted funds between the two involved countries is relatively even, with 57.59% of all funds allocated to Slovenian project partners and 45.41% for Croatian project partners (lead partners included).

Among the 16 regions of the programme area, the highest share of IPA/ERDF funds was granted to partners from Slovenia's Obalno-kraška region (12.79% of all), where 43.25% of the funding was granted to projects within Measure 1.1 and the lowest share (9.92%) was granted to Measure 2.2. The region with the second highest share of granted funds and the highest-funded Croatian region was the Istra county (11.40% of all funds), where 40.74% of the funding also went to projects within Measure 1.1. The region with the lowest share of granted funds above 10% was the Slovenian region of Savinjska (10.65% of all), where 42.54% of the funding was allocated to projects within Measure 2.1. The region with the absolute lowest share of granted funds was the Slovenian region of Primorsko-notranjska (1.4% of all), where 51.34% of the funding was granted to projects within Measure 1.3, closely followed by the Croatian county of Karlovac (2.35% of all), where 49.54% of the funding was granted to projects within Measure 2.1.

Cooperation institutions in the Slovenian region of Jugovzhodna Slovenija were granted 9.91% of all IPA/ERDF funds, and more than half of this (51.34%) was for projects within Measure 2.2. 7.49% of the funds was granted to the Croatian county of Primorje-Gorski kotar, where the breakdown of the allocated amounts by measure was almost totally even (with shares between 18% and 21% for each

measure). Slightly less (7.12% of all) was granted to the Slovenian region of Podravje, where the highest share (31.57%) went to projects within Measure 1.2. 6.84% of all the funds was granted to the Slovenian region of Pomurje, where more than half of the funding (56.24%) went to projects within Measure 1.1. The participating institutions from the Croatian county of Međimurje were granted 6.04% of all funds, out of which 44.59% went to projects within Measure 1.1. 4.53% of all distributed funds was granted to the Croatian county of Zagreb, where 48.26% of the funds went to projects within Measure 2.1 and none to Measure 1.3. The Croatian county of Varaždin was granted 4.02% of all the funds, and more than half of this (51.12%) went to projects within Measure 1.2. 3.96% of the funds was granted to the Croatian county of Krapina-Zagorje, of which 45.7% for projects within Measure 2.1. The Slovenian region of Posavska was granted 3.34% of the funds, and 32.82% of this went to projects within Measure 2.1. 2.35% of all the funds was granted to the Croatian county of Karlovac, almost half of which (49.54%) for projects within Measure 2.1 and none to Measure 2.2. The lowest share of the funds was granted to the Slovenian region of Primorsko-notranjska (1.4%), where projects only covered three measures (1.2, 1.3 and 2.1) and where the highest share of the funding went to projects within Measure 1.3. On the Croatian side, the Karlovac county was the region with the lowest amount of granted funds (2.35%) where almost half (49.34%) went for the Measure 2.1.

A total share of 8.17% of the available funds was granted to the two regions that were included in the programme area based on the flexibility clause. Most of this (5.54% of all) was granted to institutions located in the Slovenian region of Osrednjeslovenska, where the highest participation was within Measure 2.1 (30.57%). 2.62% of the available funds was granted to the City of Zagreb, with the highest participation within Measure 1.2.

In 2008, no expenditure was incurred which would be paid out to the beneficiaries. Expenditure incurred only under Technical Assistance, but the Certifying Authority made no application for payment to the EC.

In 2009, the first projects started implementation, but since the first reporting periods were due in 2009, no expenditure was paid out to the beneficiaries. However, the costs of Technical Assistance covering the programme management amounted to a total of EUR 305,319.56.

In 2010, the first expenditures were paid to the beneficiaries of the first Call, based on their reports. In the same year, the second Call for Proposals was published for projects expected to start in 2011. In 2010, a total of EUR 1,084,439.74 in IPA funds was paid by the Certifying Authority to the final beneficiaries.

In 2011, the projects from the first and the second Call were in the phase of implementing their project activities. In 2011, the CA submitted four AfPs to the EC for the expenditures incurred within the projects and for Technical Assistance amounting to a total of EUR 3,241,421.63. The amount of payments received was

different since it covered one AfP from 2010 and only three from 2011 (the last one was not processed yet). The total amount of funds paid to beneficiaries in 2011 was EUR 3, 69,504.50 (TA included).

In 2012, projects from the first and the second Call were still ongoing, and the third Call for Proposals was published. That year, the CA submitted four AfPs to the EC to cover the expenditure of the projects and TA. A total of EUR 3,823,382.54 was paid to beneficiaries in 2012, out of which EUR 3,554,005.98 went to ongoing projects.

The year 2013 was intense for the JTS and financial controllers since the final reports with claims for reimbursement from the first Call were being processed and the interim reports with claims for reimbursement from ongoing projects of the second Call were being reviewed. This resulted in the highest amount of funds paid by the CA to beneficiaries – EUR 8,867,713.86 (TA excluded), or a total of EUR 9,246,651.71 (TA included). By the end of 2013, the financial realisation of the programme stood at 39.82%.

In 2014, the JTS and financial controllers were mainly working on checking the project reports of the second Call and their final claims for reimbursement. Since most of the activities from the third Call started in autumn 2014, the amount of payments by the CA to the final beneficiaries was much lower than the year before. In total, EUR 2,535,870.09 was paid to the final beneficiaries, of which EUR 2,369,218.7 went to project partners. This means that six years after the approval of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, its financial realisation was only 45.48%.

In 2015, a total of EUR 5,374,393.53 in IPA/ERDF funds was paid out to the beneficiaries and EUR 393,170.50 for TA. This puts the financial realisation of the programme (until 31 December 2015) at EUR 26,132,732.17 or 58.36%.

In 2016 (by the cut-off date of 8 November 2016), a total of EUR 4,665,820.44 in IPA/ERDF funds was paid out to the beneficiaries and EUR 423,055.24 for TA. This puts the financial realisation of the programme at EUR 31,221,607.85 or 69.73%.

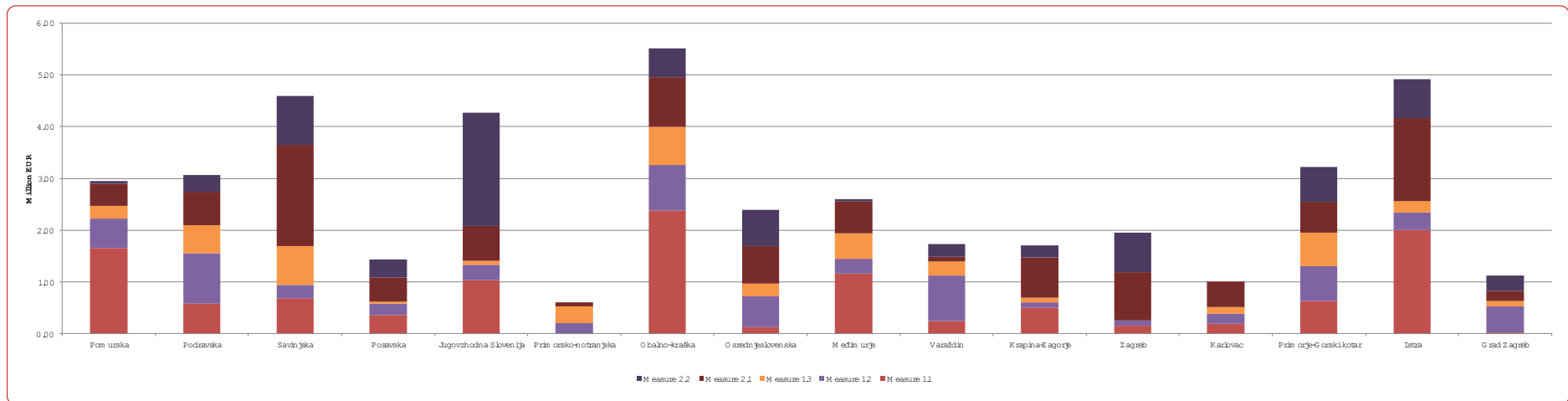
The biggest problems causing this delay were a combination of fluctuation of the MA's employees, severe shortage of staff, transition under a new government body, and a freeze in the absorption of funds related to Technical Assistance.

The total amount of funding validated by national controllers by the cut-off date is EUR 41,376,232.56 in IPA/ERDF funds, which indicates a 92.41% financial realisation of the programme. This is the absolute maximum possible realisation of the programme, while the actual realisation is expected to be slightly lower when all the funds are paid out to the beneficiaries.

On the next pages, we take a more detailed view of the granted and validated²¹ amounts of IPA/ERDF funding by measure and region, presented in graphs, a spreadsheet and maps.

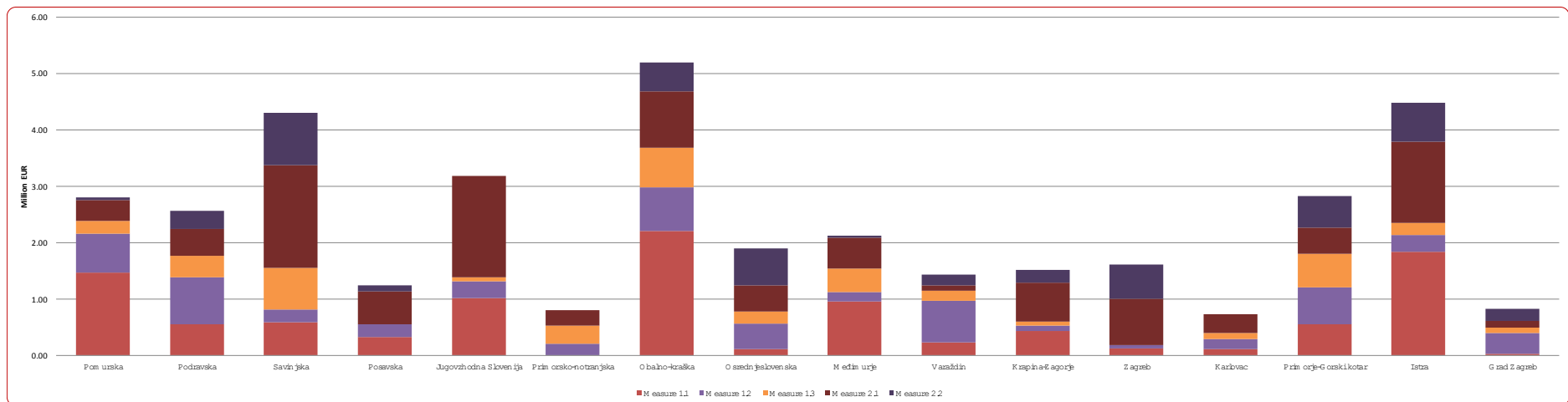
²¹ The validated funding is the closest approximation to the final financial realisation of the programme as it represents how much money has been paid out to the beneficiaries plus the funding validated by national controllers on the Croatian and the Slovenian side plus the validated funds for two projects for which all the reports have not yet been submitted. The final realisation is expected to be slightly lower due to the actual amount in project reports and possible reductions due to reviews and revisions.

Graph 6: Granted IPA/ERDF funds by measure and origin of project partners within the programme area



Source: Data acquired from the JTS

Graph 7: Validated IPA/ERDF funding by measure and origin of project partners within the programme area



*Note: Validated IPA/ERDF funding amounts represent data by the cut-off date 8 November 2016

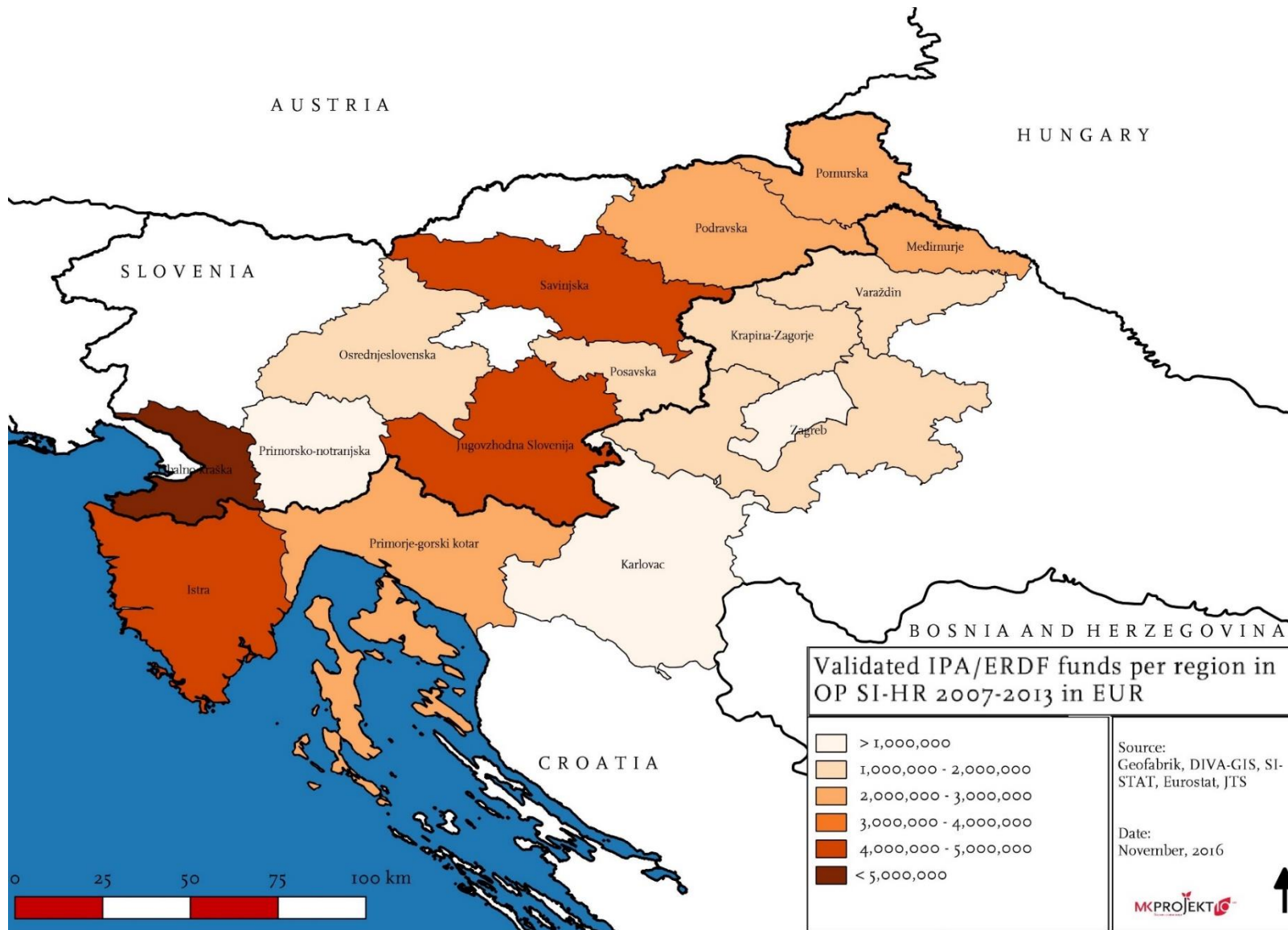
Source: Data acquired from the JTS

Table 19: Amount of IPA/ERDF funding paid by the Certifying Authority to the final beneficiaries

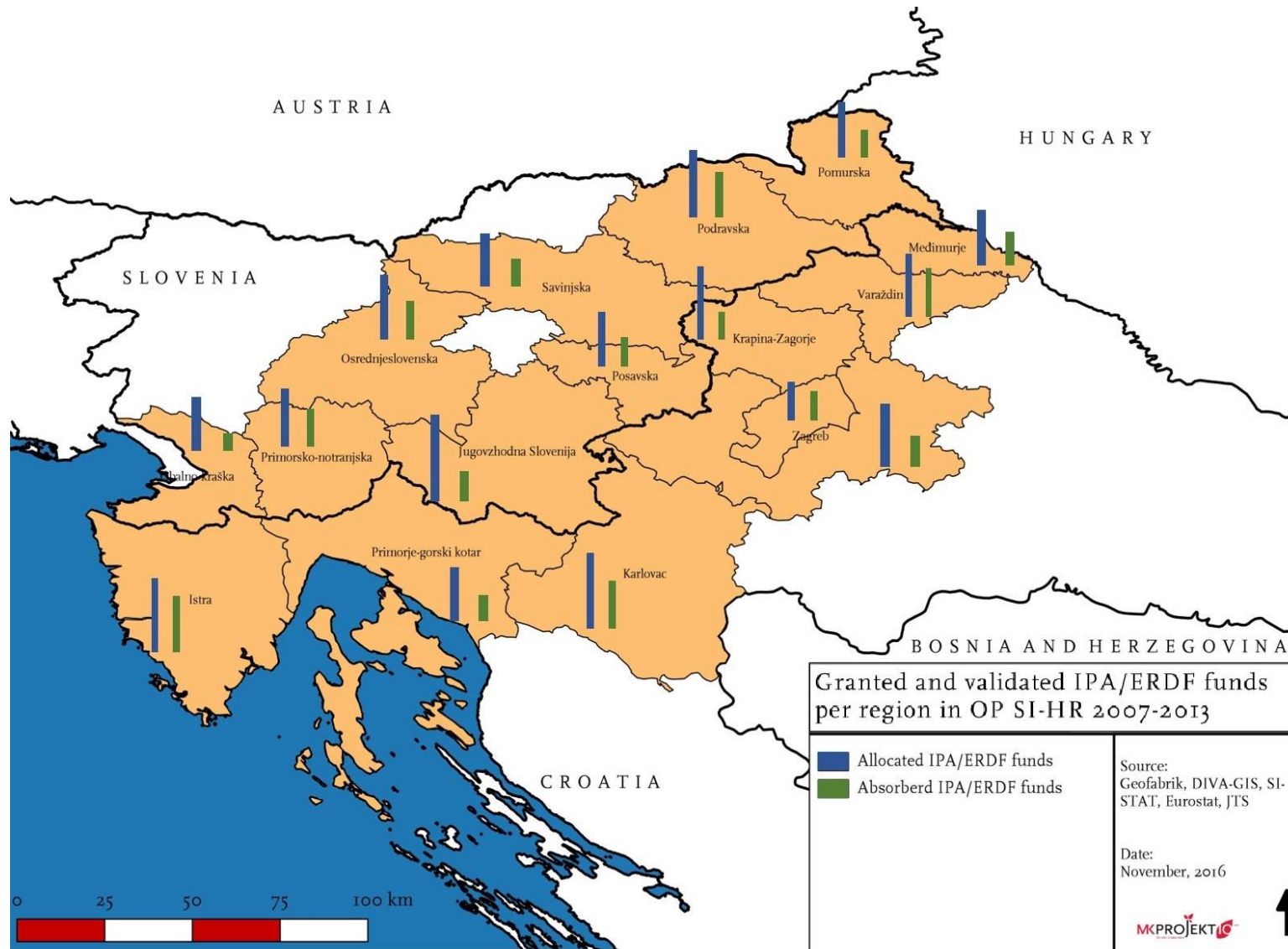
Field	Planned IPA/ERDF Funding in OP	Total amount of certified eligible expenditures paid by Beneficiaries										Realisation (%)
		31.12.2008	31.12.2009	31.12.2010	31.12.2011	31.12.2012	31.12.2013	31.12.2014	31.12.2015	8.11.2016	until 08.11.2016	
Priority 1	21,798,518.00	0.00	0.00	254,710.64	1,651,946.23	1,682,877.29	4,651,304.95	1,522,394.95	3,321,401.09	2,805,074.85	15,889,710.00	72.89
Priority 2	18,903,820.00	0.00	0.00	290,437.27	1,270,688.12	1,871,128.69	4,216,408.91	846,822.15	2,052,992.44	1,860,745.59	12,409,223.17	65.64
Technical Assistance	4,072,572.00	0.00	305,319.56	539,291.83	446,870.15	269,376.56	378,937.85	166,652.99	393,170.50	423,055.24	2,922,674.68	71.76
TOTAL	44,774,910.00	0.00	305,319.56	1,084,439.74	3,369,504.50	3,823,382.54	9,246,651.71	2,535,870.09	5,767,564.03	5,088,875.68	31,221,607.85	69.73

Source: OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, annual implementation reports 2008–2015 and data acquainted from the JTS

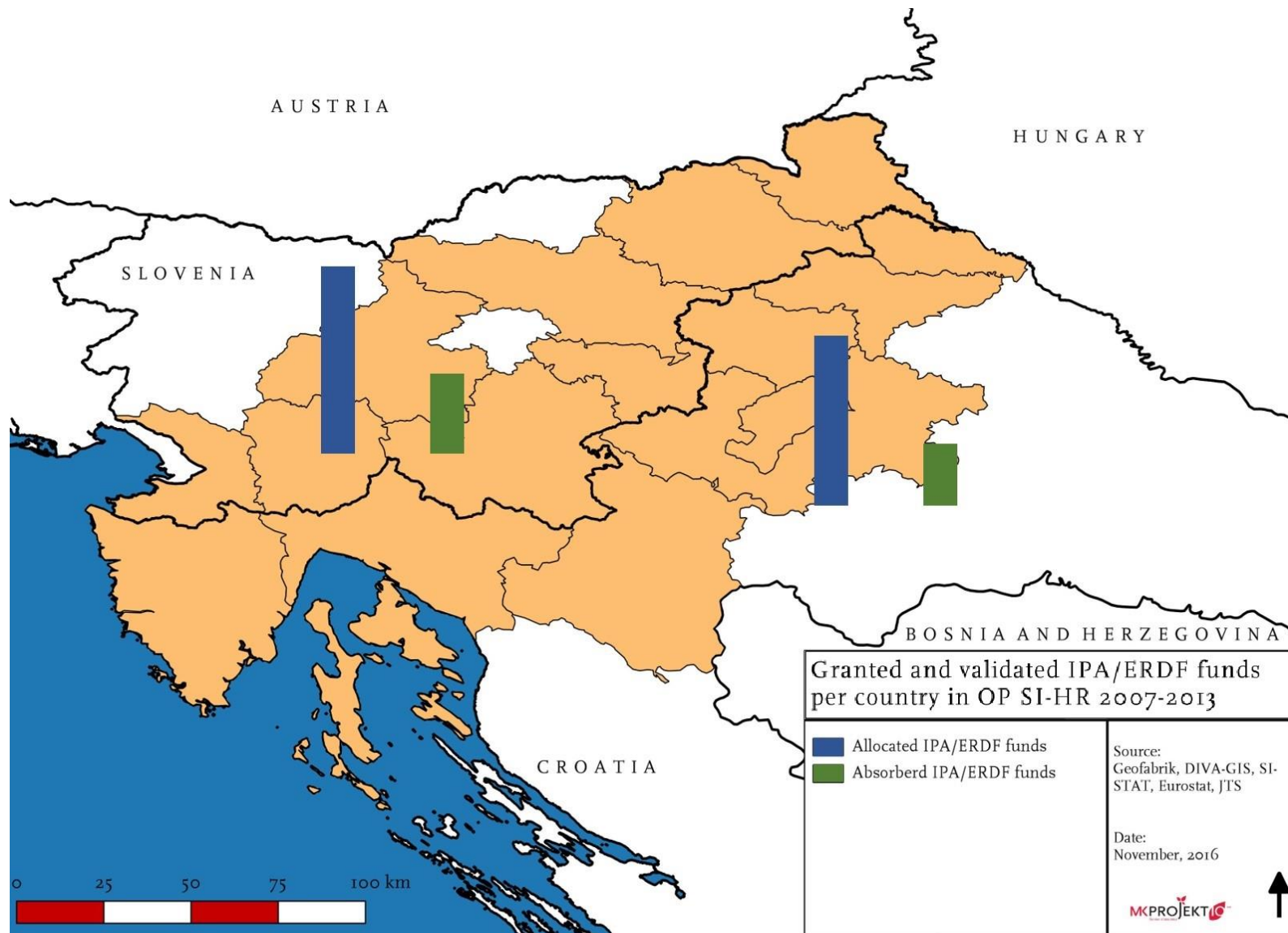
Map 5: Validated IPA/ERDF funding by region on the cut-off date 8 November 2016



Map 6: Granted and validated IPA/ERDF funding by region on the cut-off date 8 November 2016



Map 7: Granted and validated IPA/ERDF funding by country on the cut-off date 8 November 2016



4.4 Analysis of programme indicators

The indicators for measuring the progress of the programme implementation are divided into two categories:

- programme level,
- level of individual priorities.

The indicators set in the OP were designed to measure the impact of the programme on the increase of cross-border cooperation in the programme area. Data for the achieved values is based on the data acquainted from the JTS, where the achieved values reflect the achieved values from all the projects from the 1st and the 2nd Call and 18 projects from the 3rd call. For the other 32 projects the indicated planned values are taken into consideration.

Table 20: Achievement of programme indicators

Level	Name	Code	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Value until 8 November 2016	% of achievement	
PROGRAMME LEVEL	Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013	Indicators reflecting the degree of cooperation						
		42	Number of projects respecting two of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	70	2	2.86	
		43	Number of projects respecting three of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	55	6	10.91	
		44	Number of projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing	0	40	89	222.50	
		Result indicators reflecting the cross-border cooperation						
		46	Number of projects developing joint use of infrastructure	0	5	23	460.00	
		47	Number of projects developing collaboration in the field of public services	0	20	67	335.00	
		48	Number of projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport, ICT networks and services	0	15	27	180.00	
		49	Number of projects encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of the environment	0	40	43	107.50	
		50	Number of people participating in joint education or training activities	0	200	30,875	15437.50	
			Female		at least 50%		49.29%	98.58
			Number of projects with bilingual products	0	65	94	144.62	
			Number of projects actively involving women and disadvantaged groups of people	0	105	51	48.57	
			Gross jobs created	0	50	140.75	281.50	
	Female		at least 50%		65.53%	131.06		
PRIORITY 1	Economic and Social Development		Number of new cross-border tourist services	0	10	138	1380.00	
			Number of new cross-border tourist destinations	0	25	23	92.00	
			Number of new natural and cultural assets integrated into sustainable tourist offer	0	25	161	644.00	
			Number of projects in the field of tourism and rural development	0	40	28	70.00	
			Number of projects supporting cooperation between SMEs and R&D	0	25	34	136.00	
			Number of projects affecting the increase of cross-border trade	0	20	25	125.00	
			Number of joint cultural events supported by the programme	0	25	152	608.00	
			Number of projects increasing cooperation between civil society associations	0	15	39	260.00	
			Gross jobs created	0	25	90.5	362.00	
			Female		at least 50%		63.38%	126.76
			Number of projects for eco-efficiency, energy efficiency, use of renewable resources	0	3	13	433.33	
	Number of regional initiatives or cross border partnerships for joint management of natural resources, green purchasing, eco-efficiency, eco-labelling, sustainable transport, cross-border public transport etc.	0	3	36	1200.00			
PRIORITY 2	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources		Number of organisations included in awareness raising actions	0	105	367	349.52	
			Number of joint plans	0	15	57	380.00	
			Number of joint management of water sources	0	10	10	100.00	
			Number of waste disposal sites rehabilitated	0	5	93	1860.00	
			Number of natural/cultural resources units revitalized	0	15	172	1146.67	
			Number of projects increasing cooperation between local and regional actors with their cross-border counterparts for joint spatial planning	0	10	17	170.00	
			Number of projects in the field of environment protection	0	50	29	58.00	
			Number of projects preserving and revitalising natural/cultural resources	0	20	27	135.00	
			Gross jobs created	0	25	52.25	209.00	
	Female		at least 50%		60.06	120.12		
TA	Technical assistance		Number of projects approved and monitored	0	165	95	57.58	
			Number of promotional events	0	25	25	100.00	

Source: OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 and data obtained from the JTS.

In theory, the lowest achievement ratio is recorded in the three cooperation indicators. However, if we examine the figures more closely, we see that the target for the third indicator “number of projects respecting four of the following criteria: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing” was achieved by 222.50%. Considering that respecting four of the cross-border criteria also means respecting two or three of the same criteria, we can say that the first and second indicator were also achieved.

Among the indicators that reflect cross-border cooperation, 8 out of 10 targets were achieved. Only the indicator for female participation in joint education or training activities (98.58% realisation) and the indicator “number of projects actively involving women and disadvantaged groups of people” (48.57% realisation) did not reach the set threshold. The indicator “number of people participating in joint education or training activities” was exceeded more than 154 times. In general, the projects reflected strong cross-border cooperation. In the OP, most projects were expected to encourage and improve joint protection and management of the environment, but in practice most projects developed collaboration in the field of public services (20 planned and 67 projects realised). They were followed by projects encouraging and improving joint protection and management of the environment (43 projects), projects reducing isolation through improved access to transport, ICT networks and services (27 projects), and projects developing joint use of infrastructure (23 projects).

On the level of Priority 1: Economic and Social Development, all but two indicators reached the targets, namely the indicator “number of new cross-border tourist destinations” (reached 92% of its target value) and the indicator “number of projects in the field of tourism and rural development” (reached 70% of its target value). The “number of new cross-border tourist services” indicator was exceeded more than 13 times. The highest number of projects supported cooperation between SMEs and R&D organisations (34), followed by projects in the field of tourism and rural development (28), projects affecting the increase of cross-border trade (25), and projects for eco-efficiency, energy efficiency and use of renewable resources (13). It is interesting to note that there were many regional initiatives or cross-border partnerships for joint management of natural resources, green purchasing, eco-efficiency, eco-labelling, sustainable transport, cross-border public transport, etc. – 36 instead of the expected 3. Instead of the expected 25, the projects created 90.5 new jobs, out of which 63.38% were given to women.

On the level of Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, 9 out of 10 indicators reached their targets, only the indicator “number of projects in the field of environment protection” reached 58%. It is surprising that the “number of waste disposal sites rehabilitated” reached 93, exceeding the planned number 5 by more than 18 times. The highest number of projects was in the field of environmental protection (29), which corresponds to the plan in the OP. However, as already mentioned, this indicator did not reach the target of 50 projects. The second highest number of projects under this priority was in the

field of preservation and revitalisation of natural/cultural resources (27), followed by projects increasing cooperation between local and regional actors with their cross-border counterparts for joint spatial planning (17). Instead of the expected 25, the projects created 52.25, out of which 60.06% were given to women.

One out of two indicators of Technical Assistance was achieved, namely the “number of promotional events”. The other indicator, “number of projects approved and monitored” reached 57%, as only 95 projects were approved and monitored instead of the planned 165. A high target value of the approved projects is a consequence of the planned small projects fund as a financial instrument to support local initiatives from the first adopted OP²². Even though this fund was never implemented and was deleted from the later versions of the OP, the target value of the indicator was not adjusted.

All in all, two indicators (“number of joint management of water sources” and “number of promotional events”) were achieved in the exact value as estimated in the OP. 29 indicators were achieved or exceeded (at an average of 936%), and only 8 indicators were not achieved (their average realisation was 55%). The general realisation of all indicators was almost 80%, which may be due to the fact that only 95 out of the targeted 165 projects (57%) were approved.

Considering the fact that the number of approved projects was only 57.58% of the target number (165 projects), the projects fared well above average with respect to programme indicators, since most of them were achieved (and also exceeded). Based on this fact, we can conclude the approved projects were very consistent with programme indicators.

The extraordinary rate of exceeded planned achievements of some output and outcome indicators suggests that their planning was not ambitious and the goals were set very low. For instance, only 50 new employments were foreseen as a result of implementing the OP. If only a quarter of the projects would contribute to new jobs, the goal should be 5 times higher – from this perspective, the exceeded indicators in employment (3.6 times higher for Priority 1 and 2 times higher for Priority 2) cannot be evaluated as a great achievement.

4.5 Effectiveness of the programme

The effectiveness of the programme is assessed based on an analysis how much the implementation of the OP CBC Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 encouraged changes in addressing the most relevant needs within the programme area and whether the defined strategic objectives have been achieved.

The Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion 2007–2013 in the strategic framework of the EU²³ set the following priorities:

- making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work;

²² OP dated on 27 November 2007, approved by Commission Decision No C(2008)739 as of 28/2/2008.

²³ Council decision of 6 October 2006 (2006/702/EC).

- ↳ encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy;
- ↳ creating more and better jobs.

Following these guidelines, the following three key areas were highlighted for this period within European Territorial Cooperation²⁴:

- ↳ Development of cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development. This involves, for example, encouraging entrepreneurship, joint protection and management of natural and cultural resources, development of collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures.
- ↳ Establishment and development of transnational cooperation, including bilateral cooperation between maritime regions. The priorities here are innovation, environment, better accessibility and sustainable urban development.
- ↳ Reinforcement of the effectiveness of regional policy by encouraging regional and local authorities to form networks and exchange experience.

The objectives and achievements of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 are in line with the first and the third Community guideline priorities, since the programme area has become more attractive for investment and work, and the programme has created opportunities for more jobs.

The achievements are also in line with the first and third key area of European Territorial Cooperation for the period 2007–2013, as the programme encouraged entrepreneurship, supported joint protection and management of natural and cultural assets and development of collaboration. Moreover, it encouraged regional and local authorities to form networks and exchange experience, which is clearly evident on the level of all programme measures.

When analysing the effectiveness of the OP, we must take into consideration its limited capacity, especially financial. Considering that the programme area covers approximately two thirds of the territory of the Republic of Slovenia and half of the territory of the Republic of Croatia, we can only evaluate the contribution of the programme to these objectives and not to the greater effect that could be easily identified in the programme area.

The following table summarises to what extent the specific objectives were achieved, using the categories *very effective*, *effective* and *less effective*. It provides reasons for the assessment, in light of the following aspects:

- ↳ Is the objective still relevant?
- ↳ To what extent were the planned activities implemented?
- ↳ To what extent did the implemented activities lead to the desired results?

Table 21: Achievement of specific objectives

Specific objective	Justification
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²⁴ Regulation (EC) No. 1080/2006

Specific objective	Justification
Very effective	
<p>To stimulate sustainable tourism built on a cross-border regional identity and based on natural and cultural assets in order to prolong the tourist season and generate additional and sustainable income for the local people, especially in rural areas</p>	<p>Tourism is one of the key economic drivers in the programme area, or even the most important one in some regions/counties. As the fastest growing market with many opportunities still to be discovered, it remains relevant in the next programme period.</p> <p>The approved projects focused on all activities listed in the OP. New integrated products and services were developed for various types of tourism offer (with special focus on cultural, agricultural and active tourism). Infrastructural development was carried out, in a sense of revitalisation of cultural heritage and its integration into tourism. Many projects involved investments in recreational and small-scale tourism infrastructure. Areas indicated as nature protected areas were included in the tourism offer. However, more could be done in the field of joint marketing and promotion of tourism.</p> <p>The programme achieved measurable results in development of tourism infrastructure and generated new destinations for different types of tourists with a strong emphasis on natural and cultural heritage, which can ensure long-term sustainability of the achieved results.</p>
<p>To improve environmental awareness in the cross-border area</p>	<p>The relevance of this objective is still high, as environment bears a heavy burden of human activities and is harmed by economic considerations in the area.</p> <p>Many projects performed activities rising awareness of the population about innovative environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Many promotional activities (including joint cross-border activities) using various types of media were implemented to bring this important issue closer to the wider population and the target groups of the project. A special emphasis in these activities was put on economical use of energy, renewable use and recycling.</p> <p>Within this specific objective, the programme contributed to a better understanding and consequently better preservation of the environment in the programme area. When communication and demonstration activities were performed, they had an</p>

Specific objective	Justification
	<p>impact on the target groups, but future implementation of these activities (and thus sustainability) is questionable without financial support after the conclusion of the projects.</p>
<p>To mitigate environmental risks by joint planning, management and monitoring of natural resources in the cross-border area</p>	<p>This objective encourages public authorities to joint cross-border activity within the area, and is – considering the sensitivity of nature and the high number of shared natural resources (especially water) – highly relevant and included also in the next programme period.</p> <p>The approved projects within Priority 2 focused on development of joint feasibility studies (mainly to improve the quality of waste water management systems), preservation of water sources and improvement of water quality. Joint management approaches raised awareness among policy makers regarding natural resources. Joint monitoring approaches (such as identification of underwater flows) provided new knowledge that will be used in the future.</p> <p>According to the beneficiaries, these studies will be implemented in the next years, which will be a further sustainable effect of the programme, especially since common issues such as waste water and water management should be planned together with a joint approach for a broader area.</p>
Effective	
<p>To promote business cooperation</p>	<p>This objective is aimed at developing entrepreneurship to address the problems of unemployment, lacking economic cross-border cooperation and innovativeness. The relevance of this objective remains high in rural areas as well as in bigger towns with high youth unemployment. Nevertheless, this objective was abandoned in the new period the programme.</p> <p>All activities that were planned in the OP were carried out, but the highest sustainable effect was transfer of know-how, exchange of information and cooperation of the education, research & development sector. Using various exchange platforms, online and smartphone applications for exchange of knowledge, ideas and networking, many new companies were established, creating new jobs.</p>

Specific objective	Justification
	<p>Since many of the involved partners were private companies and NGOs, limited-time financial support means that sustainability of project results related to networking, publication and platforms is not as high.</p>
<p>To facilitate the creation of a common cultural and social space in the Slovenian-Croatian border region</p>	<p>This objective addressed the need for cross-border cooperation in culture and social services between civil-society organisations and municipalities. The programme area is rich in cultural heritage and identity, and the needs for further projects within this objective have been acknowledged also in the next programme period.</p> <p>The projects improved cooperation between institutions in the field of protection services (fire brigades), education and health services. The projects actively addressed underprivileged groups, and educated a large number of different experts through educational activities and workshops, which is one of the most sustainable results of this objective. The most visible results are in the field of volunteering, health care and education.</p> <p>Adequate professional knowledge and skills are available to maintain the results; however, their sustainability is subject to the financial situation in partner organisations.</p>
<p>To reduce environmental pollution (air, water, soil, forests, etc.) in sensitive cross-border areas</p>	<p>The relevance of this objective is still high and it will remain included in the next programme period, as the pressure of increased tourism resulting from better developed infrastructure is taken into consideration.</p> <p>Under this objective, many concrete in situ activities were performed to reduce the environmental pollution (such as rehabilitation of waste disposal sites and new disposal sites, better infrastructure and revitalised natural sources). Special attention was given to the identification and clean-up of illegal disposal sites, which is particularly important in karst terrain, which makes up a large share of the programme area.</p> <p>Sustainability of results can be expected in the long term only if the promotional and awareness-raising activities continue and the infrastructure is adequately maintained.</p>
<p>To preserve and revitalise natural and</p>	<p>Considering the geography of the programme area and its rich cultural and natural assets, this objective</p>

Specific objective	Justification
cultural resources as a basis for strengthening regional identity and diversity, as well as ensuring sustainability	<p>is highly relevant and remains so in the next programme period.</p> <p>Many activities under this objective were implemented in the field of preservation of natural and cultural heritage. Many protected areas were included in the partnerships, which organised many public events and established communication tools that are still in use after the conclusion of the projects. Considerable results were achieved in the field of preservation of natural and cultural resources, as well as landscape diversity. However, no protected area, cross-border network or joint management was established as envisaged in the OP.</p> <p>Sustainability of project results is strongly related to the activity of the administrative bodies managing the protected natural and cultural sites.</p>

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the interviews with beneficiaries and project analysis.

The programme was very effective in stimulating sustainable tourism, where a lot of sustainable infrastructure was built. Many positive effects can also be found in mitigation of environmental risks and especially in the establishment of cross-border cooperation of institutions as a tool for addressing shared problems and threats. Furthermore, the programme was effective in promoting business cooperation and creating a common cultural and social space. Projects generated many tangible results in the reduction of environmental pollution and preservation and revitalisation of natural and cultural resources. The programme generated many pilot initiatives, initial investments and plans for the future that still need to be implemented to be able to fully assess the effectiveness of the programme.

However, it is important to mention the new circumstances related to the measures that the Republic of Slovenia adopted in response to the migration crisis. A barbed wire fence (or panel fence in some cases) has been erected along most of the border between Slovenia and Croatia.

Apart from the feeling that boundaries are created and strengthened instead of reducing their impact (as the main goal of EU cross-border programmes), this fence raises concrete issues for the implemented projects and has a negative impact on the achieved results and long-term effects of some of the projects. For example, the project CURS-COLAPIS provided sustainable tourism infrastructure on the border river Kolpa and access to it is now hindered by the fence.

Overall, it can be said that the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 made a contribution towards achieving the objectives of the EU.

Recommendation: To improve the effectiveness of the next programme period, a special evaluation aspect should be added to consider the capitalisation of projects (projects based on results of previously implemented projects from other operational programmes).

4.6 Programme efficiency

Programme efficiency is a combination of the financial realisation (presented in Chapter 4.3), implementation procedures (presented in Chapter 4.1) and programme and project management from the perspective of the implementation, which is presented in this chapter based on the inputs from the beneficiaries and programme structures.

In order to manage and monitor the reporting process of implemented projects, the MA has established a central information system on the programme level called ISARR. This online project management application was previously mainly used in Slovenian programmes and projects under the Cohesion Fund and was never designed for use in cross-border programmes. Thus, it lacked a user interface in Croatian for the Croatian beneficiaries. The ISARR system provided informational support for reporting on programme implementation, ranging from the level of the operational programme, priorities and measures to the level of each project.

ISARR was used by the following users:

- the Managing Authority,
- the Joint Technical Secretariat,
- the Slovenian and Croatian first-level control,
- the Certifying Authority,
- the Slovenian and Croatian national authorities,
- the Audit Authority,
- the beneficiaries.

All programme stakeholders had many difficulties using ISARR. Programme structures had limited capabilities and application-specific knowledge on full use of this online tool. Moreover, some programme structures could make no use of the data because the form in which they were available was not appropriate for their working processes. Many flaws were detected in the system in relation to disparities between the data entered and the final printouts. As a result, programme structures had to develop their own reporting tools in order to properly monitor the implementation of the projects.

Many beneficiaries also experienced difficulties with this online reporting tool. In some cases, the problems occurred already in the beginning since they did not receive the certificate necessary to run the application on time to catch the deadline for submitting their first project reports. Project partners also

complained about the technical assistance for the tool, which was available only in writing and not over the phone, which was more time consuming and meant their problems could not be solved immediately. The application itself was slow and had a lot of technical issues.

All the stakeholders said that the application was inflexible and that the manager of the application took too long to solve the problems and errors.

With regard to procedures, long payment periods caused many problems for the beneficiaries. The most common ones were:

- Since beneficiaries had not received the funds for the first half of their projects by the time they were in their second half, they could not spend the funds they intended to, which hindered the implementation of their activities and led to a lower financial realisation of projects.
- Project partners that were NGOs or small private legal entities had to get a loan from the bank to ensure financial liquidity for the implementation of project activities. Because of the delay in reimbursement, high negative interest was incurred, which could not be reimbursed and remained a high burden for beneficiaries.
- In some projects, long payment periods posed a serious threat to the stability of the partnership.

The problems related to the long payment periods were also identified by the JTS and the MA and were a consequence of staff limitations. In some periods (especially in the second part of programme implementation), some controllers were transferred from other programmes to be able to process the high number of reports. This meant that new controllers were not familiar with project-specific circumstances.

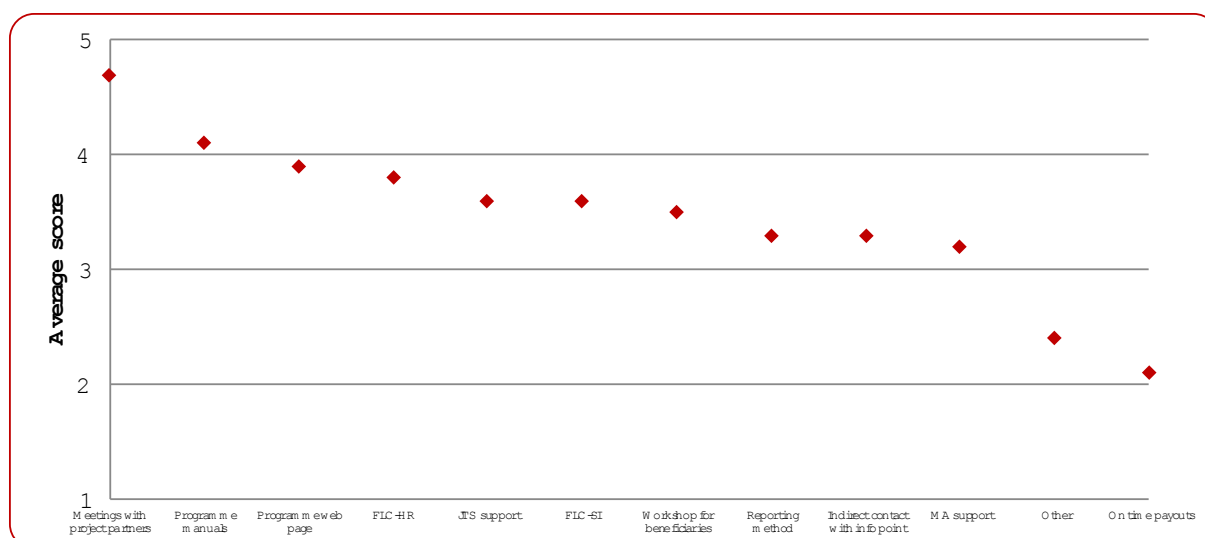
Some partners experienced problems with PRAG tender procedures. The difficulties were mainly related to the small number of received tenders (or none in some cases) as service providers found the documentation too complex.

Some beneficiaries had many problems because their activities (namely within the measure Development of Entrepreneurship) were classified as state aid. This hindered the involvement of some target groups and therefore reduced the effect of the projects.

Despite all this, the delivery mechanism and implementation procedures were, according to the beneficiaries, quite efficient. Many stated that they understood that there were reasons for the rules and that they had to be respected. But they also stressed that the MA should have provided enough staff to ensure smoother implementation of the programme.

The following graph shows the average grades the beneficiaries gave to the factors affecting the success in the implementation of their projects.

Graph 8: Average grades of factors affecting successful project implementation



Source: Interviews with the beneficiaries

Meetings with project partners were assessed as the factor with the biggest influence on successful implementation of the projects (average grade of 4.7), followed by programme manuals (4.1) and the programme web page (3.9). The highest grade among the programme structures was given to the Croatian FLC (3.8), followed by the JTS and the Slovenian FLC (both 3.6). Workshops for beneficiaries were graded with 3.5, and the most common remarks were that the presentations were too general and did not focus enough on solving concrete problems the projects were facing. ISARR as a reporting method received an average grade of 3.3, followed by the Croatian Info Point (3.2), support from the MA (3.2) and other factors (2.4). The factor that received the lowest average grade was timely payment of funds (2.1).

According to the beneficiaries, the administrative burden of the project implementation was much too high. They found it unreasonable that in some cases they spent more time dealing with paperwork than on the implementation of project activities. The reports were too complicated and time consuming. The rules for reporting should be facilitated and the report documents should be simplified. Pre-financing of projects was a wish of all the beneficiaries and should be considered at least for NGOs.

Some of these issues are already addressed in the new programming period (the user interface of the online tool is provided in both national languages and flat-rate reimbursement of administrative costs is possible).

Recommendations:

- *A reduction of the administrative burden related to the rules for project implementation should be taken into consideration, as there is some room for simplification (e.g. in reporting labour costs, where timesheets could be sufficient). This would help shift the focus of the projects from implementation and paperwork to results and quality.*
- *Clearer rules regarding state aid should be provided, together with a detailed list of activities considered as state aid. This would facilitate full implementation of projects and more sustainable effects.*
- *Since all expenditure has to be financed by project partners, the disbursement procedure should be accelerated.*
- *Pre-financing for NGOs should be provided so this target group will also be involved in future projects and so their involvement in the programme will not jeopardise their existence.*
- *Due to the extensive administrative work that has to be done after the projects are concluded (the final report, revisions, programme evaluations), a flat-rate reimbursement of labour costs should be provided for partners (at least lead partners) to avoid serious issues related to lack of administrative staff once the project is concluded and project coordinators are no longer employed.*

5. PROJECT LEVEL EVALUATION

5.1 Implementation and results

When designing their project proposals, applicants had to define the indicators on the programme level (presented in the previous chapter), along with project-specific indicators. These are divided into two groups: Output indicators and result indicators.

This chapter analyses the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project-specific indicators of the approved projects. First, a quantitative overview is presented in a table, while the second part of the chapter provides an in-depth qualitative review of project achievements for each measure.

The following table presents the distribution of the project-specific indicators by priority and measure. The total number of output and result indicators is presented for each measure, along with the share of achieved values. The data was gathered from the application forms provided by the JTS, while the values were obtained in the interviews with the beneficiaries.

Table 22: Achievement of project-specific indicators

Measure	Number of projects	Total number of output indicators	% of achieved output indicators	Total number of result indicators	% of achieved result indicators
Priority 1 – Economic and Social Development					
Tourism and Rural Development	21	335	97.92	147	98.64
Development of Entrepreneurship	22	356	99.34	144	97.33
Social Integration	16	202	99.01	121	98.35
<i>Partial sum and average where %</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>893</i>	<i>98.76</i>	<i>412</i>	<i>98.11</i>
Priority 2 – Sustainable Natural Resources Management					
Environmental Protection	21	330	99.40	143	99.31
Preservation of Protected Areas	15	203	99.02	99	98.99
<i>Partial sum and average where %</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>533</i>	<i>99.21</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>99.15</i>
<i>Totalsum and average where %</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>1,426</i>	<i>98.94</i>	<i>654</i>	<i>98.52</i>

Source: Project application forms provided by the JTS and interviews with beneficiaries

Under Priority 1, 59 projects set 893 output and 412 result indicators. On average, 15.1 output indicators and 6.9 result indicators were set per project. Achievement rates were high in all measures, with the highest outputs in Development of Entrepreneurship (99.34%). With the other two measures, the output success rate was only slightly lower, with as much as 97.92% of the priorities realised in the measure Tourism and Rural Development, and 99.01% in Social Integration. The realisation on the level of Priority 1 was 98.75% for output indicators and 98.1% for result indicators.

The measures under Priority 2 covered 36 projects with 533 output indicators and 242 result indicators, for an average of 14.8 output indicators and 6.7 result indicators per project. The projects divided into two measures achieved an output

success rate of 99.4% for the measure Environmental Protection, and 99.02% for Preservation of Protected Areas. The percentage of achieved result indicators is similarly high, at 99.31% and 98.99% respectively.

In total, the 95 projects under both priorities set 1,426 output and 654 result indicators, and 98.94% of the output and 98.52% of the result indicators were achieved. The target values of 67 (4.69%) output and 135 (20.64%) result indicators were exceeded. These numbers need to be taken with reservation, because we have concluded from the surveys that all the indicators were not set properly. We assume that this is a result of poor knowledge about the appropriate methodology for setting indicators.

Moreover, the obtained values of some project-specific indicators are not realistic because beneficiaries either stopped measuring the indicators once the target values were achieved, or they received informal hints from the programme structures to use the target values in their final reports if the value was surpassed. In most cases such indicators were related to promotional activities and the number of participants at project events.

A further in-depth analysis of output and result indicators was conducted to identify the concrete results of the supported projects. The projects were arranged by their corresponding measures. Due to a large number of indicators, they were put in groups to make the review of outputs and results clearer. The findings of the analysis are presented in the following two sub-chapters by priority.

5.1.1 Priority 1: Economic and Social Development

Table 23: Qualitative analysis of output indicators for Priority 1

Measure	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Achieved value	% of achieved results
Priority 1 – Economic and social development					
Tourism and rural development	Tourist infrastructure	6	7	6	85.71
	Revitalized biking trails	2	4	5	125.00
	Revitalized hiking trails	3	9	9	100.00
	Revitalized horse riding trails	1	1	1	100.00
	Coastal areas revitalized	2	50	50	100.00
	Caves revitalized	1	1	1	100.00
	Resting spaces for tourists	3	53	53	100.00
	Mills reconstructed	1	5	5	100.00
	Oil spring revitalized	1	1	1	100.00
	Revitalized boats and docks	1	3	3	100.00
	People with raised awareness about the environment	8	99,500	99,500	100.00
	Auxiliary material	13	942	944	100.21
	Plans and strategies	4	90	84	93.33
Development of entrepreneurship	Studies, analyses and plans	109	846	841	99.41
	Computer and mobile applications and software created	6	7	7	100.00
	Educational material	32	13,929	14,079	101.08
	Social companies established	1	1	3	300.00
	Workshops and educational courses	62	903	909	100.66
	Info points	2	17	17	100.00
	Centers of excellence established	1	2	2	100.00
Social integration	Partner meetings	11	33	33	100.00
	Events and exhibitions	6	76	78	102.63
	Regional informative offices	1	2	2	100.00
	Fire station	1	1	1	100.00
	Intergenerational center	1	1	1	100.00
	Rehabilitation center	1	1	1	100.00
	Educational workshops	8	265	359	135.47
	Promotional material	18	17,664	16,715	94.63

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is 1, the name of the group of indicators is the same as the output indicator stated in the project.

Source: Grouping by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from the application forms provided by the JTS and their achieved values obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

We have highlighted the following output indicators set by the beneficiaries within Priority 1 (arranged by indicator groups):

- Educational material:
 - ↳ 2 e-classrooms
 - ↳ 1 specific benchmarking software
 - ↳ 6 technical manuals
 - ↳ 2 books

- Tourism infrastructure:
 - ↳ 8 info centres
 - ↳ 793 route signalisations
 - ↳ 101 rest areas

- Auxiliary material:
 - ↳ 17 info points
 - ↳ 2 route maps
 - ↳ 10 mobile apps

- Events and exhibitions:
 - ↳ 6 swimming festivals for people with special needs
 - ↳ 17 arts festivals
 - ↳ 6 historical exhibitions

- Educational workshops:
 - ↳ 2 study visits
 - ↳ 6 seminars for swimmers
 - ↳ 2 bilingual summer camps

Table 24: Qualitative analysis of result indicators for Priority 1

Measure	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Achieved value	% of achieved results
Priority 1 – Economic and social development					
Tourism and rural development	Tourist guides and providers on workshops and training	10	394	406	103.05
	Revitalized objects of heritage	5	43	43	100.00
	Newly established cross-border tourist destinations	9	10	10	100.00
	Promotional material for the public	8	7,840	8,736	111.43
	Areas protected	1	4	4	100.00
	Marketing strategies and project documents	18	43	41	95.35
	Romanian minority cultural center	1	1	1	100.00
Development of entrepreneurship	The number of participants on workshops and training	37	2,407	4,546	188.87
	New companies established	1	20	20	100.00
	New business plans	2	90	100	111.11
	Suggestions for improvement	6	45	79	175.56
	Connections established between existing companies	7	214	214	100.00
	Trained young entrepreneurs	6	152	164	107.89
	Cross-border employment companies established	1	8	8	100.00
Social integration	Additionally trained experts	2	34	35	102.94
	Children informed and included in the projects	6	625	655	104.80
	Participants informed	6	75,236	281,555	374.23
	Participants at the events	6	7,660	10,179	132.89
	Newly available jobs	1	1	1	100.00
	Institutions cooperating in the projects	2	23	23	100.00

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is 1, the name of the group of indicators is the same as the result indicator stated in the project.

Source: Grouping by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from the application forms provided by the JTS and their achieved values obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

We have highlighted the following result indicators set by the beneficiaries within Priority 1 (arranged by indicator groups):

- Suggestions for improvement:
 - ↳ 1 model for encouraging technologic start-up companies
 - ↳ 10 plans for improving competitiveness
 - ↳ 20 business analyses for hotels

- Revitalised heritage:
 - ↳ 120 revitalised bike trails
 - ↳ 6 tourist points maintained
 - ↳ 110 km of renovated traditional infrastructure

- Newly established cross-border tourism destinations:
 - ↳ Eco-museum Mura
 - ↳ Paths for hiking, pilgrimage, biking and horse riding
 - ↳ 1 horse track

- Children informed and included in the projects:
 - ↳ 150 children informed about cultural differences
 - ↳ 320 children attended hockey practices
 - ↳ 1 children's music festival

- Participants at events:
 - ↳ 4 Croatian/Slovenian days
 - ↳ 210 participants of seminars on volunteering
 - ↳ Exhibition about Istrian heritage

- Participants informed:
 - ↳ 12,000 people informed about the importance of heritage
 - ↳ 5,000 people informed about the importance of volunteering
 - ↳ 4,800 people informed about cultural differences and stereotypes

5.1.2 Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Table 25: Qualitative analysis of output indicators for Priority 2

Measure	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Achieved value	% of achieved results
Priority 2 – Sustainable natural resources management					
Environmental protection	New methodologies and feasibility studies	88	151	189	125.17
	Info points	4	62	62	100.00
	Rubbish sorting bins	3	86	86	100.00
	Revitalized areas	7	67	67	100.00
	Educational material	16	16	16	100.00
	Cleaning plants	3	3	3	100.00
	Public lightning reconstruction	1	727	727	100.00
Excursions and qualifications	39	350	374	106.86	
Preservation of protected areas	Revitalized orchards	1	15	33	220.00
	Revitalized trails	4	5	5	100.00
	Renovated walls	3	9	9	100.00
	Trees planted	1	3,000	4,019	133.97
	Equipped cultural objects	6	17	17	100
	Bear's trail	1	1	1	100
	Feasibility studies and strategies	32	53	53	100
	Fruitpress	1	1	1	100
	Heads of Istrian cattle reintroduced	1	10	10	100
	Suggestion of establishment of a protected area	1	1	1	100

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is 1, the name of the group of indicators is the same as the result indicator stated in the project.

Source: Grouping by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from the application forms provided by the JTS and their achieved values obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

We have highlighted the following output indicators set by the beneficiaries with projects within Priority 2 (arranged by indicator groups):

- New methodologies and feasibility studies:
 - 2 studies about the content and quantity of trash
 - 4 geomechanical studies for rerouting waste water
 - 1 monograph with depictions of local areas
 - 2 interactive databases of illegal dumping sites
 - 1 monitoring programme for water sources
 - 1 report on rules for introduction of energy efficiency in cultural heritage infrastructure
- Educational material:
 - 2000 children's books
 - 1 documentary about water preservation

- ↳ 1 documentary “Underground Istria”
 - ↳ 1 documentary “Živo!”
 - ↳ 1 documentary “Water cycle”
 - ↳ 1 documentary about bears
 - ↳ 2 comic book
 - ↳ 5 different expert manuals
- Revitalised areas:
- ↳ 1 cleaned and renovated cave
 - ↳ 10 illegal dumping sites cleaned
 - ↳ 5 learning trails revitalised
 - ↳ 1 jogging track and 1 playground on former illegal dumping sites
- Excursions and qualifications:
- ↳ 9 lectures about the karst
 - ↳ 2 speleological workshops
 - ↳ 6 workshops on energy efficiency in households
 - ↳ 17 excursions across Slovenia and Croatia
 - ↳ 2 lessons about environmental protection and innovative water protection measures
- Equipped cultural buildings:
- ↳ CPU center Velenje renovated and upgraded
 - ↳ ZEC “speleo house” newly equipped
 - ↳ An old abandoned school renovated

Table 26: Qualitative analysis of result indicators for Priority 2

Measure	Group of indicators	Number of indicators in group	Planned value	Achieved value	% of achieved results
Priority 2 – Sustainable natural resources management					
Environmental protection	Revitalized natural sources	2	55	55	100.00
	Rehabilitated illegal dumping grounds	2	591	601	101.69
	Fecal station	1	1	1	100.00
	Collected waste textile	1	35	37	105.71
	Experts involved in the project	2	16	16	100.00
	Educational material	5	5,313	5,313	100.00
	Infrastructure for the reduction of energy consumption and pollution	1	1	1	100.00
	Participants involved in workshops and training	20	6,264	6,757	107.87
	Youth involved in the project	4	1,970	1,970	100.00
Preservation of protected areas	Participants involved in meetings and workshops	18	1,622	1,937	119.42
	Experts trained	3	62	64	103.23
	People informed	30	368,666	440,085	119.37
	Public events	7	9	11	122.22
	Participants involved in the project	11	4,485	7,667	170.95

Note: Where the number of indicators in group is 1, the name of the group of indicators is the same as the result indicator stated in the project.

Source: Grouping by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data from the application forms provided by the JTS and their achieved values obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

We have highlighted the following result indicators set by the beneficiaries with projects within Priority 2 (arranged by indicator groups):

- Educational material:
 - 40 school programmes
 - 2 scientific articles on speleology
 - 3 documentaries

- Participants involved in workshops and training:
 - 16 speleologists trained
 - 1200 children educated about the importance of correct waste disposal
 - 120 participants in youth quizzes on ecology
 - 90 participants visited sites of good practices
 - 60 participants in topographical filming course
 - 5 workshops for museum personnel

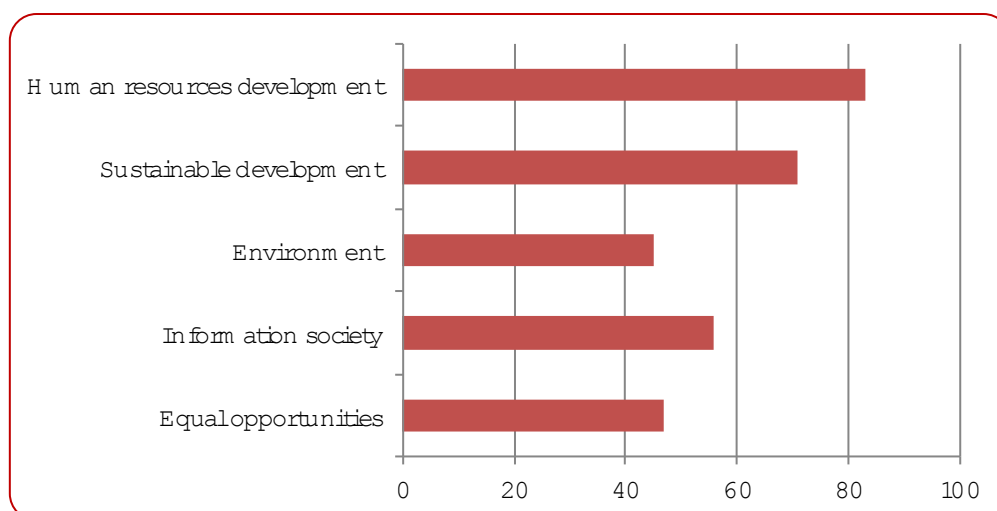
- ↳ 200 visitors of an educational garden
 - ↳ 20 tourist guides trained
- Public events:
- ↳ 1 bears' trail exhibition
 - ↳ 59 eco workshops
 - ↳ 1 rock-climbing event

5.2 Contribution to horizontal policies and guidelines

Horizontal EU policies represent the fundamental principles of the EU, and were used as the underlying principles for projects under this programme. They were integrated to a reasonable degree into every project as a tool supporting the achievement of objectives in the selected priorities. Incorporation of horizontal policies was assessed in project applications, so all applications addressed them, but not all in the same manner. In the 2007–2013 programming period, programmes and projects were encouraged to follow the goals of the EU horizontal policies in the field of equal opportunities, information society, environment, sustainable development and human resources development.

For the purpose of analysing the contribution of the projects to the five horizontal policies, we verified whether the beneficiaries actually addressed the horizontal policies as planned in the application form. In the interviews, we asked the beneficiaries which horizontal policies they followed and how they were integrated in the projects. The application forms for the first, second, and third Call did not include the same horizontal policies. Namely, in the first Call, applicants could only choose four horizontal policies (equal opportunities, information society, environment and sustainable development), whereas the application form for the second and the third Call included five horizontal policies (equal opportunities, environment, sustainable development, information society and human resource development). Since we wanted to ensure a consistent evaluation method for all projects, we verified the inclusion of all five horizontal policies in all projects.

Graph 9: Distribution of projects according to horizontal policies



Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

Equal opportunities

Equality between men and women is one of the European Union's founding values. It goes back to 1957 when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome. Some encouraging trends include the increased number of women in the labour market and their progress in securing better education and training. However, inequalities still exist, as gender gaps remain and in the labour market women are still over-represented in lower-paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions. Therefore, the European Union sets out the principle that the gender perspective should systematically be taken into account in all Community policies and actions.

All projects implemented under the Operational Programme SI-HR 2007–2013 respected the principle of equal opportunities and none of them violated this during the implementation period. 47 beneficiaries (49.47%) integrated the horizontal policy of equal opportunities in their project and developed activities that directly addressed this topic. The projects focused on inclusion of minorities (mainly the Roma), women, unemployed people, people with physical and mental disabilities, and people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Information society

The information society continues to be a key driver of growth and employment and remains at the heart of the Lisbon strategy. Information society is a horizontal tool to support achievement of objectives of the priorities, not only in the business sector, but also in environmental protection and management, preservation and revitalisation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as in setting up and using coordination mechanisms. The advantage of activities related to information society – such as courses in specific fields of knowledge, establishment of ICT infrastructure and equipment, development of ICT services and applications, and increased use of these services – is increased work efficiency.

56 projects (58.95%) supported the horizontal policy of information society by using ICT equipment and improving digital literacy. The beneficiaries established websites, profiles on social media (mostly Facebook and YouTube) and QR codes with links to the websites of their projects.

Environment

Environmental protection is a priority aimed at reducing the impact on climate change, preserving biodiversity and ecosystems, and avoiding or limiting excessive exploitation of natural resources to a minimum.

45 beneficiaries (47.37%) included the environmental horizontal policy in their projects. They mostly focused on preservation of natural resources (forests, rivers), environmental protection, use of renewable energy sources for heating (wood biomass) and education about green energy.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a concept aimed at meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It offers a vision of progress that integrates immediate and longer-term objectives, local and global action, and regards social, economic and environmental issues as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress. Sustainable development is a fundamental and overarching objective of the European Union, enshrined in its treaties since 1997. The overall aim of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy is to identify and develop actions to enable the EU to achieve continuous long-term improvement of quality of life through the creation of sustainable communities that are able to manage and use resources efficiently, able to tap into the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy and, finally, able to ensure prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion. The programme focuses primarily on this topic, as the main strategic objective of the programme is sustainable development of the entire cross-border area of Slovenia and Croatia.

Ensuring sustainable development was in the focus of 71 projects (74.74%). Even projects that did not primarily deal with Priority 2 – Sustainable Management of Natural Resources strived to enhance sustainable development. The projects included activities in the fields of social equity (inclusion of underprivileged social groups in projects), improving quality of life (of people with disabilities, women, young people), sustainable use of natural resources (water sources, wood) and environmental protection (rivers, forests, reducing uncontrolled waste disposal).

Human resources development

Human resources development is related to formal and non-formal types of education or training. Education and training are seen as key drivers of growth and jobs. The European Union established the Education and Training 2020

(ET2020) strategic framework for cooperation in education and training, which set 4 common EU objectives for addressing the challenges in education and training systems by 2020: lifelong learning and mobility; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; and encouraging creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training. Human resources development is a horizontal tool to support the achievement of objectives in the selected priorities of the programme.

Human resources development was the horizontal policy that was included in the most projects. A total of 83 projects (87.37%) improved the skills and competences of participants in training activities and/or developed training materials and curricula for further training activities, which can be integrated in the regular education system.

Recommendation: Meeting the requirements of horizontal objectives should remain an important element of future projects, as it contributes to the achievement of programme priorities. However, every project should not be expected to meet all horizontal objectives and the total number of horizontal objectives that they address should not be an issue in the evaluation of projects.

5.3 Identification of good practices

Based on the interviews with beneficiaries, we have identified good practices in projects with respect to the following aspects: innovation, ability to create synergies, effective implementation, efficiency of achieved objectives, added value, cross-border effect and sustainability. These aspects were chosen as the most important indicators of successful projects and because they are all (especially the ability to create synergies and sustainability) even more important in the next financing period for all European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

Innovation

Tourism and Rural Development	PEDO TUR – Development of tourist activities to prolong the tourist season, involvement of underprivileged groups of people in project activities, innovative promotional approaches. PEDO TUR – Equine-assisted therapy.
Development of Entrepreneurship	ENTERYOUTH – A computer game for entrepreneurship training and a mobile application for elaborating a business plan. SOCPOD – A training programme for vulnerable social groups on the topic of social entrepreneurship that resulted in new jobs in the field of organic farming.
Social Integration	BERI – Cross-border mobile libraries.
Environmental Protection	PORETEKS – Creation of new sustainable employment opportunities in the field of reuse of textile, and research on the use of textile as an insulation material in construction.
Preservation of Protected Areas	KAMEN-MOST – Reintroduction of stone as a traditional construction material, raising awareness about dry stone walls as a characteristic feature of the landscape. Innovative use of leftover stone material of lower quality.

Ability to create synergies

Tourism and Rural Development	ROKIC DROM – Inclusion of the Roma population; building infrastructure for cultural tourism; initial contacts established that were further developed in future projects.
Development of Entrepreneurship	MLADIEKOIN – Six new project proposals for sustainable funding of project activities were drafted within the project.
Social Integration	CITY VOLUNTEERS – A new type of volunteering was developed and implemented for large-scale events (European Capital of Culture).
Environmental Protection	DOBRA VODA ZA VSE and PIJEMO ISTO VODO – A coherent approach to protection and preservation of drinking water in a cross-border aquifer.
Preservation of Protected Areas	RAST ISTRE – Reintroduction of traditional fruit sorts and olive trees, from which local producers will have long-term benefits and a possibility to upgrade their activities with new products.

Effectiveness

Tourism and Rural Development	MALA BARKA – Successful use of natural and cultural resources of the cross-border area for tourism, and development of a new attractive tourism destination. ROKIC DROM – The European commissioner for human rights, other politicians and ambassadors attended the opening ceremony, which was covered by CNN, so the information about the project was well spread.
Development of Entrepreneurship	MALA ŠOLA PODJETNIKOV – An application for managing a virtual enterprise.
Social Integration	MURA-MEDIA-MINORITY – Hotspots with free internet access in rural villages.
Environmental Protection	KUP & ŽIVO! – Biological research and study of caves, resulting in clean-up initiatives and establishment of a joint science and training centre.
Preservation of Protected Areas	APRO – Successful reintroduction of Istrian cattle.

Efficiency

Tourism and Rural Development	MURA DRAVA BIKE – Efficient capitalisation of an extension of a bike trail, and establishment of a macroregional tourist hotspot for active holidays.
Development of Entrepreneurship	EDU-PRENEUR – Quality training for students, which led them to establish their own company.
Social Integration	PTO – Swimming as therapy for the integration of people with special needs. Development of their motor skills and inclusion in social life.
Environmental Protection	PORETEKS – An integral approach to involving target groups in the project.
Preservation of Protected Areas	OHS/OKP – Construction of a waste water treatment plant.

Added value

Tourism and Rural Development	CURS COLAPIS – Apart from new tourism infrastructure, many disputes about the use of river banks resulting from different interests were also resolved with mutual understanding and to a mutual benefit.
Development of Entrepreneurship	SLOHRA GLOBALNET – Assistance to young entrepreneurs through education and assistance in developing a business plan and in initial

	operations.
Social Integration	DMNPG – Promotion of anti-discrimination and child participation in cultural cooperation. IRIS – Trainings for teachers how to work with people with disabilities, and inclusion of people with disabilities in sports and recreational activities.
Environmental Protection	ŠKOCJAN-RISNJAK – Awareness raising about the complexity of water management, which cannot be left to local management.
Preservation of Protected Areas	GREEN4GREY – An innovative approach of building a small tree hut in a park close to the city centre can help increase the number of park visitors (children and their parents), thus indirectly promoting a healthier lifestyle of families. OD VIJEGLAVKE DO SOKA – Popularisation of orchards as an element of the traditional cultural landscape.

Cross-border effect

Tourism and Rural Development	PARENZANA and PARENZANA MAGIC – Renovation, remodelling and tourist valorisation of a bicycle route.
Development of Entrepreneurship	MARATON – A cross-border web platform for mentors and students to exchange research paper ideas.
Social Integration	MURA-MEDIA-MINORITY – Bilingual shows about the projects implemented within the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 were broadcast by local TV stations in both countries.
Environmental Protection	PORETEKS – Transfer of knowledge and approaches in recycling textile waste. Within the project, a foundation for further cross-border cooperation was set up, which is still operational and is a case of good practice and cooperation of municipalities. ŠKOCJAN-RISNJAK – The project brought uniform methodology and indicators for measuring water quality, which is especially important for the drinking water that comes from springs on both sides of the border.
Preservation of Protected Areas	PREBUĐENA KULTURNA BAŠTINA – Elaboration of a study that resulted in restoration of cultural and historical sites in the border regions and the introduction of a cross-border

| cultural heritage route.

Sustainability

Tourism and rural development	CURS-COLAPIS – Tourist infrastructure, water way and information panels for region-specific type of sustainable tourism with a strong emphasis on directing visitors to less vulnerable areas.
Development of entrepreneurship	ZOOB – Increased number of producers and areas subjected to organic agriculture.
Social integration	CLOUD – Continuation of implemented new approaches helping drug addicts, especially mothers.
Environmental protection	IMBY – Reduction of environmental pollution by building a recycling and re-use centre, and results in a constant increase of separately collected waste. ONS – Improvement of a waste management system and green islands that reduced user costs for disposed waste.
Preservation of protected areas	ROJSTVO EVROPE – Project is still being presented on various locations within the programme area with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia. Primary schools included developed curricula in their teaching processes.

Based on three criteria (effectiveness, cross-border effect and sustainability), we have identified the following projects as examples of good practice:

- Measure 1.1. – CURS-COLAPIS
- Measure 1.2. – MALA ŠOLA PODJETNIKOV
- Measure 1.3 – CLOUD
- Measure 2.1 – ŽIVO!
- Measure 2.2 – APRO

5.4 Partner level

The purpose of this chapter is to present the characteristics of the partnerships, and in particular the relationship between the public and private sector, the geographical distribution of partners, and the median number of partners, according to priority axes and fields of activity.

According to the OP, the beneficiaries of the programme were non-profit legal persons established by public or private law for the purpose of public interest or general interest.

Eligible public organisations were:

- ↳ regional and local public authorities;
- ↳ public bodies and public-equivalent bodies such as funds, institutions and agencies established by the state or a municipality, research and development institutions, education and training institutions, health care institutions, institutions for protecting natural and cultural heritage, local and regional development agencies, etc.

Eligible private organisations were:

- ↳ non-governmental organisations such as associations, foundations;
- ↳ chambers of commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, clusters registered as non-profit legal persons;
- ↳ legal entities established by private law (societies) with non-profit status and purpose of operating, such as local and regional development agencies registered as companies, local tourism organisations, training organisations, etc.

For the partnership analysis presented in this chapter, we have created a matrix of approved projects based on the information obtained from the JTS. We have analysed the following parameters: tender, priority, measure, total number of partners, location and legal form of partners.

Table 27: Share of projects by status of the lead partner and measure (%)

Priority	Measure	Private	Public
1	Tourism and Rural Development	20.59	21.31
	Development of entrepreneurship	32.35	18.03
	Social Integration	23.53	14.75
2	Environmental Protection	11.76	27.87
	Preservation of Protected Areas	11.76	18.03
Total		100	100

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the JTS

The table above presents the share of projects by status of the lead partner and measure. 61 lead partners (64.21%) were public and 34 lead partners (35.79%) were private organisations. The highest share of public institutions serving as lead partners implemented projects in Environmental Protection (27.87%), followed by Tourism and Rural Development (21.31%), Preservation of Protected Areas and Development of Entrepreneurship (both 18.03%). As lead partners, public institutions were least involved in projects in the field of Social Integration (14.75%). Almost a third of private organisations (32.35%) serving as lead partners implemented projects in the field of Development of Entrepreneurship, followed by Social Integration (23.53%), Tourism and Rural Development (20.59%), Environmental Protection and Preservation of Protected Areas (both 11.76%).

Table 28: Number of lead partners by type, priority and country

Priority	Slovenia		Croatia	
	Private	Public	Private	Public
1	15	24	11	9
2	3	17	5	11
Partial sum	18	41	16	20
Sum	59		36	

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the JTS

The table above presents the number of lead partners by type, priority and country. Out of the total 95 lead partners, 61.11% were from Slovenia, of which more than two thirds were public bodies (69.49%) and less than a third were private organisations (30.51%). 37.89% of lead partners were from Croatia, of which 44.44% were private organisations and 55.56% were public bodies.

Most lead partners implemented activities under Priority 1: Economic and Social Development, 66.10% in Slovenia and 55.55% in Croatia. Most Slovenian public lead partners (58.53%) implemented projects under Priority 1, while most Croatian public lead partners (55%) implemented projects under Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.

Table 29: Total number of project partners and median per approved project by measure

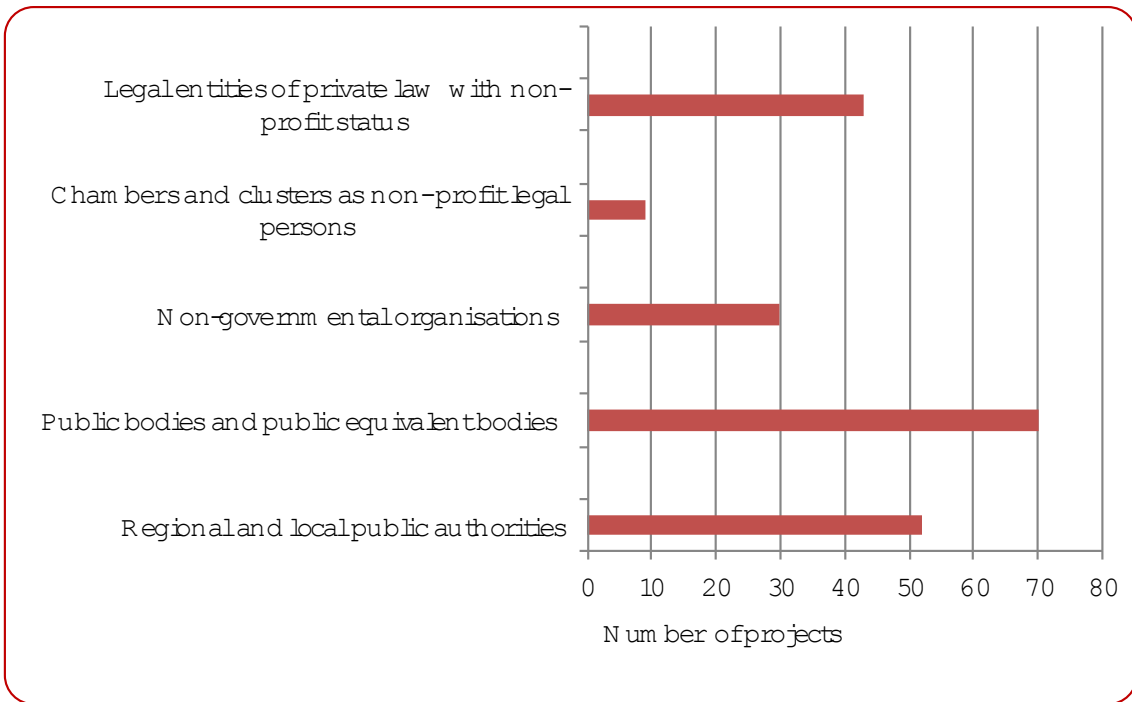
Priority	Measure	Total number of Partners	Project median
1	Tourism and Rural Development	123	5.50
	Development of entrepreneurship	134	6.00
	Social Integration	75	4.00
2	Environmental Protection	113	5.00
	Preservation of Protected Areas	75	5.00
Total		520	5.50

Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from the JTS

The table above shows the total number of project partners within each measure and the median number of partners per approved project. It indicates the scope of established partnerships, regardless of the legal form or location of partners. The centreline (median) value was chosen as an alternative indicator to the arithmetic mean because it is much more reliable when there are extreme values in the sample. The highest total number of partners was within the measure Development of Entrepreneurship (25.77%), followed by Tourism and Rural Development (23.65%) and Environmental Protection (21.73%). The lowest number of partners was within the measures Social Integration and Preservation of Protected Areas (both 14.42%).

The broadest partnerships were formed in the scope of the measure Development of Entrepreneurship, where the median number of project partners was 6. These were followed, with respect to the median number of partners, by Tourism and Rural Development (5.5), Environmental Protection and Preservation of Protected Areas (both 5), and Social Integration (4). The median number of partners for all the projects was 5.5.

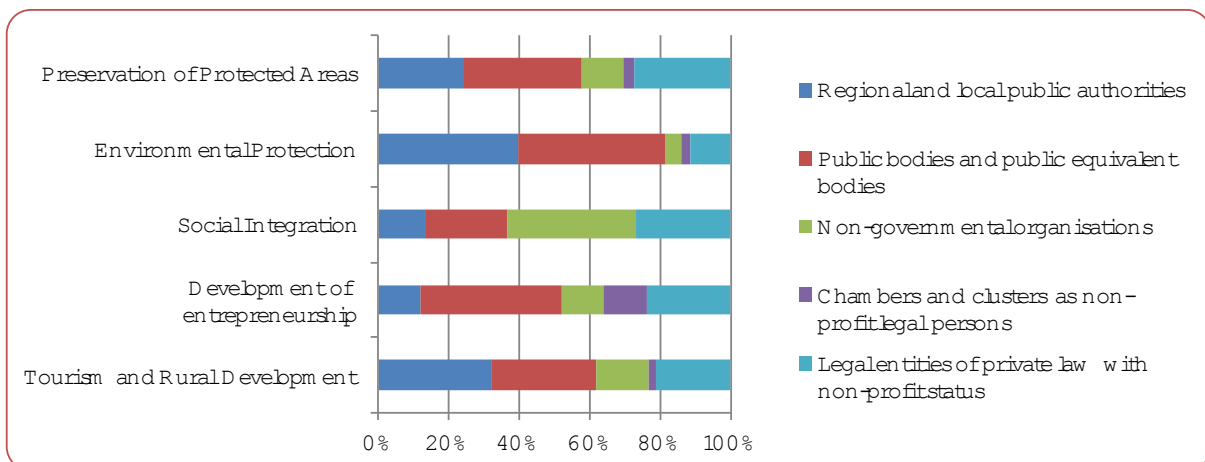
Graph 10: Legal form of beneficiaries in the projects



Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained in interviews with beneficiaries

The graph above shows the number of beneficiaries involved the projects by type of legal entity. The most common group of beneficiaries were public bodies and public-equivalent bodies, which were involved in 70 projects (73.68%), followed by the second group of eligible public organisations, regional and local public authorities, which were involved in 52 projects (54.74%). The most common group of private organisations were legal entities of private law with non-profit status, which were involved in 43 projects (45.26%), followed by non-governmental organisations, which took part in 30 projects (31.58%). The least represented type of eligible organisations were chambers and clusters registered as non-profit legal persons, which were involved in 9 projects (9.47%).

Graph 11: Legal form of beneficiaries in the measures



Source: Data analysis by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on data obtained from interviews with beneficiaries

The graph above presents the involvement of each type of beneficiaries in the individual measures. It shows that all five types of beneficiaries were represented in almost all measures, except for the measure Social Integration, which saw no involvement by chambers and clusters as non-profit legal persons. The group of public bodies and public-equivalent bodies was the most common type in the following three measures: Development of Entrepreneurship (40.00%), Environmental Protection (41.86%) and Preservation of Protected Areas (33.33%). Regional and local public authorities were the most common type of organisation in the measure Tourism and Rural Development (31.91%), while non-governmental organisations were the most common in the measure Social Integration (36.67%).

In our interviews, we asked lead partners to rate the quality of their partnerships on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning poor and 5 excellent). A total of 59 partnerships (62.1%) were rated as excellent, receiving the best grade, 33 partnerships (34.7%) were rated as very good (grade 4), and 3 partnerships (3.2%) were rated as good (grade 3). None of the partnerships was rated with a 1 or a 2 (which would mean poor). When asked about the biggest obstacles to even better cooperation, the beneficiaries mentioned the following factors: inexperience of the partners (some of them have never participated in a project before), unresponsiveness (poor communication) and financial problems (some of the partners were unable to finance their share of activities). The average grade of all partnerships is 4.6, which is a sign of high quality and efficiency of partnerships, and a strong indication that many of them will continue to work together. Some of the beneficiaries stated that they have already applied for a follow-up of their project in the next programming period (2014–2020) together with their partners.

Recommendations:

- *In our opinion, it would be helpful for programme implementation to include SMEs as eligible beneficiaries.*
- *The MA could stimulate (approve) new projects that build on the achieved results of previous projects, which would lead to a capitalisation of existing results.*
- *Pre-financing for NGOs should be provided so this target group will also be involved in future projects and so their involvement in the programme will not jeopardise their existence.*

5.5 Added value of implemented projects

This chapter presents the added value of implemented projects found in the analysis of the acquired data. The beneficiaries stated that the development of cross-border partnerships was one of the most important aspects of added value of their projects. Successful cooperation of partners was a result of identifying common challenges in the programme area, as well as the exchange of best practices in policies and project implementation.

Successful cross-border partnerships

In the implementation of the programme, 95 cross-border partnerships were formed, involving a total of 482 entities. According to the experiences of the beneficiaries, the programme has significantly contributed to the integration of stakeholders, cross-sector cooperation and development of joint services in the entire programme area. Partnerships created positive effects in various fields related to cross-border cooperation. First of all, the beneficiaries said that the developing and implementation of their projects raised awareness about the opportunities and the potential of the cross-border area for tourism. The established partnerships between the partners and the institutions in the programme area resulted in successful projects, which proved that cooperation is the key to success. The beneficiaries emphasised that innovative cross-border tourism products attract more visitors and improve the popularity of their regions. Second, cross-border cooperation expanded the market for entrepreneurs, promoted entrepreneurship and encouraged the establishment of new start-ups. Third, cross-border partnerships enhanced the revitalisation and protection of natural and cultural heritage of great importance to both Croatia and Slovenia. Fourth, successful cross-border partnerships contributed to some very fruitful projects in protection of natural resources shared by both countries regardless of the border, such as water and forests. All in all, the successful cross-border partnerships that were established will have positive long-term effects on the programme area, as many beneficiaries want to continue working with their partners to either follow up on their projects or start new projects in the cross-border area.

Exchange of best practices in policies and project implementation

According to the beneficiaries, the exchange of experience and best practices between the Slovenian and Croatian partners was very valuable. Many projects initiated and encouraged cooperation through direct communication between public institutions such as municipalities, museums and institutes in the programme area. The beneficiaries stated that the identification of common issues was a good starting point for establishing successful cooperation among project partners, which included exchange of best practices in specific policies, such as water management, natural and cultural heritage protection, etc.

The Slovenian partners said that many of their partners from Croatia had never been involved in an EU project before. The exchange of experience and best practices between the less and more experienced partners was quite significant for successfully completing the projects. Moreover, exchange of best practices was also useful for the more experienced partners that are aware that constant improvement of the work process is crucial for success. To ensure successful implementation of the projects, many lead partners developed their own (internal) tools for effective project management. They proved efficient in ensuring the implementation of the projects within the timeframe and budget envisaged in the contract. Although e-mail is the most common communication tool today, personal communication (by telephone or web conferencing) and

especially problem-solving meetings were assessed as the most efficient process-management tool on the partner level.

5.6 Sustainability of project results and impact

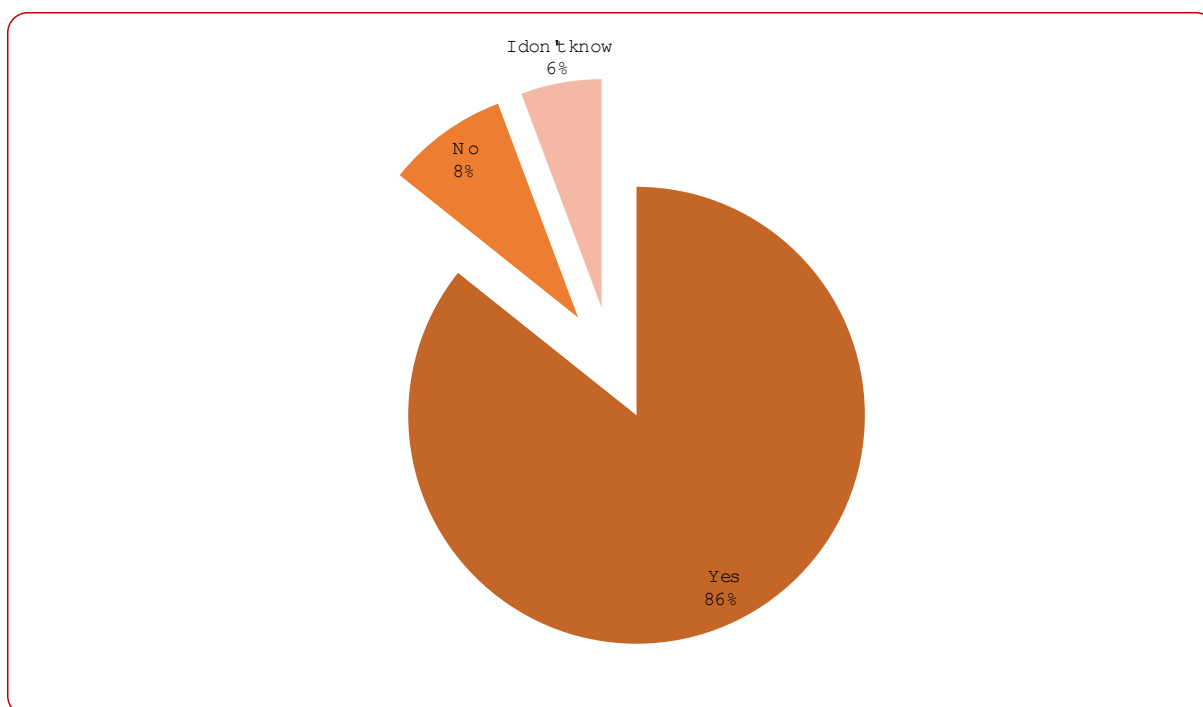
5.6.1 Cost-efficiency of the approved projects

Based on the results of the survey conducted among lead partners, most of them (80%) are convinced that the results of their projects would not have been achieved or the projects would not have the same effect if they were financed with a lower amount. 41.43% of lead partners believe the project would be impossible to implement within any other financial mechanism, while 32% believe that the project could be realised within some other regional and transnational programmes but the impact would be smaller.

Regarding the cost-efficiency of their project, a majority of lead partners (87.14%) are convinced that the allocated amount of funds was sufficient to achieve the planned benefits for the target groups of their project and to achieve the final result. 21.43% of lead partners believe that they would partly implement their project even if they were not approved OP co-financing, but to a much smaller extent. On the other hand, 78.57% of lead partners believe that their project would not be carried out at all. The average financial realisation of 95 implemented projects (based on the latest available data from the JTS on the cut off date 8.11.2016) is 89.6%. Main reasons for incomplete financial realisation are a consequence of a combination of the following factors;

- Delay of reimbursement of funds hindered the spending of funds.
- Mistakes in the administrative project management which resulted in the rejection of costs.
- Overestimated project budgets even after the process of budget-clearing.

The following graph shows the share of the implemented projects that continue also after their official conclusion.

Graph 12: Share of projects that continue also after their official conclusion

Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

Some of the lead partners indicated that they would need funding to continue with the implementation of their projects, while some coordinators stated that their project was planned with a clear start and conclusion and that it would therefore be impossible to continue, but that it could be a foundation for a new project.

The efficiency assessment for the funds invested in each measure depends on the monitoring of the projects with respect to the sustainability of their activities and dissemination of their results. Furthermore, the assessment depends more on the projects' impact on the target group than the size of the target group. Based on the analysis of the implemented projects, we can highlight two measures that indicate completely opposite characteristics:

- Measure 1.1: Tourism and Rural Development – The funds invested in tourism infrastructure and new cross-border tourism destinations created possibilities for strong multiplication effects for the local economy. A wide range of target groups can benefit from the invested funds, which means that large numbers of people feel the impact of the programme.
- Measure 1.3: Social Integration – The implemented projects addressed specific shared problems of the programme area. Projects achieved tangible results and have an impact on more specific target groups, such as people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. We can say that the invested funds in this measure had an important effect on the target groups even the number of people this involves is much smaller than in Measure 1.1.

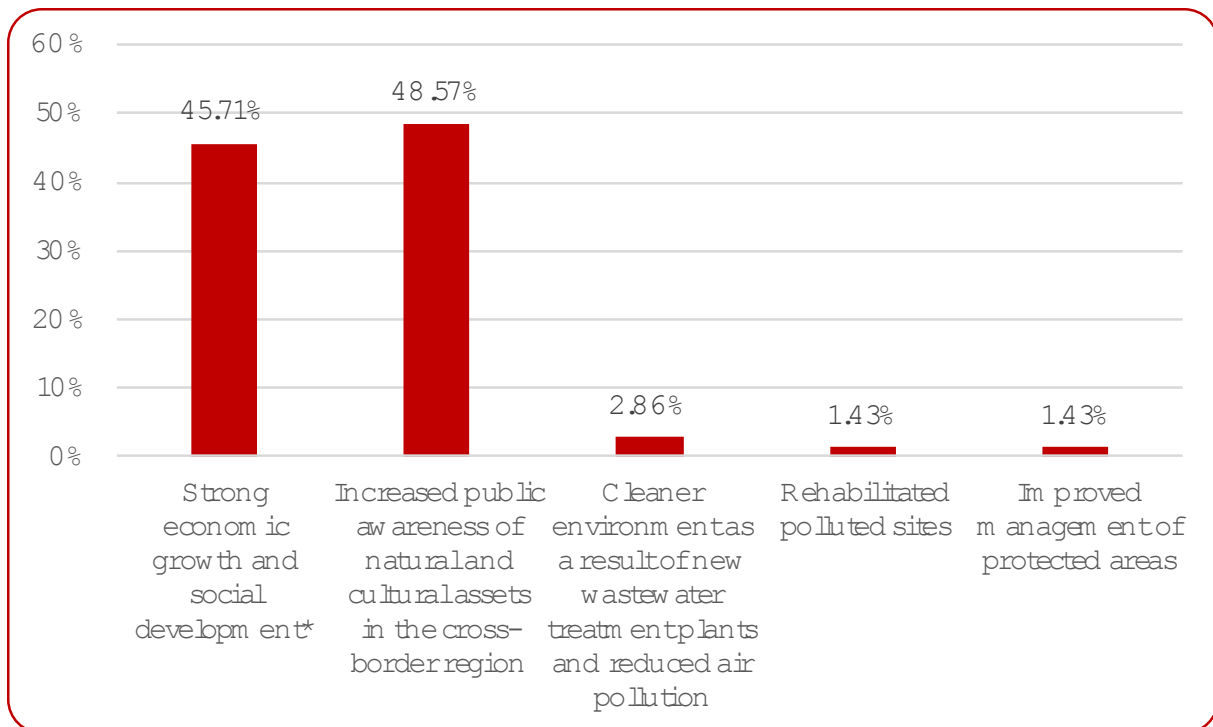
The invested programme funds also contributed to tangible results in the other three measures. The invested funds within Measure 1.2: Development of

Entrepreneurship created new possibilities for cross-border companies to increase their markets. Within both measures of Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, the projects improved the living conditions of the local population and contributed to significant progress in environmental protection.

5.6.2 Cross-border effect and partnerships

In the survey, we asked lead partners which of the five cross-border impacts of projects foreseen in the OP they recognise as the most important effect of their project. As it can be seen in the following graph, “increased public awareness of natural and cultural assets in the cross-border region” was recognised as the biggest cross-border effect of their projects. As almost as strong, the partners saw “*strong economic growth and social development in the cross-border area, with a growing number of SMEs providing additional employment and reducing the brain drain from rural areas to big cities*”. On the other hand, “cleaner environment as a result of new wastewater treatment plants and reduced air pollution”, “rehabilitated polluted sites” and “improved management of protected areas” were indicated to have the lowest cross-border effect. This is partially a consequence of a lower number of projects implemented within these areas and partially due to the fact that projects primarily focused on infrastructure indicate a lower cross-border effect than soft projects.

Graph 13: Biggest cross-border effect of the projects



*Complete statement was: Strong economic growth and social development in the cross-border area, with a growing number of SMEs providing additional employment and reducing the brain drain from rural areas to big cities.

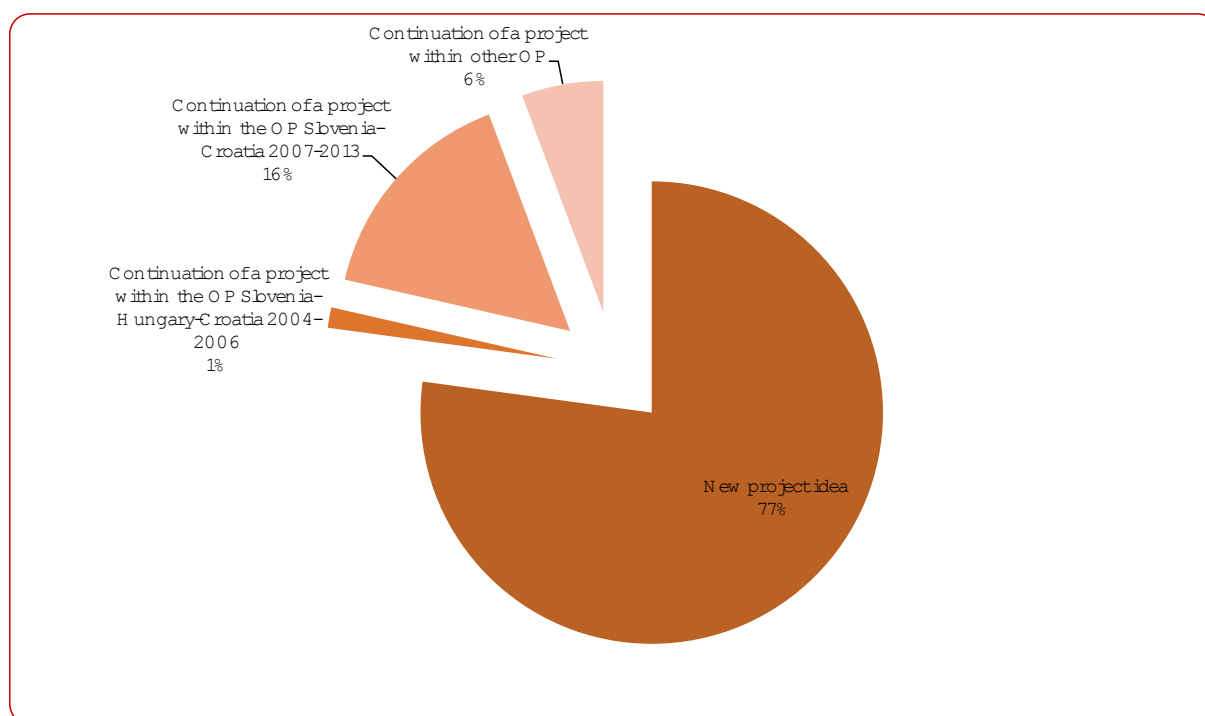
Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

The respondents' answers regarding the cross-border effect are partly a reflection of the distribution of projects under the two priorities and their measures, and partly a consequence of the five proposed answers themselves. The first two proposed impacts are more general, so more projects can identify with them, while the remaining three (with the lowest shares) are more project-specific.

As regards the composition of partnerships, 54% of lead partners knew at least some of their project partners before they submitted the project application, 34% lead partners knew all their partners and 11% knew none of them. Those who knew their project partners before had mostly cooperated with them in projects on the national, regional or trilateral level. 13.15% of project partners had met as part of their cooperation within the trilateral programme Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia 2004–2006. The highest share of project partnerships (54.34%) is a result of different existing connections, notably past business cooperation, past project proposals, regional cooperation, professional conventions or political connections.

The following graph shows the proportion of the implemented projects that were based on ideas elaborated from previous operational programmes, and the share of projects based on new ideas.

Graph 14: Origin of project ideas underlying the implemented projects



Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

According to the survey, a majority of the co-financed projects (77%) were based on new projects ideas that had not been previously implemented. From the project ideas derived from previous projects, a surprisingly large share (16% of all) were a continuation or an upgrade of projects within the same programme (OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013), which indicates that the programme period was long enough to realise more complex and extensive project ideas than simple

one-off projects. 1% of the implemented projects were a continuation of projects realised within the trilateral OP Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia 2004–2006 and 6% from other past OPs.

A majority (81.4%) of lead partners stated that, during the implementation of their project, they had an opportunity to make contacts and exchange ideas with project partners from other projects (within the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013). A welcome result of the survey is also the fact that 92.9% of lead partners wish and seek to continue cooperation with their partners in future projects. This is an indication of the generally good and creative atmosphere among the project partners.

5.6.3 Added value of partnerships

The added value of partnerships was measured in three different thematic fields, where a series of statements was given to partners and they had to grade them according to the added value of their project from 1 to 5 (where 1 is no added value and 5 is high added value).

Social capital

A majority of lead partners (40) recognised *exchange of experience* as the highest added value of their project with respect to social capital, followed by *creation of new partnerships and networks* (31), *improved management of cross-border projects* (30), *improved competences thanks to the exchange of knowledge or so-called know-how*, and *creation of new projects* (both 29), *increased awareness about cultural, social and economic differences between partners from different countries* (27), *greater interest in cross-border cooperation and transfer of good practices from other countries*, and *increased awareness about the funding possibilities within ETC* (both 20). The statement with the lowest recognised added value was *creation of new jobs* (10). Under other added value, lead partners listed important aspects such as *joint efforts in the field of biodiversity*, *raising awareness regarding development potentials of the programme area*, *learning about the area and broadening horizons*, *creation of new ideas and joint development*.

Work and process management

In the field of work and process management, *better understanding of partners* (30) was recognised as the greatest added value, followed by *solving shared problems* (25), *improves capability to establish contact with partners from other countries in order to develop joint projects* and *better understanding of the results, role and principles of ECP* (both 22) and *improves organisational skills* (17). Two aspects that 10 lead partners see as the most important were *implementation of innovative processes or products* and *access to new technologies/solutions/services*. Under other, one lead partner wrote *personal growth when meeting new and different people, their aspects, way of work and performance*.

Recognisability

Promotion of the area (36) was seen as having the highest added value in this field, followed by *improved image of the partners involved in the project* (32). Under other, an important aspect highlighted by one lead partner was *recognisability of the work of the project in the area*.

A look at the feedback provided by lead partners from a higher perspective shows that the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 has an important (or fundamental) role in the field of cross-border cooperation in the sense that the partners involved and their staff see it more as an important factor of exchange of good practices, team work, learning about cultural differences, different approaches, etc., rather than a programme to create new jobs, products and services. From the statements highlighted by lead partners, we can see that, once a project is finished, the partnership itself is the biggest added value that remains and is also the foundation for future projects from which the area will further benefit.

These results are in accordance with the findings of the Ex-post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2014²⁵ where is stated that beyond the outputs and results at project level, ERDF funded programmes also contributed to wider effects, notably in terms of alleviating specific barriers to cooperation (mainly cultural and distance barriers), and that one of the key results of the Interreg programmes is indeed their contribution to enhanced cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders.

5.6.4 Sustainability of the projects

The most important project results, highlighted by the lead partners are:

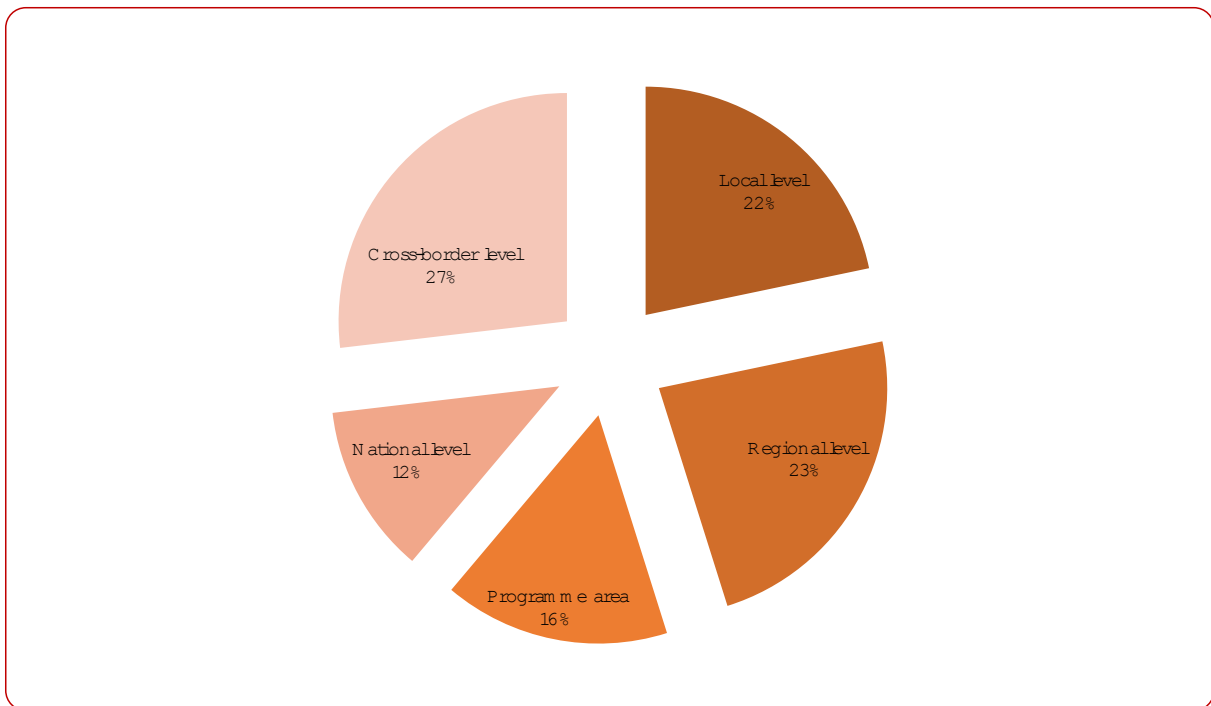
- The establishment of a network of culinary and promotional centres that inform tourists about the quality of the cultural and culinary offer of the hinterland.
- The development of 5 different tourist packages, which are available also after the conclusion of the project.
- The development of the first pomegranate and jujube orchard in Istria, and informing the public about old fruit varieties.
- The establishment of a Roma cultural and information centre in the Kamenci Roma village, and two Slovenian-Croatian info points for the promotion of Roma culture and heritage.
- The elaboration of a dry stone construction manual, encouraging the protection of traditional stone houses that are valuable monuments of the Istrian cultural heritage.
- The development of 22 tourist programmes on farms (2 of them cross-border farms) that attract more tourists to the border area between Slovenia and Croatia.

²⁵ Ex-post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)

- ↳ The development of a “stock of research projects” that promotes cooperation for improving the innovation potential of both countries.
- ↳ The establishment of an educational trail to raise awareness about the importance of the brown bear, an educational video on the coexistence with brown bears, and a brochure on how to behave in the habitat of the brown bear.
- ↳ The establishment of a textile waste collecting system that reduces communal waste, development of a bilingual mobile application promoting better waste management, creation of 2 jobs in the field of textile reuse.
- ↳ The publishing of a book about the state and the prospects of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia and Croatia, and establishment of a methodological model for encouraging new forms of entrepreneurship.

According to the lead partners, the project results have the greatest impact on the cross-border level (26.9%), followed by the regional level (23.4%). 21.7% claim that the project results have the highest impact on the local level, 16% said it was the level of the programme area, while only 12% believe that the projects’ biggest impact is on the national level.

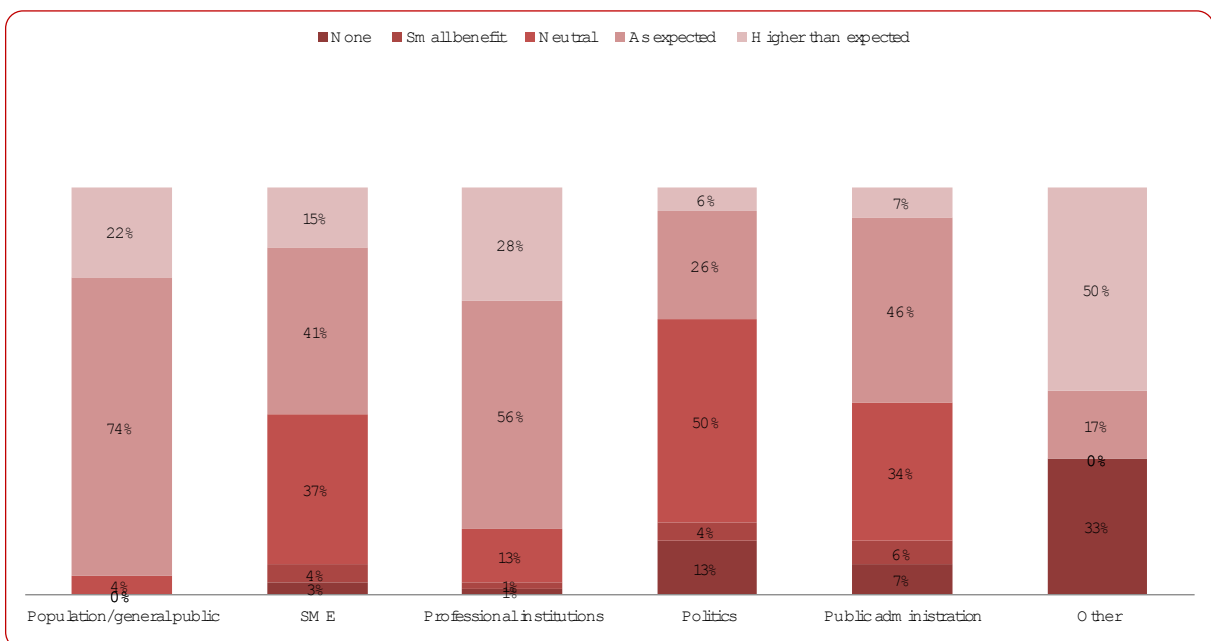
Graph 15: Level of project impact



Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

All lead partners claim that the results of their projects are still in use. However, we have noticed during the on-site interviews that in practice project results are no longer used as intently once the project is concluded because the resources for dissemination activities are limited. Most of the projects also no longer update the content of project websites once the project is concluded and in some cases the website is no longer active.

Graph 16: Benefits of the project

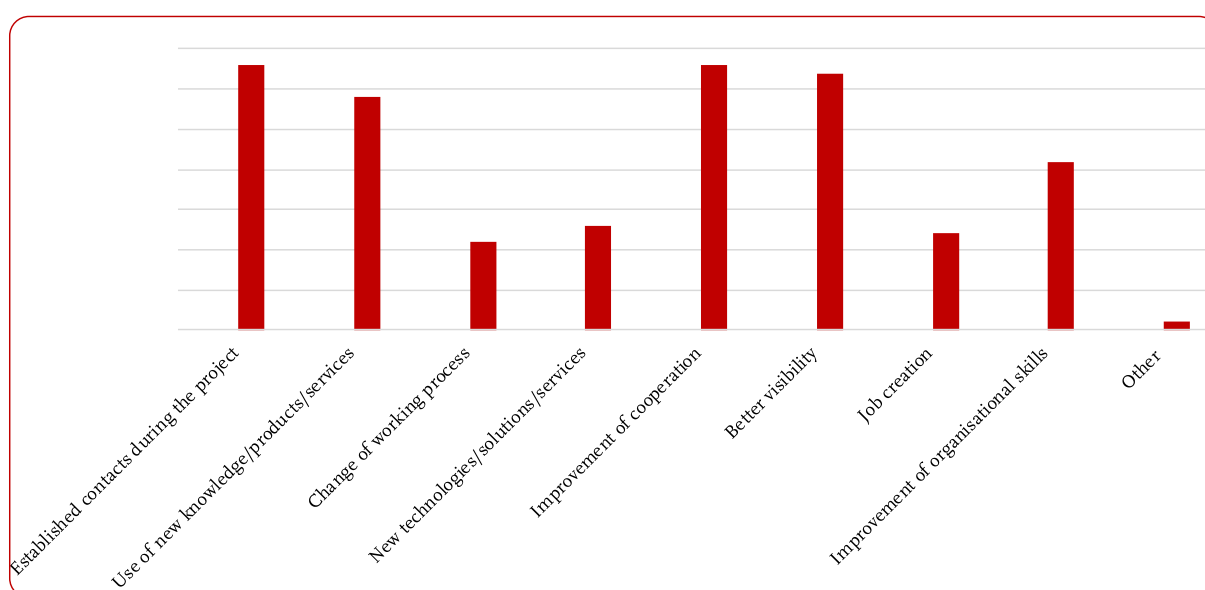


Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

Lead partners believe that the biggest obstacle preventing them from fully achieving the best results was the complexity of reporting, followed by the problem of financing after the end of the project and difficulty providing liquid assets. The partners also mentioned problems with poor response from the target groups, and poor response from partners.

63% of lead partners believe that their project generated additional results that were not initially planned: established contacts during the project and improved cooperation (both 76.7%), better visibility (74.4%), as well as the use of new knowledge/products/services (67.4%).

Graph 17: Additional unplanned results



Source: Survey among lead partners conducted by MK projekt, d.o.o., N=70

When asked about the relevance of the project in the light of the changed economic circumstances (economic and financial crisis, austerity measures), 42.6% of the partners said that the project goals were still appropriate for addressing strategic problems. 51.5% of the partners agree that the broad social impact of their project were achieved regardless of the circumstances. The most partners (45.6%) partly support the claim that the efficiency goals were achieved without additional costs and burdens. Finally, most of them (51.5%) fully agree that the quality and quantity of the initially planned efforts were appropriate regardless of the changes in economic circumstances.

5.6.5 Other

According to the partners, the biggest advantages of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 are the following:

- the strengthening of cross-border cooperation,
- integration of cross-border areas that share natural and cultural heritage,
- the exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices,

- ↳ the solving of shared problems, which is usually approached differently due to different legal systems,
- ↳ a high share of co-financing,
- ↳ the possibility of developing larger projects in different fields on both sides of the border that could not be implemented without EU funding,
- ↳ efficient technical support in reporting,
- ↳ transparency.

When asked about the biggest disadvantages of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013, the partners mentioned:

- ↳ the delay in the reimbursement,
- ↳ excessive red tape, slow problem solving and certificate distribution leading to late payments,
- ↳ rigid rules for national co-financing (de minimis),
- ↳ insufficient programme funding given the number of project applications,
- ↳ a complex application and reporting system.

6. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

6.1 Communication plan

The first version of the Communication Plan on information and publicity for the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was prepared in April 2008. It served as a basis for further plans for specific measures regarding information and publicity in the framework of the cross-border OP SI-HR 2007–2013. In March 2010, the Communication Plan was revised and indicators were amended. The amended version of the Communication Plan is used as the basis for evaluating the programme communication activities.

The Communication Plan is based on five general objectives:

- ensuring transparency about the contribution of the European Union and use of IPA/ERDF funds through general public information and publicity;
- strengthening partnerships on the interregional level between Slovenian and Croatian border regions;
- presentation of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 and all its participants from the perspective of their contribution to the development of border regions in all areas covered in the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013;
- encouraging potential beneficiaries in Croatia and Slovenia to draw EU funds for cross-border cooperation;
- increasing awareness about the benefits and positive effects of drawing EU funds for cross-border cooperation.

The following table offers a clear overview of the objectives and their relation to indicators.

Table 30: Structured overview of the general objectives and their relation to indicators set in the Communication Plan

GENERAL OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Ensuring transparency about the contribution of the EU and the use of EU funds through general public information and publicity	Number of website visitors
Strengthening partnerships on the interregional level between the Slovenian and Croatian border regions	Studies
Presentation of the OP and all its participants from the perspective of their contribution to the development of border regions in all areas covered in the OP	Number of publications / printed copies
Encouraging potential beneficiaries in Croatia and Slovenia to draw EU funds for cross-border cooperation	Number of mailing list members, number of informative electronic messages sent

GENERAL OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Increasing awareness about the benefits and positive effects of drawing EU funds for cross-border cooperation	Number of events organised

Source: Drafted by MK projekt, d.o.o. based on the Communication Plan on information and publicity for the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013

Specific objectives were set to ensure greater efficiency of implementing measures for information and publicity. But since they cannot be directly linked to the listed indicators, they cannot be properly monitored and evaluated in terms of performance.

Recommendation: The Communication Plan should include a table showing the direct relation between objectives and their achievement indicators.

The Communication Plan addressed the following three basic target groups:

- the general public in the programme area,
- potential applicants,
- beneficiaries and lead partners.

Both the information and the means of its public distribution were adapted for each target group, which also showed which methods needed to be used to address each target group. However, no connection with the indicators has been made to enable measuring the efficiency of each communication measure.

Table 31: Indicators of the Communication Plan's implementation

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Initial value	Target value at the end of the programme period	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total	% achieved
Number of visitors to the website	Visits	0	60000	0	0	5332	10967	11056	20553	7348	11977	9521	76754	127.92
Number of events performed	Events	0	8	0	2	1	6	3	6	1	3	2	24	300.00
Number of publications	Issues	0	2 in 1000 copies	0	0	0	1 in 1000 copies	0	0	0	0	0	1 in 1000 copies	50.00
Number of mailing list members	Addressee	0	180	0	289	120	6	137	5	208	32	0	797	442.78
Number of submitted electronic messages with informative contents	Messages	0	50	0	3	5	9	11	9	4	10	6	57	114.00
Studies	Issues	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	50.00

Source: Communication Plan on information and publicity for the Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 and annual implementation reports

The table above shows that four out of six indicators were achieved by the end of 2015, which is more than 66%. The achieved indicators were: number of website visitors, number of events organised, number of mailing list members, and number of informative electronic messages sent. The total number of website visitors reached 76,754 by the end of 2015, which is almost 28% more than initially planned. The MA and the JTS organised 24 events in total, which is 16 (300%) more than the target value. The number of mailing list addresses was 797 at the end of 2015, which is more than four times the target value (180). This proves that the general public had a greater interest in the programme than initially expected. A total of 57 informative electronic messages were sent by the end of 2015, which is 7 (14%) more than planned. As previously stated, the target values were not achieved in two of the six indicators. The number of publications issued by the end of 2015 was not 2 in 1,000 copies as initially planned, but only 1 in 1,000 copies. The studies indicator was also achieved to a 50% degree, as only one study was issued by the end of 2015 instead of the initially envisaged two. By the end of 2016, an interactive map will be integrated in the programme website instead of the previously planned compendium of projects, and an ex-post evaluation of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 will be published. This means that the planned targets in these two indicators will be achieved by the end of the programme implementation.

The funding planned for the implementation of measures related to information and publicity in the framework of the Technical Assistance budget of the Operational Programme Slovenia–Croatia 2007–2011 amounts to EUR 200,000. This amount was 85% co-financed from the IPA/ERDF (EUR 170,000) and 15% from national co-financing (EUR 30,000). Since the programme authorities did not monitor the use of funds for communication activities, we cannot evaluate the cost-efficiency of the measures or the realisation of the financial plan.

Recommendation: An effective system should be set up for monitoring the funds spent on the implementation of the Communication Plan and the cost-efficiency of the activities that are carried out.

6.2 Communication activities

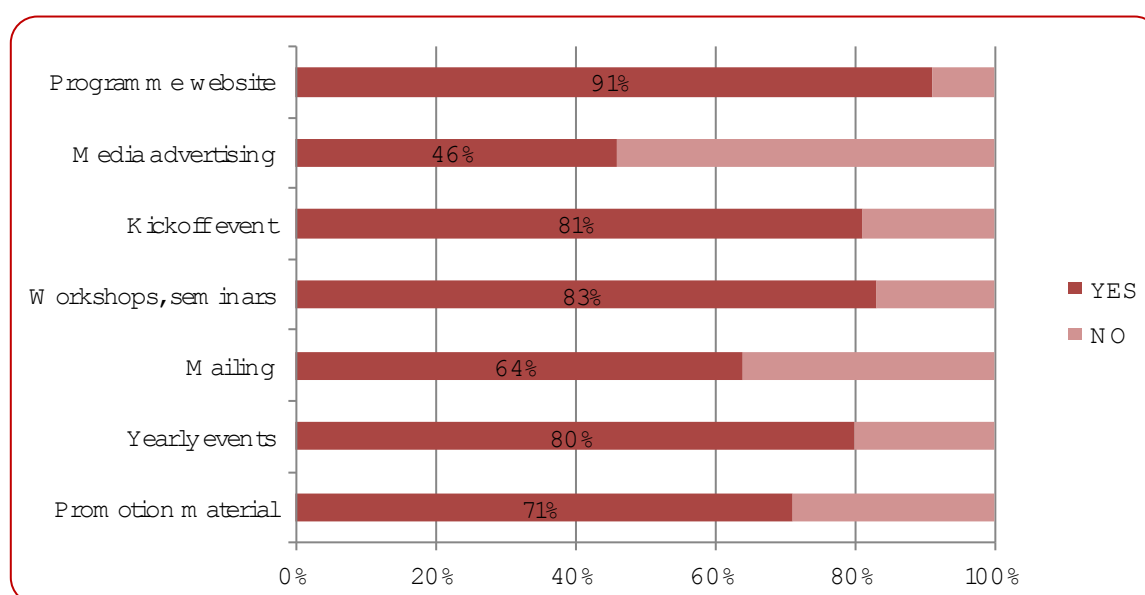
The communication strategy defined three measures aimed at reaching as many members of the target groups as possible. The table below presents the measures and their respective activities.

Table 32: Communication measures and activities

Promotional measure	Information measure	Support measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing a visual image - Motto - Website - Advertising in mass media - Events (conferences, round tables, forums, symposiums, etc.) - Raising the European flag in front of the Managing Authority headquarters (MA) for a week starting on 9 May - Promotional products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launching event - Publishing the list of beneficiaries - JTS call centre - Publications - Direct e-mail messaging - Collection of mailing lists - Thematic seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops - Studies and external advisers - Continuous education and training of MA and JTS staff in charge of information and publicity of the OP - Guidelines for implementing information and publicity measures

Source: Communication Plan on information and publicity for the Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013.

We asked the beneficiaries of the programme to assess the efficiency of the communication tools.

Table 33: Efficiency of communication tools

Source: Interviews with beneficiaries

The graph above shows the efficiency of the communication tools according to the beneficiaries. They stated that the most effective communication tools were the programme website (91%), followed by workshops and seminars (83%) and the kick-off event (81%). Only 46% of the beneficiaries believe that media

advertisement was an effective communication tool. Even though a majority of beneficiaries consider the website effective, many of them highlighted possible improvements, such as regular updates (i.e. news related to the activities in the approved projects) and a more user-friendly design. As regards the workshops, the beneficiaries noted that they were mostly helpful, but suggested that there could be more of them, especially to give better insight into the rules and procedures for project implementation. 17% of the beneficiaries said that the workshops were not efficient, as they did not provide detailed answers to practical problems of the beneficiaries. However, we should note that a call centre was available to beneficiaries for solving individual and project-specific problems.

The beneficiaries had limited knowledge of other projects approved within the OP SI-HR. The fact that lead partners in projects knew little about other projects, even though some were in similar fields of activity, is a result of insufficient promotional activities within the programme. Consequently, the ability to create synergies on the programme level was weak. By the end of 2016, an interactive map will be integrated in the programme website with summaries and partner lists of all approved projects, and the map will also be regularly updated with approved projects of the new programme period.

Most beneficiaries were in favour of inclusion of social media in the programme communication activities. 78% of them suggested that a Facebook profile would be an excellent tool for promotion of the programme and sharing information with the general public, contributing to a better visibility of the programme in Slovenia and Croatia. Some of them even suggested that social networks could be a platform for presenting the projects and their achieved results, as the general public is mainly interested in the latter. However, the beneficiaries stated that the communication between them and the programme structures should still be by e-mail and telephone, and these should not be replaced by social networks.

Almost 95% of the project leaders/coordinators at lead partners have read the OP before submitting their projects, and 74% of them said that participation in the programme expanded their knowledge of how the EU functions. Almost all of the beneficiaries know many other EU programmes, mostly other cross-border programmes, as well as transnational and centralised programmes.

Recommendations: To improve the efficiency of communication measures in the next programme period, we have drawn up the following recommendations:

- ↳ Instead of providing several PDF lists of approved projects, the programme website should publish a list of projects with short*

summaries and links to project websites (as will be done by the end of 2016 with the interactive map) to make information on the approved projects more accessible. Direct links to project websites on the programme website would enable potential applicants, beneficiaries and other interested public to easily find information about the approved projects.

- ↳ Social networks (e.g. Facebook) should be used as a tool for promoting the approved projects and their activities in the general public, as well as for networking among beneficiaries. It could also be used as an additional communication tool for sharing general information with beneficiaries (e.g. promotion of events). However, e-mail and telephone should remain the main communication channels between the programme structures and the beneficiaries.*
- ↳ More promotion in the media, especially in newspapers, on the radio and television. A promotional video of the results achieved with the approved projects could be made in order to inform the general public about the accomplishments of the programme.*

7. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURES

This chapter presents an in-depth evaluation of the programme structures and is based on two different sources of data: the interviews with the beneficiaries and the questionnaire for the programme structures.

The first part is an analysis of the beneficiaries' experience with individual structures regarding their effectiveness and implementation efficiency. The data for this evaluation was obtained through the interviews with beneficiaries.

The second part is an evaluation of individual programme structures with respect to the level and the quality of cooperation between the structures and the level of implementation efficiency of individual structures (based on the opinion of other structures). The data for this evaluation was obtained through questionnaires that were answered by representatives of each structure²⁶. Inputs from questionnaires for structures reflect the working experiences of employees of each structure. Some comments and assessments are based more on a desired degree of cooperation that would contribute to a better implementation of the programme rather than on an assessment of the structures based on their actual role and tasks. The recommendations based on these inputs are proposals for better cooperation in future programming periods.

Both sources of data provide examples of good practice, problems and difficulties of beneficiaries and programme structures, as well as recommendations for the next programming period.

7.1 Managing Authority

Slovenia and Croatia agreed that the Managing Authority (MA) with the overall responsibility for managing and implementing the Operational Programme would be the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy²⁷ within the meaning of Article 102 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 and of Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2010 of the European Parliament and Article 59 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

Apart from the responsibilities mentioned in these regulations, the Managing Authority is also responsible for:

- preparing all documents necessary for programme approval and implementation in cooperation with programme partners;
- ensuring smooth implementation of the programme;
- preparing and implementing strategic decisions of the JMC;
- concluding contracts for EU funds with the lead beneficiary;
- preparing the programme amendments and re-programming financial plans;
- cooperating with the Certifying Authority in preparing payment forecasts;

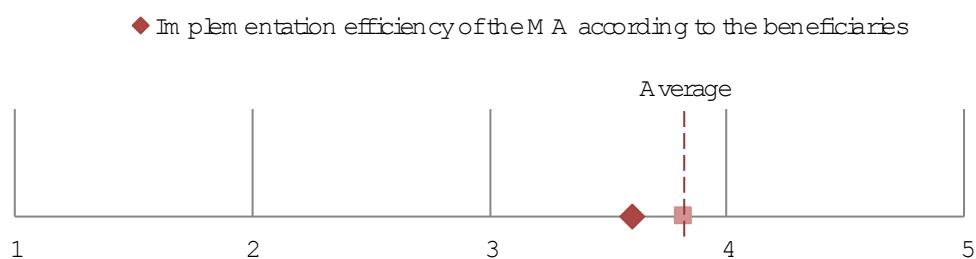
²⁶ With the exception of the Info Point, see Chapter 2.3.

²⁷ See the institutional changes presented in Chapter 3.1.

- informing the Certifying Authority of irregularities and recoveries.

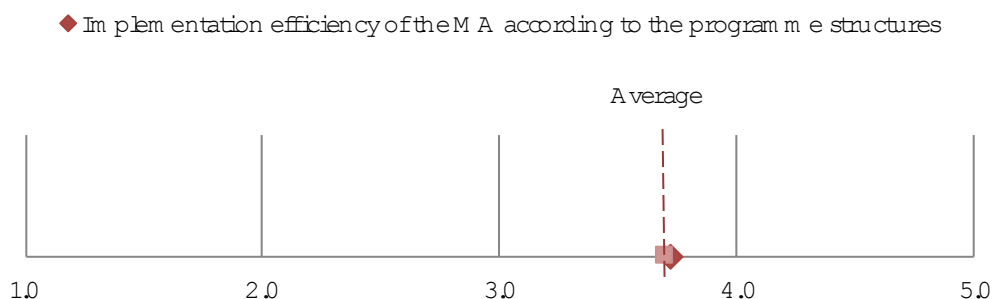
The beneficiaries were asked to assess the level of implementation efficiency of each programme structure on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning inefficient and 5 very efficient) to see how strongly they were involved in the implementation of the project. We asked them to only rate the structures they had contact with to obtain a more realistic assessment of the implementation efficiency of the structures.

A total of 83 beneficiaries rated the implementation efficiency of the MA. The MA received an average grade of 3.6, which is slightly below the average of all programme structures (3.8).



The beneficiaries also assessed to what extent the MA contributed to the successful implementation of their project (1 meaning no influence and 5 big influence). The MA received an average grade of 3.2, which is also slightly below the average of all the factors that were taken into consideration (3.5).

We also asked all programme structures to assess the level of cooperation with other structures in terms of being able to reach an agreement with them, problem-solving and information flow (1 meaning very bad and 5 excellent). The MA was rated with a score of 4.1, which is above the average (3.9). According to other programme structures, the main reason for this high grade is the MA's readiness for cooperation.



Other programme structures rated MA's implementation efficiency with a score of 3.7 out of 5, which is the same as the average of all programme structures. According to other programme structures, the MA had regular meetings with the

JTS, was very responsive and able to solve all problems regularly. However, the programme structures underlined some difficulties with the implementation of the 3rd Call for Proposals because the JTS was understaffed.

Recommendation: The MA should be more proactive in solving problems related lack of staff at the JTS, which led to significant delays in the implementation of the programme. In the event of another restructuring of the government office that serves as the MA, a smoother transition should be ensured to guarantee that the implementation of the programme is not affected.

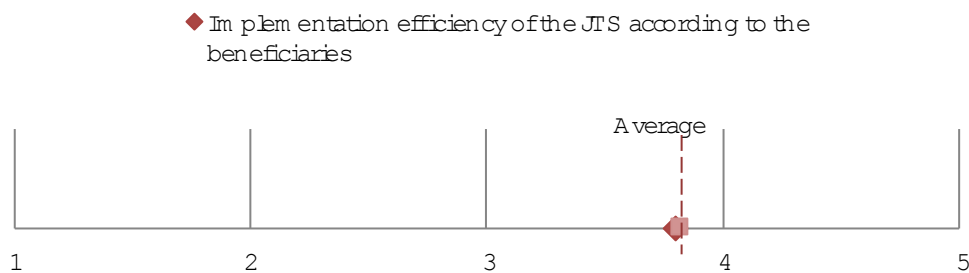
7.2 Joint Technical Secretariat

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) performed its activities under the responsibility of the MA. The JTS was organised within the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy²⁸. The main duties of the JTS were supporting the MA and the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) in the day-to-day management and implementation of the programme and in the preparation of all necessary documents, in particular:

- setting up, maintaining and updating the monitoring system;
- performing the function of the secretariat for the MA and the JMC, including the preparation and mailing of documentation for meetings and the minutes;
- drawing up reports on programme implementation;
- preparing and making available all documents necessary for the implementation;
- acting as the first contact point for potential project applicants and partners;
- collecting and evaluating (formal check) project proposals;
- checking if and ensuring that all the information needed to make a decision on a project proposal is available;
- organising the evaluation of the quality of project proposals;
- organising bilateral events;
- consulting the (potential) project beneficiaries;
- preparing proposals for JMC decisions on projects, operations to be financed;
- preparing subsidy contracts;
- checking joint progress and final reports;
- carrying out joint public relations work in agreement with the Managing Authority, the National Authority and the Info Point;
- administrative management of (external) tasks and services.

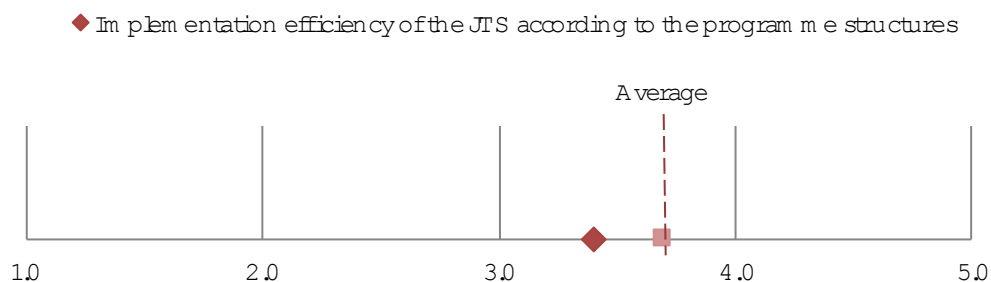
²⁸ See the institutional changes presented in Chapter 3.1.

All of the interviewed beneficiaries rated the implementation efficiency of the JTS, which is understandable as the JTS was the structure with which they had the most contact during project implementation. The average grade of the JTS's implementation efficiency was 3.8, which is the same as the average grade of all programme structures. The beneficiaries said that the JTS was mostly helpful and professional, but that the procedures of the JTS were sometimes too complicated and lengthy.



With an average grade of 3.6, the beneficiaries assessed that the support of the JTS had a rather positive impact on the implementation of their projects. This is just above the average of all the factors that were taken into consideration (3.5).

Other programme structures rated their level of cooperation with the JTS with 3.9, which is the same as the average score of all structures. They had regular meetings for solving the problems arising during project implementation and with the use of the ISARR system. The JTS also sent the relevant data to the AA on a regular basis.



The JTS was rated with a score of 3.4 for its implementation efficiency, which is below the average of all programme structures (3.7). Other programme structures assessed that the JTS was understaffed and did not take into consideration the audit recommendations regarding applications for funding.

Recommendation: Additional staff should be employed to ensure a smooth implementation of the programme. The JTS should also take into consideration the audit recommendations regarding applications for payments.

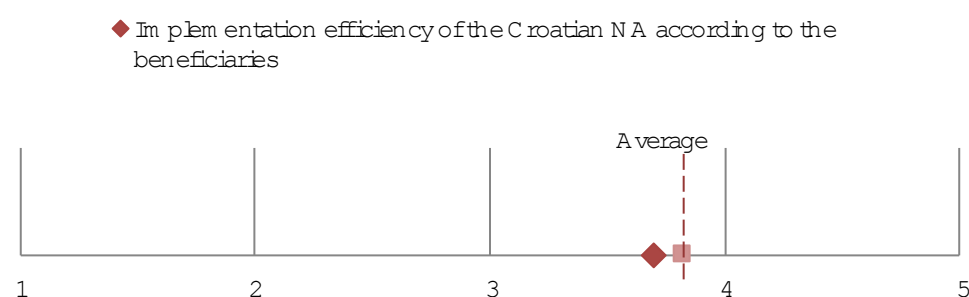
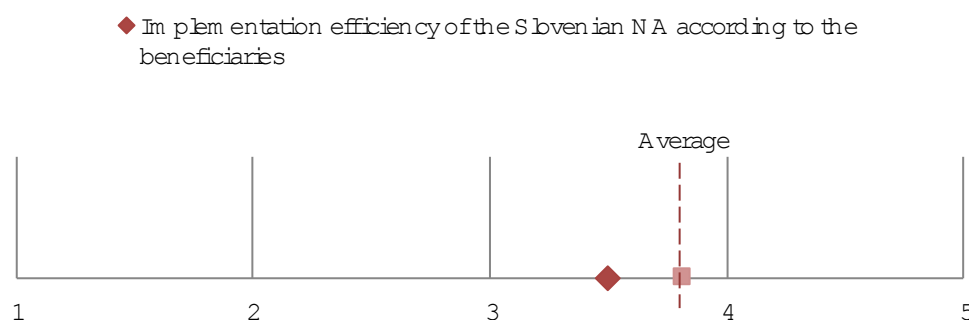
7.3 National Authority

Slovenia and Croatia agreed that the National Authority (NA) would operate under the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds in Croatia. EU law does not formally require establishing a NA, so Croatia was represented by the afore mentioned ministry and Slovenia by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy²⁹.

The main responsibilities of the NA are:

- ensuring the functioning of state representatives in the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- cooperating with the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority in managing, monitoring and supervising the implementation of the programme;
- supporting project preparation;
- carrying out a conformity assessment of operations applying to the call within national strategies and with state aid.

63 beneficiaries rated the implementation efficiency of the Slovenian NA, and 55 beneficiaries rated the implementation efficiency of the Croatian NA. The Slovenian NA received an average grade of 3.5, while its Croatian counterpart received a grade of 3.7, which is just below the average (3.8).

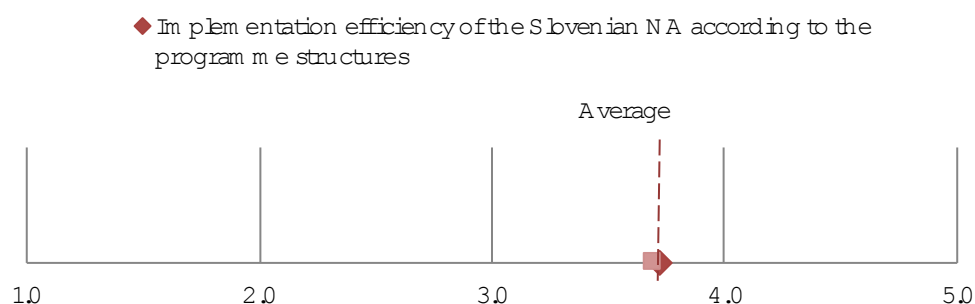


Other programme structures rated the Slovenian NA's level of cooperation with other structures with a score of 3.8, which is slightly below the average (3.9). The Slovenian NA always sent information to the AA promptly and regularly attended bilateral technical meetings, Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)

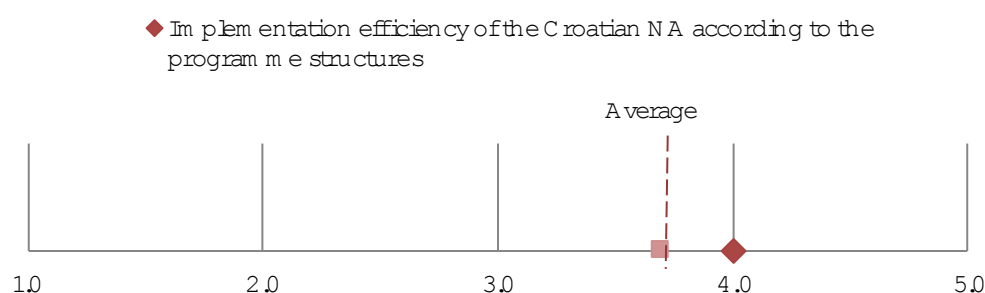
²⁹ See the institutional changes presented in Chapter 3.1.

sessions and meetings of the JTS and the programming group. Its Croatian counterpart received a higher grade of 4.0, which is also above the average of all programme structures. Its representatives also regularly attended bilateral technical meetings, JMC sessions and meetings of the programming group. They communicated well with other programme structures and were keen on exchanging good practice.

Other programme structures rated the Slovenian NA's implementation efficiency with a score of 3.7, which is the same as the average of all programme structures. While the Slovenian NA functioned quite efficiently, it struggled with a lack of staff, which resulted in a delay in payments of national funding.



The Croatian NA was rated with a score of 4.0 for its implementation efficiency by 5 other programme structures, which is also the highest score of all programme structures.



***Recommendation:** Additional staff should be employed to ensure a smooth implementation of the programme.*

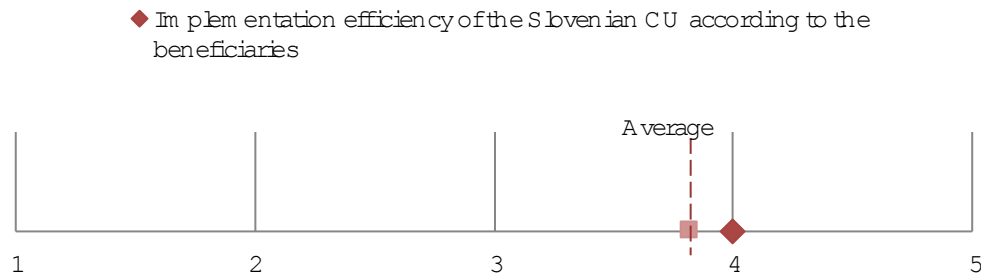
7.4 Slovenian Control Unit

In accordance with Article 108 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 and Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, each participating state has to establish a control system to verify the delivery of the co-financed products and services. The designated Control Unit (CU) is responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary in the operation. The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy³⁰ served as the Slovenian CU. Before the disbursement of funds, the CU

³⁰ See the institutional changes presented in Chapter 3.1.

checks if the beneficiaries followed all the relevant national and Commission rules and that all project expenditure is eligible.

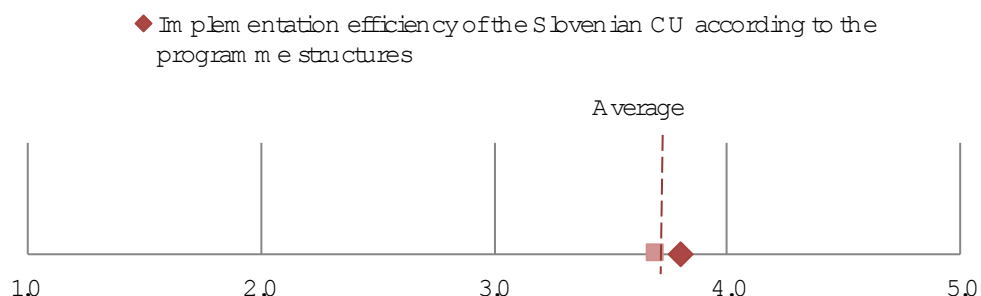
According to 79 beneficiaries, the Slovenian CU was mostly responsive and professional, so they rated their implementing efficiency with a grade of 4, which is above the average (3.8). In general, the beneficiaries were satisfied with the work of the Slovenian CU's staff. The main reason that they were not assessed as more efficient were delays in the controlling procedures, which led to significant delays in reimbursement of beneficiaries. This was a result of complex procedures and the fact that the CU was understaffed.



75 beneficiaries assessed to what extent the Slovenian CU contributed to the successful completion of their project. It received an average grade of 3.6, which is just above the average of all the factors that were taken into consideration (3.5).

Other programme structures rated the Slovenian CU's level of cooperation with other structures with a score of 3.9, which is the same as the average grade of all programme structures. According to other programme structures, the Slovenian CU regularly attended problem-solving meetings, bilateral technical meetings and the meetings of the programming group. It was proactive and always prepared to share the relevant documentation.

The Slovenian CU was graded 3.8 for its implementation efficiency by 6 other programme structures, which is above the average (3.7). However, despite a high grade, other programme structures pointed out that there were some delays in reviewing applications.

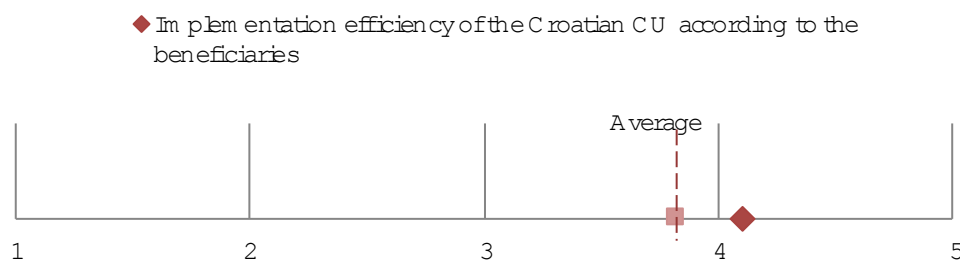


***Recommendation:** Additional controllers with adequate knowledge and experience should be employed to ensure faster and more efficient*

reviewing of reports that will prevent delays in reimbursement of beneficiaries. First-level control should show more understanding and take into account the specific (real-life) circumstances of projects.

7.5 Croatian Control Unit

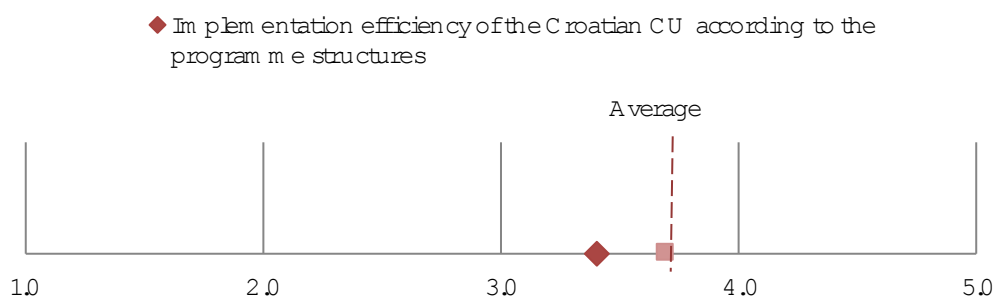
The Agency for Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia served as the Croatian CU, which had the same responsibilities as its Slovenian counterpart and was in charge of the beneficiaries (lead partners and project partners) in the Croatian part of the programme area. Rated by 80 beneficiaries, the Croatian CU received the highest grade for implementation efficiency (4.1), which is well above the average (3.8). The beneficiaries stated that the Croatian CU was professional and helpful.



The 80 beneficiaries rated the Croatian CU's contribution to the successful completion of their project with a grade of 3.8, which is also above the average (3.5). This high grade shows that the beneficiaries saw that the involvement of the Croatian CU mainly had a positive effect on the implementation of their projects.

Other programme structures rated the Croatian CU's level of cooperation with other structures with a score of 4.0, which is just above the average of all programme structures (3.9). It actively participated in bilateral technical meetings and also attended the meetings of the programming group if needed.

The Croatian CU received a grade of 3.4 for its implementation efficiency, however, only 4 programme structures rated it, as the others did not interact with it. According to the 4 programme structures, the Croatian CU's performance could be improved with less staff fluctuation and better knowledge of programme rules and the ISARR system.



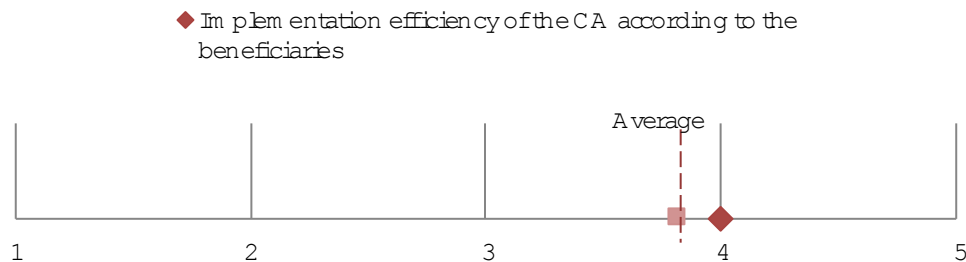
Recommendations: *The Croatian CU's performance could be improved*

with less staff fluctuation and better knowledge of programme rules. More frequent updates of the status of the applications for payments would also facilitate the reimbursement of beneficiaries.

7.6 Certifying Authority

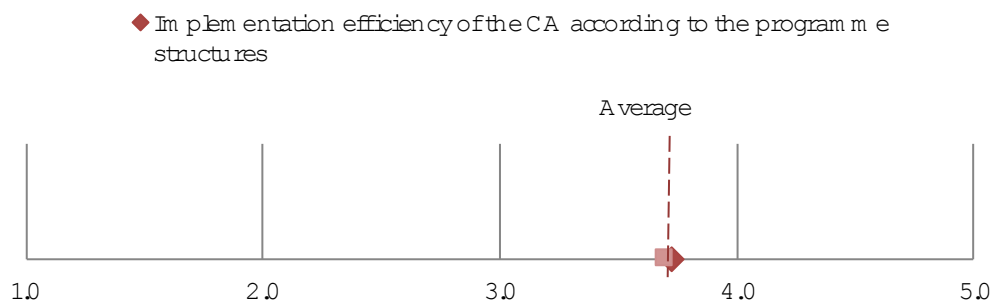
Slovenia and Croatia agreed that the Certifying Authority (CA) would be the Public Fund for Regional Development in Slovenia. Its responsibilities are set forth in Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 and Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, and are mainly related to certifying declarations of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the Commission, as well as receiving payments made by the Commission and making the payments to lead beneficiaries.

66 beneficiaries rated the implementation efficiency of the CA with an average grade of 4, which is above the average of all programme structures (3.8).



Other programme structures rated the CA's level of cooperation with other structures with a score of 3.9, which is the same as the average grade of all programme structures. The CA was seen as reliable, proactive in meetings and prepared to adjust the number of staff according to the workload (e.g. at the end of the year). It was also actively involved in problem-solving meetings and sent the relevant data to the AA on a regular basis.

The CA was rated 3.7 for its implementation efficiency, which is also the same as the average grade of all programme structures.

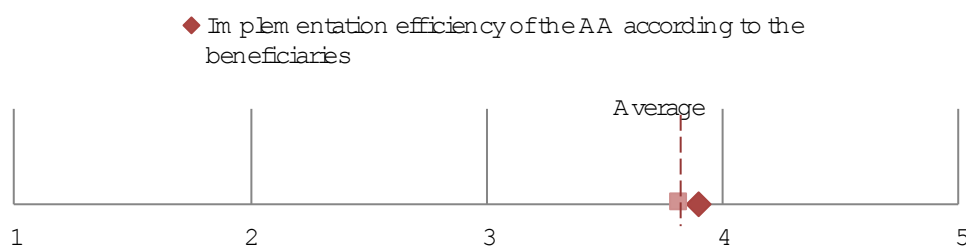


Recommendation: *The CA should allow other programme structures access to data on certified expenditures of the applications for payment.*

7.7 Audit Authority

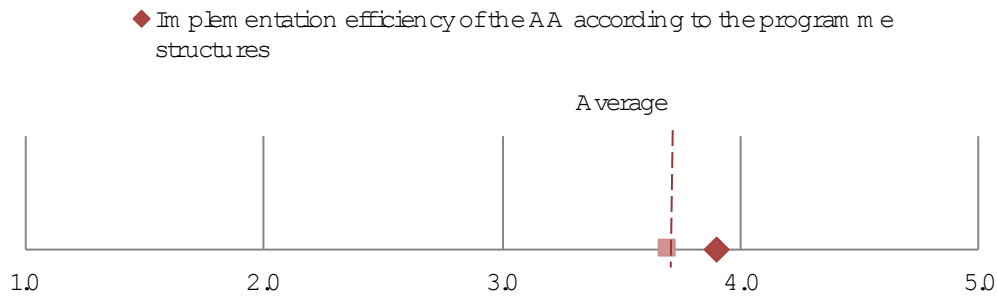
Slovenia and Croatia agreed that the Audit Authority (AA) would be the Budget Supervisory Office of the Ministry of Finance in Slovenia, having the overall responsibility of verifying the effective functioning of the management and control system. The AA is a body that functions independently from the MA and the CA. In accordance with Article 105 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 and with Article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, the AA is mainly responsible to ensure that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme, and that the audit work is performed according to internationally accepted auditing standards.

Only 45 beneficiaries stated that they interacted with the AA, which is less than half of the beneficiaries we interviewed. They graded the AA's implementation efficiency with an average of 3.9, which is just above the average of all programme structures.



Other programme structures rated the AA's level of cooperation with other structures with a grade of 3.6, which is below the average (3.9).

The AA was rated 3.9 for its implementation efficiency, which is above the average grade of all programme structures. The programme structures assessed that the AA regularly and directly informed them about the results of the audits and was happy to exchange opinions and good practices. However, some of the programme structures complained about the fact that the AA was unable to take into consideration the CU's comments while processing operation reviews. Moreover, they stated that the exchange of information was not as good as it was with other programme structures, as the AA was not involved enough in the implementation of the programme and was not familiar enough with its specifics.



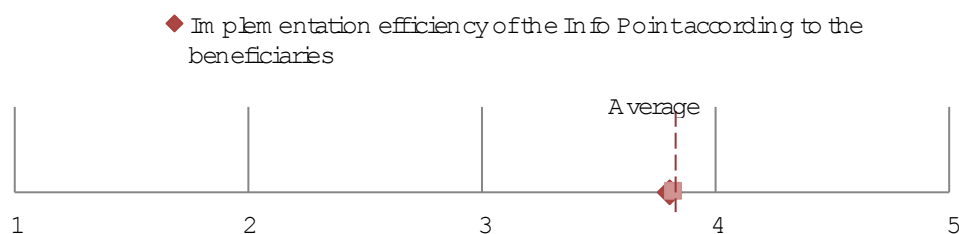
***Recommendations:** The AA should improve its exchange of information with other programme structures. Moreover, the AA should be involved more in the implementation of the programme and get more familiar with its specifics. Finally, the AA should take into consideration the CU's comments when processing operation reviews.*

7.8 Info Point

The Info Point in Croatia operated within the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds. Its main tasks included:

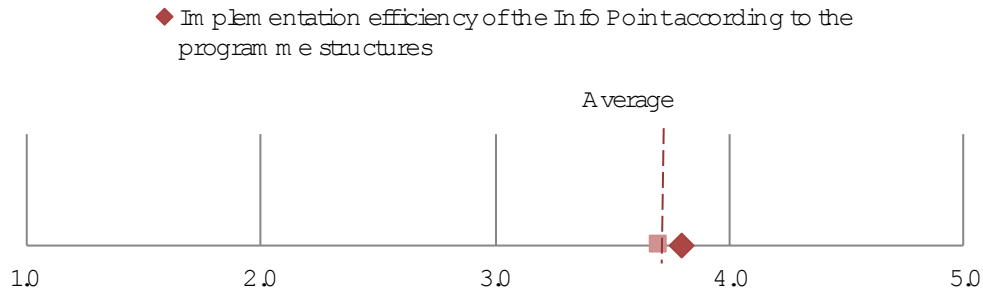
- acting as a first contact point for potential beneficiaries to provide information and advice to project beneficiaries on the Croatian territory;
- supporting the MA in the implementation of communication activities (including promotional events, info days, Communication Plan) on the Croatian territory;
- assisting (potential) beneficiaries in project development and implementation;
- assisting the JTS in project selection and evaluation process according to the programme procedures;
- assisting the JTS in the preparation of contracts with lead beneficiaries.

56 of the interviewed beneficiaries had contact with the Info Point. They rated its implementation efficiency with an average grade of 3.8, which is the same as the average of all programme structures.



The beneficiaries said that their direct contact with the Info Point had a positive impact on the implementation of their projects, as they gave it a grade of 3.3, which is a bit below the average (3.5).

Only 4 programme structures rated the Info Point's level of cooperation with other structures, but gave it a grade of 4.0, which is above the average (3.9).



The Info Point was rated 3.8 for its implementation efficiency, which is above the average (3.7). Other programme structures assessed that its performance could be better if it had more staff and if the Info Point also operated through 2015 and 2016, as many beneficiaries complained they could not contact them for more information on the programme. Support was, nevertheless, guaranteed by the Croatian NA throughout the entire programme period.

Recommendation: The Info Point should be open and available for the entire duration of the programme in order to support the beneficiaries.

8. MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Operational Programme Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was designed on the basis of bilateral cooperation between Croatia and Slovenia. The cooperation area, which shares great resemblance in socio-economic structure and in structural problems, included seven statistical regions in Slovenia (Pomurska, Podravska, Savinjska, Spodnjeposavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Notranjsko-kraška and Obalno-kraška), seven Croatian counties (Međimurje, Varaždin, Krapina-Zagorje, Zagreb, Karlovac, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istra) and the adjacent NUTS III Osrednjeslovenska region in Slovenia and the City of Zagreb in Croatia.

Relevance of the programme

The adoption of the OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 coincided with the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2007, which hit the programme area very severely, revealing major macroeconomic weaknesses in both countries. The OP Slovenia-Croatia 2007–2013 was adopted still in an atmosphere of great optimism related to renewed economic growth in both countries and very favourable promises of prosperity. The future is now perceived more pessimistically and in certain aspects has a lower starting point than in 2007. New socio-economic circumstances have arisen, in which cohesion programmes are related more than before to macroeconomic stabilisation and restructuring in both countries.

The relevance of Priority 1: Economic and Social Development has notably increased in the light of the deteriorated economic and especially social conditions. The same holds true for its operational measures, Tourism and Rural Development, Development of Entrepreneurship, and Social Integration. In this respect, social integration and inclusive growth further gain in importance in the new development paradigm of smart growth (2014–2020), with inclusive growth as one of its pillars. The strategic emphasis on inclusive growth with equal opportunities (the goals and specific provisions as set in Article 86 of Regulation (EC) No 718/2007 which established the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and Article 8 of the Regulation (EC) No 1299/2013 which established European Territorial Cooperation), especially if it is labour intensive, is reasonably expected to have a particularly positive impact on reversing negative demographic trends in the programme area.

Priority 2: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources has also gained in importance, since there are rather reliable indications that the overall spending for raising awareness about the environment and for preservation of natural and cultural resources in the programme area is diminishing on average. The implemented projects have thus importantly contributed to softening the grip of the financial constraints on progress in these two operational fields.

Recommendation: Since the strategic objectives (except for Development of Entrepreneurship) remain similar in the next programme period,

capitalisation of project results and the ability of projects to create synergies should become a more important evaluation measure.

Programme and project indicators

On the level of Priority 1, all but two programme indicators reached the targets, and on the level of Priority 2, 9 out of 10 indicators reached their targets. One programme indicator (“number of joint management of water sources”), was achieved in the exact value as estimated in the OP, and altogether 29 out of 37 indicators were achieved or exceeded (at an average of 936%), while only 8 indicators were not achieved (their average realisation was 55%). The general realisation of all indicators was almost 80%, which may be attributed to the fact that only 95 projects were approved, while 165 were envisaged (58%).

The 95 projects set 1,426 output and 654 result indicators, and 98.94% of the output and 98.52% of the result indicators were achieved. The target values of 67 (4.69%) output and 135 (20.64%) result indicators were exceeded. These numbers need to be presented with reservation, because we concluded from the surveys that all the indicators were not set properly. We assume that this is a result of poor knowledge of beneficiaries about the appropriate methodology of setting indicators.

Recommendations: As follows from the interviews with beneficiaries, the MA/JTS should put a greater emphasis in future educational events on the methodology of setting project-specific output and result indicators. In the next programme period, better monitoring of projects' achievements should be ensured, as this would provide a much needed overview of the achievements and would make the programme itself much more result-orientated.

Programme communication activities

The Communication Plan for the programme addressed the following three target groups: the general public from the programme area, potential applicants, and beneficiaries and lead partners.

Beneficiaries stated that the most effective communication tools were the programme website, followed by workshops and seminars, and the kick-off event. Less than half of them believe that media advertisement of the programme was an effective communication tool. Even though a majority of beneficiaries consider the website effective, many of them highlighted possible improvements, such as regular updates with news related to the activities in the approved projects, and a more user-friendly design. As regards the workshops, the beneficiaries noted

that they were mostly helpful, but suggested that there could be more of them. Some of the beneficiaries said that the workshops were not efficient, as they did not provide detailed answers to practical problems of the beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries had limited knowledge of other projects approved within the OP SI-HR. The fact that lead partners in projects knew little about other projects, even though some were in similar fields of activity, is a result of insufficient promotional activities within the programme. Consequently, the ability to create synergies on the programme level was weak. By the end of 2016, an interactive map will be integrated in the programme website with the summaries and partner lists of all approved projects, and the map will also be regularly updated with approved projects of the new programme period.

Recommendations: There are many possibilities for improving the efficiency of communication measures and tools in the next programme period, such as: leasing common media space in local and regional media to promote the activities within the approved projects; more regular updates on the website with news related to the activities within the approved projects, posting direct links to project websites on the programme website and integration of social media in the promotional activities of the programme (e.g. Facebook). They should be used as a tool for promoting the approved projects and their activities in the general public, as well as for networking among beneficiaries.

Programme structures

Fluctuation of employees, lack of staff and reorganisation of some of the authorities had a significant negative effect on the implementation of the programme and the consequences affected especially the beneficiaries. Almost all beneficiaries were satisfied with the staff in the programme structures with which they had contact (mainly national controllers and contract managers), but were not pleased with the constant changes of staff. Some beneficiaries also said that they sometimes did not have the feeling the structures were cooperative as they did not provide possible solutions for project-specific problems.

Recommendations: In case of staff fluctuation at programme structures or their restructuring, more effort should be made to ensure a smoother transition of work. The MA should, together with national authorities, ensure a smoother and uninterrupted use of funds for Technical Assistance. National rules limiting employment in the public sector should not affect programme implementation. Furthermore, more effort on the national level should be made to clarify the rules on state aid. Pre-financing for NGOs should be provided so this target group will also be involved in future projects and so their involvement in the programme will not jeopardise their existence. Due to the extensive administrative work that has to be done after the projects are concluded (the final

report, revisions, programme evaluations), a flat-rate reimbursement of labour costs should be provided for partners (at least lead partners) to avoid serious issues related to lack of administrative staff once the project is concluded and project coordinators are no longer employed.

As for beneficiaries, we have prepared the following list of 10 golden rules as recommendations on how to prepare and submit a good project proposal, based on the experience of beneficiaries, evaluators, the MA and the JTS:

- 1. Applicants should read carefully and understand the cooperation programme and the documentation of the relevant call for applications.*
- 2. The project should contribute to solving a specific problem of the programme area and not a problem of the EU or the world.*
- 3. Applicants should consult with the Joint Technical Secretariat and/or the National Authorities.*
- 4. Applicants should participate in workshops and other events organised within the programme.*
- 5. Applicants should form strong and appropriate partnerships with clearly defined roles and expectations.*
- 6. Applicants should avoid duplicating project outputs and results from previously implemented projects. A detail background search of past projects is a must. Instead of duplicating results, projects should capitalise on the achievements of previous projects and create synergies.*
- 7. Applicants must clearly distinguish between objectives, outputs, results and impacts.*
- 8. Applicants must make sure that all the planned activities are relevant for achieving the planned project results.*
- 9. The budget of the proposed project should be realistic and adequate to achieve the set indicators.*
- 10. The sustainable effects of projects must be clearly defined.*

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10. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Statistical appendix

Table 1: Gross value-added growth by activity and gross domestic product, constant, previous year's prices, growth rates, by country, in %

	CROATIA	SLOVENIA	SLOVENIA + CROATIA
	2013/2007	2013/2007	2013/2007
A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing	-24.3	-6.5	-19.8
E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	-1.9	-0.1	-1.2
I: Accommodation and food service activities	2.8	8.6	4.4
Gross domestic product	-13.2	5.5	-5.5

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Cro); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slo); own calculations

Table 2: GDP structure, by country, in %

	CROATIA			SLOVENIA		
	2007	2013	2013 / 2007	2007	2013	2013 / 2007
A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4.1	3.5	-0.6	2.0	1.7	-0.2
E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1.0	1.2	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.0
I: Accommodation and food service activities	3.5	4.1	0.6	1.9	2.0	0.1

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Cro); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slo); own calculations

Table 3: GDP per capita, by country, in EUR, and growth in %

	2007	2013	2013/2007, in %
Croatia	10,187	10,228	0.4
Slovenia	17,412	17,435	0.1

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Cro); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slo); own calculations

Table 4: Expenditure for environmental protection and protection of biodiversity and landscapes

	CROATIA, mio EUR			SLOVENIA, mio EUR			SLOVENIA + CROATIA, mio EUR		
	2008	2013	2013/2007 , % change	2008	2013	2013/2007 , % change	2008	2013	2013/2007 , % change
EXPENDITURE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION									
Investment	395	276	-30.1	112	151	34.3	508	427	-15.8
Current expenditures	230	209	-9.3	73	62	-14.9	303	271	-10.6
Total	626	485	-22.4	185	213	15.1	811	698	-13.9
EXPENDITURE FOR PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPES									
Investment	6	3	-44.9	1	0	-68.5	7	4	-49.8

Current expenditures	6	2	-59.3	16	22	38.6	21	24	13.0
Total	11	5	-52.0	17	22	29.2	28	27	-2.9

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Cro); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slo); own calculations

Table 5: Outward migration of young people (0–29), 2007 and 2013, by age of migrants, number and growth in %

	CROATIA	SLOVENIA	SLOVENIA + CROATIA
Outward migration in 2007	2751	6543	9294
Outward migration in 2013	10767	4849	15616
Change 2013/2007, in %	291	-26	68

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Croatia); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slovenia); own calculations

Table 6: Outward migration, 2007 and 2013, by region/county, all age groups, number and change in %

CROATIA				SLOVENIA			
Counties	2007	2013	2013/2007 in %	Regions	2007	2013	2013/2007 in %
Grad Zagreb	1134	5046	345	Pomurje	284	548	93
County of Zagreb	328	2276	594	Podravje	552	1569	184
County of Krapina-Zagorje	54	409	657	Savinjska	308	695	126
County of Varaždin	101	800	692	Zasavska	64	154	141
County of Međimurje	85	342	302	SoutEast Slovenia	111	349	214
County of Karlovac	458	901	97	Central	804	2302	186
County of Primorje-Gorski kotar	340	2549	650	Primorje-Kras	94	132	40
County of Istria	237	1280	440	Obala-Kras	188	454	141
OP SI-HR counties, Cro	2737	13603	397	OP SI-HR regions, Slo	2405	6203	158
Croatia	9002	29651	229	Slovenia	3178	7789	145

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Croatia); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slovenia); own calculations

Table 7: Number of new enterprises established and persons employed, 2010 and 2014, number and change in %

CROATIA	2010	2014	2014/2010, in %
Number of enterprises established	17287	13724	-20.6
Number of persons employed	42506	28609	-32.7
SLOVENIA			
Number of enterprises established	12761	21405	67.7
Number of persons employed	6832	7500	9.8
SLOVENIA + CROATIA			
Number of enterprises established	30048	35129	16.9
Number of persons employed	49338	36109	-26.8

Source: ESA 2010; <http://www.dzs.hr/> (Croatia); <http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/dialog/statfile2.asp> (Slovenia); own calculations

ANNEX 2: Bilingual questionnaire for lead partners

OSNOVNI PODATKI

AKRONIM projekta:

Kontaktna oseba:

Kontaktna telefonska številka

Naslov elektronske pošte:

OSNOVNI PODACI

AKRONIM projekta:

Kontakt osoba:

Broj telefona za kontakt:

Elektronska pošta:

1. UČINKOVITOST / UČINKOVITOST

1.1 Bi lahko dosegli enak projektni učinek z manj sredstvi? (*možen en odgovor*)

- Da, v celoti
- Da, vendar z manjšimi učinki
- Da, z večjimi učinki
- Ne

Bi li postigli enak projektni rezultat/učinek s manje sredstava? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da, u potpunosti*
- *Da, ali s manjim učinkom*
- *Da, s većim učinkom*
- *Ne*

1.2 Ali menite, da bi bili lahko rezultati projekta doseženi tudi s pomočjo drugih finančnih spodbud (na primer: regionalni programi, transnacionalni programi, programi upravljani neposredno s strani EU in podobno)? (*možen en odgovor*)

- Da, v celoti
- Da, vendar z manjšimi učinki
- Da, z večjimi učinki
- Ne

Mislite li da bi se rezultati projekta mogli postići kroz druge financijske poticaje (npr. regionalne programe, transnacionalne programe, programe upravljane direktno od strane EU, itd.)? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da, u potpunosti*
- *Da, ali s manjim učinkom*

- *Da, s večim učinkom*
- *Ne*

1.3 Ali je bila višina sofinanciranja zadostna za doseg predvidenih koristi za ciljne skupine projekta (oz. doseg končnih rezultatov)? *(možen en odgovor)*

- *Da, v celoti*
- *Da, vendar v manjši meri kot načrtovano*
- *Ne*

Je li visina sufinanciranja bila dovoljna za postizanje očekivane koristi za ciljne skupine projekta (tj. postizanju krajnjih rezultata)? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da, u potpunosti*
- *Da, ali u manjoj mjeri nego što je planirano*
- *ne*

1.4 V kolikor vaš projekt ne bi prejel sofinanciranja se le-ta: *(možen en odgovor)*

- *ne bi izvedel.*
- *bi se izvedel, vendar v manjši meri.*
- *se bi izvedel v enaki meri kot sicer.*

Ukoliko za Vaš projekt ne bi bilo omogućeno sufinanciranje tada: (jedan odgovor)

- *ne bi se provodio.*
- *provodio bi se, ali u manjoj mjeri.*
- *provodio bi se u jednakoj mjeri kao i obično/inače.*

1.5 Ali se projekt izvaja tudi po končanem obdobju sofinanciranja? *(možen en odgovor)*

- *da*
- *ne*
 - *Če ne, kaj bi potrebovali za nadaljevanje njegovega izvajanja? (navedite)*
- *ne vem*

Provodi li se projekt i nakon konačnog sufinanciranja? (jedan odgovor)

- *da*
- *ne*
 - *Ako ne, što bi bilo potrebno za nastavak njegove provedbe? (navedite)*
- *ne znam*

2. ČEZMEJNI VPLIV IN PARTNERSTVO / PREKOGRANIČNI UTJECAJI I PARTNERSTVO

2.1 Ali ste projektne partnerje poznali že pred pričetkom projekta? *(možen en odgovor)*

- *Da, vse*
- *Da, nekatere*
- *Ne, nikogar*

Jeste li poznavali projektne partnere prije početka projekta? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da, sve*
- *Da, neke*
- *Ne, nikoga*

2.2 Če da, na kakšen način ste jih poznali? *(možnih več odgovorov)*

- Skupaj smo sodelovali v trilateralnem programu Slovenija - Madžarska- Hrvaška 2004-2006
- Skupaj smo sodelovali v drugih programih teritorialnega sodelovanja
 - Prosimo navedite program:
- Skupaj smo sodelovali v drugih programih sofinancirani s strani evropskih sredstev (navedite)
- Drugo (navedite)

Ako da, na koji način ste ih poznavali? (moguće više odgovora)

- *Zajedno smo sudjelovali u trilateralnom Programu Slovenija-Madžarska-Hrvatska 2004-2006*
- *Zajedno smo sudjelovali u drugim programima teritorijalne suradnje - Molimo navedite program:*
- *Zajedno smo sudjelovali u drugim programima sufinanciranim od strane evropskih sredstava (navedite)*
- *Ostalo (navedite)*

2.3 Pri projektu gre za nadaljevanje že končanega projekta v okviru drugih programov? *(možen en odgovor)*

- Ne
- Da, je nadaljevanje končanega projekta v okviru Programa Slovenija - Madžarska- Hrvaška 2004-2006
- Da, je nadaljevanje projekta v obstoječem programu (OP SI-HR 2007-2013)
- Da, je nadaljevanje končanega projekta v okviru drugega programa (navedite katerega)

Projekt je nastavak projekata koji su već završeni u okviru drugih programa? (jedan odgovor)

- *Ne*
- *Da, nastavak je završenog projekta u okviru Programa Slovenija-Madžarska-Hrvatska 2004-2006*
- *Da, nastavak je projekta u okviru postojećeg Programa (OP SI-HR 2007-2013)*
- *Da, nastavak je završenog projekta u okviru drugog programa (navedite kojega)*

2.4 Ali ste tekom izvajanja projekta vzpostavili stike ter izmenjali izkušnje ter ideje s partnerji v drugih projektih v okviru Programa SI-HR 2007-2013? *(možen en odgovor)*

- Da
- Ne

Jeste li tijekom provedbe projekta uspostavili kontakte i razmjenu iskustava i ideja s partnerima na drugim projektima u okviru programa SI-HR 2007-2013? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da*
- *Ne*

2.5 Ali ste nadaljevali sodelovanje z obstoječimi partnerji tudi po zaključku projekta? *(možen en odgovor)*

- Da
- Ne

Jeste li nastavili suradnju s postojećim partnerima nakon završetka projekta? (jedan odgovor)?

- *Da*

- *Ne*

2.6 Če da, na kakšen način? (*možnih več odgovorov*)

- Z nadaljevanjem istega projekta izven okvirov financiranja s strani ESRR.
- V sklopu drugih projektov v okviru Programa Slovenija-Hrvaška 2014-2020.
- V sklopu drugih projektov v okviru drugih programov evropskega teritorialnega sodelovanja 2014-2020.
- V sklopu drugih projektov, sofinanciranih s strani drugih programov EU
- Drugo (navedite): _____

Ako da, na koji način? (moguće više odgovora)

- *U nastavku istog projekta izvan okvira financiranja od strane EFRR-a.*
- *Na drugim projektima u okviru Programa Slovenija-Hrvatska 2014-2020.*
- *Na drugim projektima u drugim Programima europske teritorijalne (prekogranične) suradnje 2014-2020.*
- *U okviru drugih projekata sufinanciranih od strane drugih programa EU*
- *Drugo (navedite): _____*

2.7 Kaj bi izpostavili kot največji čezmejni učinek vašega projekta? (*možen en odgovor*)

- Okrepitev gospodarske rasti in družbenega razvoja na čezmejnem območju, z rastočim številom MSP, ki zagotavljajo dodatna delovna mesta in zmanjšujejo izgubo bega možganov iz podeželskih območij v mesta
- Povečana ozaveščenost javnosti o naravnih in kulturnih virih v čezmejni regiji
- Čistejše okolje zaradi novih čistilnih naprav za čiščenje odpadne vode in zmanjšano onesnaženje zraka
- Sanirani onesnaženi predeli
- Izboljšano upravljanje zavarovanih območij

Što biste istaknuli kao najveći prekogranični utjecaj Vašeg projekta? (jedan odgovor)

- *Jačanje gospodarskog rasta i društvenog razvoja u pograničnom području, uz sve veći broj malih i srednjih poduzeća koja će osigurati dodatni broj radnih mjesta i smanjiti odljev obrazovane radne snage u gradove*
- *Povećana javna svijest o prirodnim bogatstvima u prekograničnoj regiji;*
- *Čišći okoliš zbog novih postrojenja za obradu otpadnih voda i smanjeno onečišćenje zraka;*
- *Rehabilitirane zagađene lokacije;*
- *Poboljšano upravljanje zaštićenim područjima.*

3. DODANA VREDNOST / DODANA VRIJEDNOST

3.1 Kakšna je po vašem mnenju dodana vrednost čezmejnega sodelovanja z drugimi partnerji na naslednjih področjih? (*vsako točko ovrednotite s številko od 1 = majhna do 5 = velika*)

Družbeni kapital

- Nastanek novih projektov
- Nastanek novih partnerstev in mrež
- Izmenjava izkušenj
- Izboljšanje kompetenc zahvaljujoč izmenjavi znanj, oz. t.i. know how-a
- Izboljšanje sposobnosti upravljanja čezmejnih projektov
- Ustvarjanje novih delovnih mest

- Povećan interes za čezmejno sodelovanje in vpeljavo dobrih praks iz drugih držav
- Krepitev zavesti o možnosti uporabe sredstev, namenjenih za evropsko teritorialno sodelovanje
- S skupnim delom krepitev zavesti o kulturnih, družbenih in gospodarskih razlikah med partnerji različnih držav
- Drugo (navedite)

Delo, upravljanje procesov

- Uvajanje inovativnih procesov in produktov
- Izboljšanje organizacijskih sposobnosti
- Boljše poznavanje partnerjev
- Dostop do novih tehnologij/rešitev/storitev
- Reševanje skupnih problemov
- Izboljšanje sposobnosti vzpostavitve stikov s partnerji v drugih državah za razvoj skupnih projektov
- Izboljšano razumevanje rezultatov, vloge in načel evropske kohezijske politike
- Drugo (navedite)

Prepoznavnost

- Promocija območja
- Krepitev podobe partnerjev, vključenih v projekt
- Drugo (navedite)

Kakva je po Vašem mišljenju dodana vrednost prekogranične suradnje s drugim partnerima u sljedećim područjima? (Svaka stavka ocjenjuje se prema broju od 1 = niska do 5 = visoka)

Društveni kapital

- *stvaranje novih projekata*
- *stvaranje novih partnerstava i mreža*
- *Razmjena iskustava*
- *Poboljšanje kompetencija zahvaljujući razmjeni znanja, ili. tzv. know-how-a*
- *Poboljšanje upravljanja prekograničnim projektima*
- *Stvaranje novih radnih mjesta*
- *Povećan interes za prekograničnu suradnju i uvođenje dobre prakse iz drugih zemalja*
- *Jačanje svijesti o mogućnostima korištenja sredstava namijenjenih za europsku teritorijalnu suradnju*
- *Zajednički rad kako bi se podigla svijest o kulturnim, društvenim i ekonomskim razlikama između partnera iz različitih zemalja*
- *Ostalo (navedite)*

Posao, proces upravljanja

- *Uvedenje inovativnih procesa i proizvoda*
- *Poboljšanje organizacijske sposobnosti*
- *Bolje poznavanje partnera*
- *Pristup novim tehnologijama / rješenjima / uslugama*
- *Rješavanje zajedničkih problema*
- *Poboljšanje sposobnosti za uspostavu kontakta sa partnerima u drugim zemljama za razvoj zajedničkih projekata*
- *Bolje razumijevanje rezultata, uloga i načela europske kohezijske politike*
- *Ostalo (navedite)*

Vidljivost

- *Promocija teritorija/područja*
- *Jačanje imidža partnera uključenih u projekt*
- *Ostalo (navedite)*

4. TRAJNOST – trajnost projektova / ODRŽIVOST – održivost projekta

4.1 Kaj bi izpostavili kot najpomembnejši rezultat vašega projekta in kje se odraža?

Što biste istaknuli kao najvažniji rezultat projekta i gdje se to odražava? (najviše 300 znakova)

4.2 Na katerem nivoju se odražavaju doseženi rezultati? *(možnih već odgovorov)*

- Lokalni nivo
- Regionalni nivo
- Programsko območje
- Državni nivo
- Čezmejni nivo

Na kojoj razini se odražavaju postignuti rezultati? (moguće više odgovora)

- *Lokalna razina*
- *Regionalna razina*
- *Programsko područje*
- *Nacionalna razina*
- *Prekogranična razina (područje)*

4.3 Ali so učinki in pridobljeni rezultati projekta v uporabi? *(možen en odgovor)*

- Da
- Ne
 - Zakaj ne?

Jesu li učinci i rezultati dobiveni u projektu u upotrebi? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da*
- *Ne*

- *Ako ne, zašto? (najviše 300 znakova)*

4.4 Kdo ima najveće koristi od rezultata vašeg projekta in kakšne?

(ne; da, manjša korist; nevtrarno; da, kot pričakovano; da, višja od pričakovane)

- Prebivalstvo/splošna javnost
- MSP - ji
- Strokovne institucije
- Politika
- Javna uprava
- Druge

Tko ima najviše koristi od rezultata Vašeg projekta i kakve? (ne; da; manja korist; nevtrarno; da, kao što se očekivalo; da, više od očekivanog)

- *Populacija/javnost*
- *MSP - ovi*
- *Stručne institucije*
- *Politika*
- *Javna uprava*
- *Ostali*

4.5 V primeru ne-doseganja ali delnega doseganja rezultatov navedite morebitne težave, ki so otežile njihovo doseg: *(možnih več odgovorov)*

- težave/ovire zaradi neodzivnosti ciljne/ciljnih skupin
- težave/ovire zaradi kompleksnosti poročanja
- težave/ovire zaradi slabe odzivnosti sodelovanja med partnerji
- drugo

U slučaju neostvarenja ili djelomičnog ostvarenje rezultata navedite probleme koji su otežali njihovo ostvarenje: (više odgovora)

- *Problemi / prepreke zbog nedovoljnog odaziva ciljne / ciljnih skupina*
- *Problemi / prepreke zbog složenosti izvještavanja*
- *Problemi / prepreke zbog slabe suradnje između partnera*
- *Ostalo*

4.6 Menite, da je projekt generiral dodatne rezultate, ki jih niste predvideli na začetku? *(možen en odgovor)*

- Da
- Ne

Če da, ali se nanašajo na: *(možnih več odgovorov)*

- Vzpostavljene stike tekom projektnega sodelovanja
- Uporabo novih znanj/produktov/storitev
- Spremembo delovnih procesov
- Dostopom do novih tehnologij/rešitev/storitev
- Izboljšanje sodelovanja
- Izboljšanje prepoznavnosti
- Nova delovna mesta
- Izboljšanje organizacijske sposobnosti
- Drugo, navedite

Mislite li da je projekt generira dodatne rezultate koji nisu bili predviđeni na početku? (jedan odgovor)

- *Da*
- *Ne*

Ako da, odnose li se oni na: (više odgovora)

- *Kontakte tijekom suradnje na projektu*
- *Primjenu novih znanja / proizvoda / usluga*
- *Promjenu radnih procesa*
- *Pristup novim tehnologijama / rješenjima / uslugama*
- *Poboljšanje suradnje*
- *Poboljšanje vidljivosti*
- *Nova radna mjesta*
- *Poboljšanje organizacijskih sposobnosti*
- *Drugo (navedite)*

5. DRUGO / DRUGO

5.1 Ob spremenjenih zunanjih pogojih (gospodarska in finančna kriza, varčevalni ukrepi) opredelite naslednje trditve (*ne, le malo, srednje, kar veliko, zelo veliko*):

- Cilji projekta so še vedno primerni za rešitev strateških ciljev in problemov, ki jih zasleduje program (Podpirati in spodbujati trajnostni razvoj celotnega čezmejnega območja med Slovenijo in Hrvaško).
- Širši družbeni vpliv projekta (trajnost) je bil kljub temu dosežen.
- Cilji učinkovitosti so doseženi brez dodatnih stroškov in bremen.
- Količina in kakovost prvotno predvidenih vložkov je bila ustrezna.

Od spomenutih vanjskih uvjeta (ekonomska i financijska kriza, mjere štednje) navesti sljedeće argumente/naznake (*ne, malo, srednje, puno, jako puno*):

- Ciljevi projekta su još uvijek relevantni za rješavanje strateških ciljeva i problema koje ostvaruje program (podupirati i promicati održivi razvoj cijelog prekograničnog područja između Slovenije i Hrvatske).
- Postignut je širi društveni utjecaj projekta (održivost).
- Ciljevi učinkovitosti dostižni su bez dodatnih troškova i opterećenja.
- Količina i kvaliteta prvotno planiranih ulaganja bila je odgovarajuća.

5.2 Kaj so po vašem mnenju in na podlagi vaših izkušenj največje prednosti Programa Slovenija-Hrvaška 2007-2013?

Koje su po Vašem mišljenju, na temelju Vašeg iskustva, najveće prednosti Programa Slovenija-Hrvatska 2007-2013?

5.3 Kaj so po vašem mnenju in na podlagi vaših izkušenj največje slabosti Programa Slovenija-Hrvaška 2007-2013?

Koje su po Vašem mišljenju, na temelju Vašeg iskustva, najveće slabosti Programa Slovenija-Hrvatska 2007-2013?

ANNEX 3: Interview form for beneficiaries*

**listed form is in English language but the interviews were conducted in national languages of beneficiaries.*

DATE:	
ACRONYM OF THE PROJECT:	
NAME AND SURNAME OF THE PERSON:	
FUNCTION WITHIN THE PROJECT:	
NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:	



1.1 Which indicators have you achieved?

Program indicators

--	--

Project specific indicators

Name of indicator	Unit	Target value	Achieved value
<i>Output indicators</i>			
<i>Result indicators</i>			

1.2 Horizontal EU politics

*** Equal opportunities:**

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
--------------------------------------	--------------------------

*** Information society:**

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

*** Environment:**

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

*** Sustainable development:**

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

*** Human resources development:**

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

1.2 Can you state that your project achieved tangible outputs and results?

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
---------------------------	--------------------------

1.3 If yes, which? If not, why?

1.4 In the case of non achievement or partial achievement of results, state possible issues that hindered their achievement.

1.5 If the results were not achieved yet, when do you asses that they will be?

1.6 Please describe the effect of the project on the target groups which your project addressed:

1.7 Will or has project generated additional results that were not predicted in the evaluation form. If yes which?

BUDGET

2.1 Were there any financial changes of the primary financial plan during the implementation of the project?

Yes No

2.2 Please identify courses of changes between required/allocated fund and actual use of funds.

2.3 How many requests for change of financial plan have you submitted?

2.4 Financial realization by category

Category	% in the project	Realization
1. Staff costs		
2. External costs		
3. Investments		
4. Costs of administration		

2.5 In your opinion, did the project have good value for money?

2.6 Was the project implemented in accordance with the timeline and funds, predicted in

Yes No

If not, why?

2.7 Were there any delays in the implementation of the project?

Yes No

If yes, why?

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2.8 Did you face any problems during the project?

Yes No

If yes, in which phase?

Writing a project proposal
 Searching of partners
 Implementation - public tenders (PRAG)
 Implementation - other
 Reporting
 Other

If yes, what was the problem and how did you solve it?

Did you develop project idea and write application form on your own (part A and part B)?

2.9 Did you need an external help?

Yes No

If yes, in which phase?

Writing a project proposal
 Searching of partners
 Implementation – public tenders (PRAG)
 Implementation – other
 Reporting
 Other

Any additional comments:

2.10 Who provided you external help?

Managing authority
 Croatian National Authority
 Slovenian National Authority
 Certifying authority
 Joint Technical Secretariat
 Croatian Info POINT
 External experts
 Other

2.11 In case you hired external expert, were you satisfied with his services and level of

2.12 Have you experienced any technical problems or other difficulties with the application

2.13 Do you think that your project reflects the needs of the area, where activities were

2.14 If you know other projects, do you think that they reflect the needs of the area and are

PARTNERSHIP

2.15 Composition of partnership

Eligible beneficiaries	Beneficiaries in the project
Regional and local public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public bodies and public equivalent bodies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-governmental organisations (associations, foundations, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chambers of commerce, agriculture, crafts and	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal entities established by private law	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.16 Assess the quality of cooperation among partners [1=the worst, 5=the best]

1 2 3 4 5

If bad – what was the problem and why?

2.17 Do you plan to continue cooperation with partners also in the future? If yes, in which

ADDED VALUE

2.18 What is the added value of your project? (ex. benefits for the society)

SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS AND ITS OUTPUT

2.19 Sustainable output of the project – highlight the outputs/results which will continue

2.20 On which level (local/regional/cross-border) are outputs of your project reflected?

2.21 How are you ensuring functioning and updating of website of the project, after the end

2.22 In case your project included investments, how do you ensure their sustainability?

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

3.1. Do you think that the program communication tools were effective? Evaluate only activities/events you attended.

TOOL	EFFECTIVENESS	
Programme website	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Advertising in mass media	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
"Kick-off" event	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Workshop, thematic seminars	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Mailing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Yearly events	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Promotional products	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Any additional comments:

3.2 Which communication channels or tools should, by your opinion be also included in communication activities of the programme?

3.3 What do you think about including social media in communication activities of the programme? How?

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EU

3.4 Which promotional measures on the programme level have contributed to the better promotion of the Programme SI-HR 2007-2013 and the EU?

<input type="checkbox"/> Visual image
<input type="checkbox"/> Programme website
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertising in mass media
<input type="checkbox"/> Events (presentations, workshops, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional products

3.5 Has participation in this programme expanded your knowledge about functioning of the EU?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

3.6 Have you read OP SI-HR 2007-2013?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, before the project submission
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, after the project submission
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, never

3.7 Do you know any other programme, financed by the EU?

4.1 Were the support tools for projects implementation effective?

TOOL	WERE THEX EFFECTIVE?
Reporting system (ISARR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Programme web page	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Programme manuals (documents and instructions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Any additional comments:

4.2 How do you asses administrative procedures connected to the rules of Community and national rules for project implementation?**4.3 Which administrative procedures could be shortened? How?****4.4 Asses the level of implementation efficiency of each programme structure (1=ineffective, 5=very effective). Asses only the structure you have been in contact with.**

STRUCTURE	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION EFFICIENCY
Managing authority	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Joint Technical Secretariat	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Slovenian first level control (FLC-SI)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Croatian first level control (FLC-HR)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Croatian Info POINT (MRRFEU)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Slovenian National Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Croatian National Authority (MRRFEU)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Certifying authority	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Audit Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

Any additional comments:

4.5 Based to your experience, which factors had the most influence on successful implementation of your project?

FACTOR	LEVEL OF INFLUENCE				
JTS support	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
MA support	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Programme manuals (documents and instructions)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Programme web page	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Workshop for beneficiaries	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Meetings with project partners for conflict solving	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Reporting method	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Slovenian first level control (FLC-SI)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Croatian first level control (FLC-HR)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Indirect contact with info point	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
On time payouts from the CA	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Please state "other":

PROJECT SHEET

5.1 Receipt of one photography that reflects the essence of the project (suitable quality).

5.2 Receipt of logo of the project (suitable quality).

5.3 Verification of elements of the project

Name of the project:	
Acronym:	
Lead partner:	
Project partners:	
Website (SL):	
Website (HR):	
Website (ANG):	
Duration of the project	

5.4 Please indicate three key words that describe the essence of your project:

5.5 Please indicate key results and activities, which reflect the essence of the project with quantified values.

GOOD PRACTICE: in-depth conversation regarding the following fields/topics:

* innovation

*cooperation with partners:

* impact of the project (communication with target groups and others; communication activities of the p

* risk management:

* Other comments:

ANNEX 4: List of conducted interviews

Number	Project	Name and Surname	Date
1	EE CULTURE	Ivana Horvat	18.8.2016
2	PHISCULTURE	Maša Hrustek Sobočan	25.8.2016
3	NEW MEDIA CROSS-BORDER	Stjepan Hikec Sandra Magdalšnić	25.8.2016
4	EUPER	Maja Bratko Alen Višnjic	25.8.2016
5	RIDE & BIKE	Tanja Ivek	29.8.2016
6	OHS/OKP- UREĐAJ ZA PROČIŠĆAVANJE FEKALNA STANICA	Anica Kovačić	29.8.2016
7	DMNPG	Snježana Krpes	30.8.2016
8	NAPREDAK	Bojan Matijević Maja Mikšić	31.8.2016
9	BE-RI	Jasmina Milovčić Željko Mavretić Vedrana Kovač Vrana	31.8.2016
10	ONS	Miroslav Pilat	31.8.2016
11	PIJEMO ISTU VODU	Biserka Mavrin- Veinović	2.9.2016
12	DOBRA VODA ZA VSE	Biserka Mavrin- Veinović	2.9.2016
13	SOCIONET	Vlasta Starc Mile Sokolić Zrinka Zivčić Martina Mikaš Tadej Žilić	5.9.2016
14	REVITAS	Ivana Štrkalj Miran Košpenda	5.9.2016
15	REVITAS II	Ivana Štrkalj Miran Košpenda	5.9.2016
16	DIVA	Ivana Štrkalj Miran Košpenda	5.9.2016
17	HISTUR	Ana Allegra Metod Šuligoj Asta Domilijan	6.9.2016
18	HINT LAB	Ana Allegra Metod Šuligoj Asta Domilijan	6.9.2016
19	WELNESS ISTR	Mladen Dodić Igor Jurinčić	6.9.2016

20	MALA BARKA	Danijela Perković	6.9.2016
		Dražen Žganjić	
21	CREATIVE STARTUP	Irena Kregar Šegota	6.9.2016
22	ENTERYOUTH	Tina Ragužin	6.9.2016
23	EDU-PRENEUR	Martina Klopotan	8.9.2016
		Petra Pokec	
24	SPIRIT	Petra Pokec	8.9.2016
		Martina Klopotan	
25	SPRINT	Ivan Plačko	8.9.2016
		Igor Kovačić	
26	IRIS	Luka Dobrović	13.9.2016
		Boan Sušanj	
27	LOKNA	Irena Jurić	13.9.2016
28	SLOHRA GLOBALNET	Doris Sosić	13.9.2016
29	CROSS-BENCH	Vedrana Jurčević	15.8.2016
		Gabi Stroligo Herceg	
		Sandra Janković	
30	STOPCO2	Marko Bačić	15.9.2016
		Milan TIćak	
31	PROBUĐENA KULTURNA BAŠTINA	Velimir Kokot	16.9.2016
32	OD VIJEGLAVKE DO SOKA	Miljenko Gašparac	16.9.2016
		Adrijan Čermelč	
		Teo Hrvoje Oršavić	
		Dalibor Briški	
33	MARIJINA ROMARSKA POT	Tatjana Kotnik	16.9.2016
		Breda Retuznik	
		Andreja Smolej	
34	MALA ŠOLA PODJETNIŠTVA	Danica Košir	19.9.2016
		Ksenije Cerovečki	
		Grozdana Pavlović	
		Irena Hostnik	
		Lidija Sovince	
35	DE-PARK	Miran Krajnc	19.9.2016
		Sonja Golc	
		Gabriela Koj	
		Jernej Golc	
		Vladimir Ivanuša	
		Emil Tkalec	
		Martin Oreški	
		Milivoj Kolonić	
Milica Simonić			

		Steiner	
36	BIOREGIO	Viljenka Godina	19.9.2016
37	POM	Karmen Vaupotič	19.9.2016
38	KUP	Bruno Kostelić	19.9.2016
39	ŽIVO	Bruno Kostelić	19.9.2016
40	PARENZANA II	Davor Dobrila	19.9.2016
41	PARENZANA MAGIC	Davor Dobrila	19.9.2016
42	INKUB	Ozren Catela	20.9.2016
		Marko Perkov	
43	PUT-UP ISTRE	Ingrid Paljar	20.9.2016
		Katinka Janjanin	
44	APRO	Edmondo Šuran	20.9.2016
		Gordan Šubara	
45	OSIPPPIT	Ninoslav Luk	21.9.2016
		Milan Oplanić	
		Sanja Radeka	
46	MALVASIA TOURISTRA	Ninoslav Luk	21.9.2016
		Sanja Radeka	
47	RURAL DESIGN	Moira Drandić	21.9.2016
		Ezio Pinzan	
48	SPOZNAJMO UŽIVAJMO	IN Vesna Čuček	22.9.2016
49	48 UR	Brinja Hrvatić	22.9.2016
50	ŠKOCJAN-RISNJAK	Borut Peric	23.9.2016
51	KAMEN-MOST	Tjaša Kranjec	23.9.2016
52	OŽIVLJEN KRAS	Darko Ravnikar	23.9.2016
53	PEDO TUR	Aleksander Goljevšček	26.9.2016
		Metka Demšar Goljevšček	
54	PORETEKS	Mihaela Koprivnik	26.9.2016
		Alen Šopar	
		Snježana Tkalec Avirović	
		Gregor Uhan	
		Klavdija Rižnar	
		Julija Potisk	
55	MARATON	Lidija Tušek	26.9.2016
56	ROJSTVO EVROPE	Martina Zanjkovič	28.9.2016
		Morena Želja Želle	
		Spomenka Vlahović	
57	CITY VOLUNTEERS	Tadej Kurent	28.9.2016
		Vesna	

		Avgustinčič	
58	IR-OVE	Viljenka Godina	28.9.2016
59	EKOMUZEJ MURA	Elica Horvat	3.10.2016
60	MURA-DRAVA BIKE	Romeo Varga	3.10.2016
61	ROKIC-DROM	Anton Törnar	3.10.2016
		Agata Sardelić	
62	Z GLAVO ZA NARAVO	Andreja Urbanič	5.10.2016
		Pia Primec	
63	VARČUJ-ŠTEDI	Janez Kozole	5.10.2016
		Janko Uršič	
		Velimir Kokot	
		Matjaž Pirc	
		Helena Kozole	
64	MLADIEKOIN	Simona Jeraj	5.10.2016
65	GREEN4GRAY	Alja Založnik	
		Polona Barič	
66	ŠPORT AKT	Alenka Vodočnik	5.10.2016
		Marjeta Vodočnik	
67	IGRAJ SE!	Lara Žmaher	6.10.2016
		Andreja Smolej	
68	RAST ISTRE	Nataša Zoklar	6.10.2016
		Ulrih	
69	WELNESS 3 PLUS	Breda Retuznik	6.10.2016
		Andreja Smolej	
70	ISTRA HIDRO	Simona Pestotnik	6.10.2016
		Barbara Simić	
		Joerg Prestor	
71	LOL	Primož Pahor	7.10.2016
72	SOŽITJE	Maja Rupnik	7.10.2016
		Melita Oražem	
		Katja Konečnik	
73	POT MEDIČARSTVA IN LECTARSTVA	Bernardka Zorko	7.10.2016
		Nataše Šekbec	
74	BIOHEATLOCAL	Nike Krajnc	7.10.2016
75	PTO	Stanko Blatnik	7.10.2016
		Sanja Selimović	
76	KULT PRO	Sabina Klanjšek	7.10.2016
77	ROK4	Sabina Klanjšek	7.10.2016
78	ZOOB	Davor Mrzlić	11.10.2016
		Irena Vrhovnik	
79	CLAUSTRA	Katharina Zanier	12.10.2016
		Zala Koželj	
80	REMEDISANUS	Božica Rinkiovec	12.10.2016
81	IMBY	Krešimir Masić	12.10.2016
		Marko Ružić	
82	BRODARJI IDEJ OB MURI	Tatjana Škrilec	13.10.2016

83	SOCPOD	Tatjana Škrilec	13.10.2016
84	INOVA LOCA	Tatjana Škrilec	13.10.2016
85	3M-MURA MEDIA MINORITY	Ines Sukić	13.10.2016
		Simon Balažic	
86	ZELENO PODEŽELJE	Tomaz Zadavec	13.10.2016
		Damjan Jerić	
		Tjaša Vrečič	
		Jernej Pušnik	
87	VIRI ŽIVLJENJA	Vesna Muc	14.10.2016
		Greta Avguštin	
		Milan Šušter	
		Boštjan Domitrovič	
88	CURS COLAPIS	Vesna Muc	14.10.2016
		Greta Avguštin	
89	FIDES	Gasper Vilfan	17.10.2016
90	INTERINO	Andrej Medved	19.10.2016
91	365 DNI RIVIERE	Jasna Softič	21.10.2016
92	MEDGEN BORZA	Bogdan Zevnik	21.10.2016
93	CLOUD	Gorazd	24.10.2016
		Drevenšek	
94	ZAŠČITA IN REŠEVANJE	Pia Primec	25.10.2016

ANNEX 5: Questionnaire form for programme structures

STRUCTURE	How do you assess level of cooperation with other programme structures, in context of the ability of mutual agreement, problem solving and exchanging information? (mark with X)				
	<i>very bad</i> (1)	<i>bad</i> (2)	<i>satisfactory</i> (3)	<i>good</i> (4)	<i>very good</i> (5)
<i>Managing authority</i>					
<i>Joint Technical Secretariat</i>					
<i>Slovenian first level control (FLC-SI)</i>					
<i>Croatian first level control (FLC-HR)</i>					
<i>Croatian Info point (MRRFEU)</i>					
<i>Slovenian National Authority</i>					
<i>Croatian National Authority (MRRFEU)</i>					
<i>Certifying authority</i>					
<i>Audit authority</i>					

STRUCTURE	How do you assess the level of efficiency of implementation of each structure (in context of operational efficiency of specified tasks)? <i>(mark with X)</i>				
	very bad (1)	bad (2)	satisfactory (3)	good (4)	very good (5)
Managing authority					
Joint Technical Secretariat					
Slovenian first level control (FLC-SI)					
Croatian first level control (FLC-HR)					
Croatian Info point (MRRFEU)					
Slovenian National Authority					
Croatian National Authority (MRRFEU)					
Certifying authority					
Audit authority					

STRUCTURE	Please indicate examples of good practices for each structure that you recognised during the implementation of the project. It can refer to your personal cooperation with a structure or to working practice of each structure.	Please indicate problems and difficulties in connection with cooperation or functioning of each structure that, in your opinion hindered implementation of the programme.
Managing authority		
Joint Technical Secretariat		
Slovenian first level control (FLC-SI)		
Croatian first level control (FLC-HR)		
Croatian Info point (MRRFEU)		
Slovenian National Authority		
Croatian National Authority (MRRFEU)		
Certifying authority		
Audit authority		

<p>Assess (a score 1-5) efficiency of the system ISARR as the main tool for your work, its usefulness and further analysis of the data that are relevant for your work. You can argue your decision.</p>	
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