

**Final Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria cooperation
programme
Version 11th June 2015 (PG 26)**

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Description of the Cooperation Programme

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Audit Authority
AKK	Alpine-Carpathian Corridor
CA	Certifying Authority
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CENTROPE	Central European Region
CP	Cooperation Programme
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European grouping of territorial cooperation
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
FLC	First Level Control
IP	Investment priority
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
LB	Lead Beneficiary
LLL	Lifelong learning
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
PA	Priority Area of EUSDR
PAC	Priority Area Coordinator
PG	Programming Group
RECOM	Regional Cooperation Management
RTDI	Research, Technology, Development and Innovation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFC2014	Shared Fund Management Common System
SO	Specific Objective
TA	Technical Assistance

TO Thematic Objective
VET Vocational Education and Training



Introduction

The Slovak-Austrian (SK-AT) cross-border area offers significant potentialities to further the socio-economic and institutional integration for a well-performing European region.

To contribute to the further integration and sustainable development of the area the SK-AT cross-border co-operation (CBC) programme – as a specific instrument in the portfolio of European and national instruments available for territorial development – aims to improve frameworks and policies and deliver concrete solutions to tackle common challenges.

The SK-AT cooperation programme (the legally binding name is “Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria”) for the 2014 to 2020 period has to be prepared on the legal basis of common and programme specific regulations (Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 also Common Provisions Regulation (in short CPR), Reg. (EU) 1301/2013 in short ERDF Regulation, and Reg. (EU) 1299/2013 also European Territorial Cooperation in short ETC Regulation) and in line with the Common Strategic Framework and the Partnership Agreements in Slovakia and Austria.

The programming process in order to construct the programme’s intervention logic started in 2012, was coordinated by the Managing Authority (MA) and Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) of the SK-AT 2007-2013 programme and supported by an external team (Metis GmbH & Consulting Associates s.r.o.) and is based

- on the decisions taken by the Programming Group (so far 21 Programming Group meetings were held since 2012);
- on ongoing surveys targeting Slovak national as well as Slovak and Austrian regional bodies (to identify investment priorities and to establish the financing plan);
- on requirements posed by the European Commission (ongoing process);
- on a situation analysis and a needs assessment carried out in the RECOM framework (potential analysis and network analysis which has been finalized end of 2013 by RM Niederösterreich, mecca consulting and AUREX);
- on stakeholder consultations according to the partnership principle addressing competent regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners and non-governmental organisations (two major national stakeholder events with thematic focus were carried out in Hainburg at 30th April 2013 and in Senec at 14th May 2013);
- on feedback received by ex-ante evaluators and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) experts;
- on feedback by the SEA consultation process focusing on the likely environmental impacts of the proposed draft programme;
- on the Partnership Agreements of the Slovak Republic and Austria.

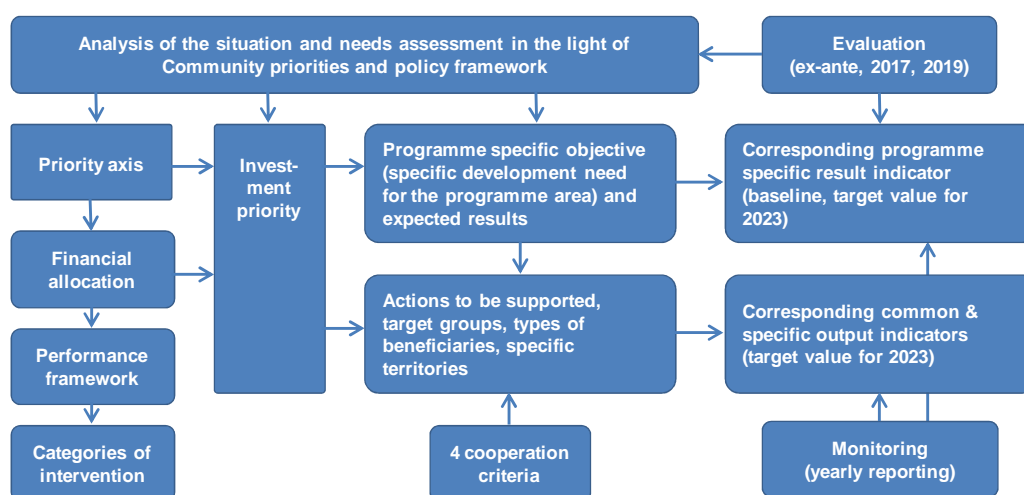
The programme architecture

The outline of the present cooperation programme (CP) document is based on the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 288/2014 which offers in Annex II a model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal from 25th February 2014.

The model reflects the ambition of European cohesion policy to be more performance and result based and introduces a new programming framework focusing more on strategy and result.

The basic, result oriented intervention logic which has to be followed in the cooperation programme is presented in the following illustration.

Figure 1. Programme's intervention logic (model)



Source: Metis on basis of CP model

The overarching policy framework and the programmes priorities

The **Europe 2020 strategy** is the current key-reference strategy of the Community aimed at providing 'more jobs and better lives' by stimulating 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' over the coming decade. The link to Cohesion Policy is defined by eleven thematic objectives which are set out in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR). The link of the present cooperation programme to the Europe 2020 strategy goals is ensured through the definition of thematic objectives (Article 9, Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 in short CPR) and the requirement for thematic concentration (Article 6, Reg. (EU) 1299/2013 in short ETC Reg.).

Moreover, the SK-AT cooperation programme has also to be put into the bigger picture of the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)** which covers amongst other regions the whole SK-AT CBC programme area. The open-ended EUSDR was adopted in December 2010. The strategy includes four pillars (1) Connecting the Danube Region, (2) Protecting the environment in the Danube Region, (3) Building prosperity in the Danube Region and (4) Strengthening the Danube Region and is accompanied by a "rolling" Action Plan breaking down eleven Priority Areas into actions and project examples. The SK-AT cooperation programme pays due attention

to the EUSDR both in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase.

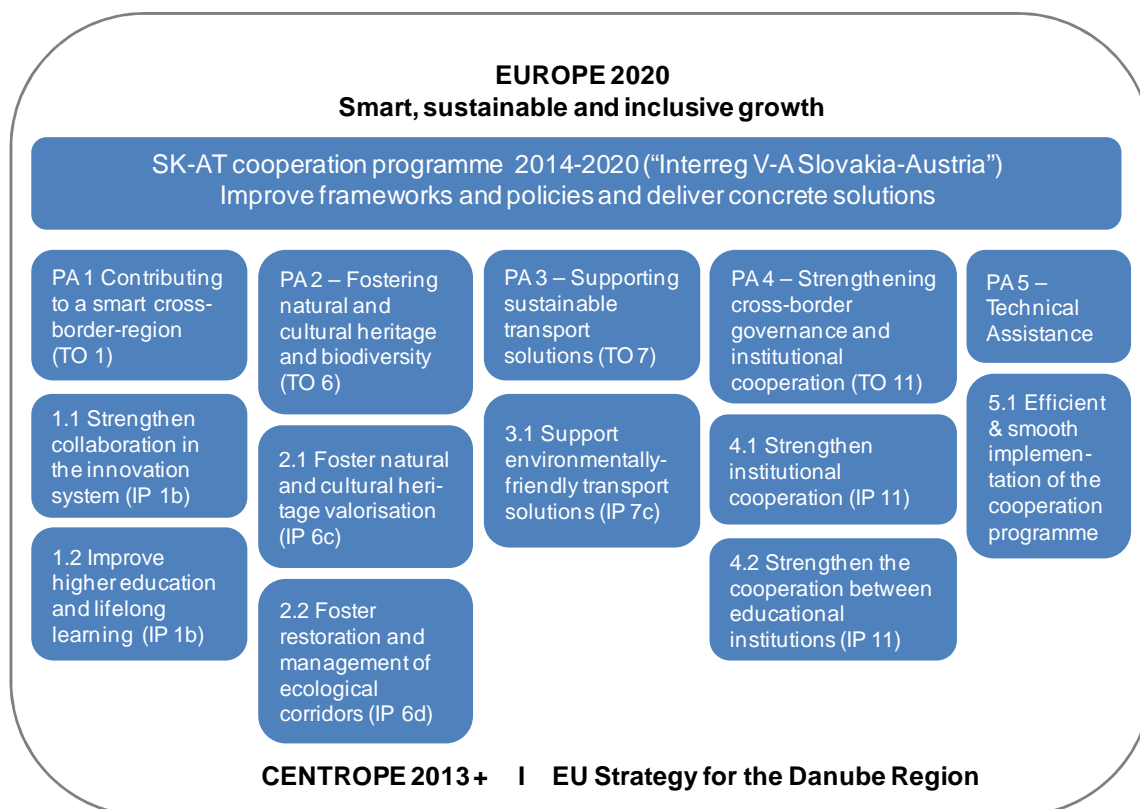
In addition, the **CENTROPE 2013+** Strategy represents a roadmap for future co-operation in the cross-border area.

Regarding its **composition** the SK-AT cooperation programme addresses **five** investment priorities (IP) under four priority axes (PA). In addition a fifth priority axis on technical assistance has been introduced.

The cooperation programme shows a **clear thematic concentration** on the four thematic objectives 1 (Research and innovation), 6 (Environment and culture), 7 (Transport and mobility) and 11 (Governance) which represent 100% of the ERDF allocation to the programme. This is more ambitious as the minimum requirement set by the ETC Regulation (at least 80% of the ERDF finances shall be concentrated on a maximum of four thematic objectives).

The architecture of the SK-AT cooperation programme is presented in the following illustration.

Figure 2. Composition of the cooperation programme (priority axes and investment priorities)



Source: Metis on basis of decisions taken by the Programming Group

1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programmes strategy

1.1.1.1 Role of the cooperation programme

Cross-border cooperation programmes are intended to complement other European programme strands such as "rural development" or "investment for growth and jobs" programmes. They are primarily designed for further cooperation in specific policy fields. Given its overall budget size, the cooperation programme cannot compare with programmes under Investment for Growth and Jobs objective in terms of economic impact.

The purpose of the cooperation programme is to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions. Needs are related to the issues how to improve institutional frameworks for cooperation, how to improve the quality of policies and their delivery and how to deliver solutions through concrete investments and smart pilot action.

It has to be considered that in this programme area the Lead Partner Principle has been applied the first time during the period 2007-2013. One clear lesson learnt during the period 2007-2013 was, that the number of institutions which are able to take over the function of a lead partner is clearly limited for a variety of reasons. Thus, the programme for the period 2014-2020 has been developed with a view to cooperation areas in which players and feasible ideas can be expected in sufficient numbers.

1.1.1.2 The process to identify cooperation needs

A brief review of the programming process illustrates the cornerstones and milestones which have led to the programme document. The main actors in the process, i.e. the members of the Programming Group (PG), have gained broad experience in the period 2007-2013. Already at the beginning, the decision was taken to go for a process which should make use of the already available analytical cornerstones. This allowed a broad and intense discussion phase with ample room to strengthen the mutual understanding of needs, the strategy and the priorities.

The analytical cornerstones for the development of the programme were:

- The process of the **ongoing evaluation** undertaken mainly in 2011 and 2012: It prepared the ground for the work of the PG since the evaluation took already the overarching framework for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 into account. The final steps of the evaluation have included a stock-taking of the outcomes of the 2007-2013 period with a view to the options in the forthcoming period. The final report documents the work of the Steering Group Evaluation (which was transformed into the PG).
- One of the conclusions of the ongoing evaluation was to consider the themes research and innovation, energy efficiency, environmental protection, cultural heritage protection and development, sustainable transport and governance for the 2014-2020 programme.

-
- The preparatory work of the **RECOM project** – the cooperation network of the five participating regions: It included a two-dimensional analysis for the period 2014-2020: the first dimension along key topics of mutual interest and the second the networks of actors which could develop projects of strategic interest in selected areas: The results of the RECOM process were presented to the PG and the studies contributed to the programme document.
 - **CENTROPE 2013+** as a policy-making process spanning over several Member States has been another important resource: Key actors in the Centrope network launched a series of strategy-building processes in key topics. The results and analytic milestones in these processes provided important contributions in particular for the fields of RDTI (Centrope TT) and transport (INAT).
 - Last but not least, within the framework of the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)** flagship projects are under development which are considered to be supported by the SK-AT cooperation programme, e.g. the development of a Danube river research facility.

On the basis of these four resources, i.e. the ongoing evaluation, the RECOM studies, Centrope and the EUSDR, the analysis of the programme region was developed. The subsequent approach to shaping the intervention logic of the programme went through phases of intense discussion and debate:

- Firstly, the discussion among the members of the Programming Group under guidance of the external experts: The representatives of the regions and the national level in Slovakia agreed on those investment priorities which offer the greatest potentialities (such as RDTI), and/or link to results of the period 2007-2013 where the need for further steps has been definitely identified (such as in transport and in valorisation of natural and cultural heritage and education and qualification) and/or can be seen as essential basis and room for expansion into new topics of cooperation (such as institutional cooperation and governance).
- Secondly, the reality test of the intended intervention logic with potential beneficiaries in the course of thematic workshops which have been held in 2013: The two events organised by the MA/JTS of the programme 2007-2013 in cooperation with the RECOM project have attracted about 250 persons.

The Ex-Ante Evaluation and SEA team joined the process in autumn 2013 and provided important inputs for the finetuning of the programme document. A final step was the public consultation of the draft programme as a second element in the consultation process for the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.1.1.3 Analysis of the situation and trends in the programme area

Programme area

The programme area consists of the Austrian *Länder*: Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland (only Nordburgenland and Mittelburgenland) and of the Bratislavský kraj and Trnavský kraj on the Slovak side.

It has around **4.7 million inhabitants**, which is a third of the total population in Austria and in Slovakia¹ (34% of total 13.8 million inhabitants in the year 2011). The proposed

¹ In order to enhance the readability, we use the term "Slovakia" for Slovak Republic throughout the text.

programme area for 2014-2020 includes also the “20% regions” of the 2007-2013 programme.

The cross-border programme area has a surface of about 28,000 km² (250 km East-West and 150 km North-South extension) and is characterised by quite strongly contrasting parts with specific needs, challenges and opportunities such as:

- The **twin city situation of Vienna (1.76 million inhabitants) and Bratislava (0.42 million inhabitants)** with two urban agglomerations and capital cities being in close proximity (60 km) with marked urban sprawl in the surrounding areas; both agglomerations are also transport and innovation hubs from a national perspective;
- Smaller cities such as **Trnava** (70,000 inhabitants), **St. Pölten** (52,000 inhabitants) or **Eisenstadt** (13,000 inhabitants) acting as local and regional growth poles;
- **Rural areas** with numerous villages below 2,000 inhabitants, and
- **Nature protection areas** such as the wetlands along the rivers Danube and March/Morava; Neusiedl Lake or the Little Carpathians, which are a important source of biodiversity in Central Europe.

Map 1. The programme area



Source: Metis

Macro-economic development and challenges

In comparison to the EU27² average, the programme area is – as a core economic area of the small and open Austrian and Slovak economies – well developed with a strong and growing economy and low unemployment rates.

About **3 million people** constitute the economically active population in the programme area (2011)³. They generate a yearly gross domestic product (GDP) of around **164 billion EUR** (Purchasing Power Standard) which is **50% of the total GDP** in Austria and Slovakia (337 billion EUR, 2009).

The **GDP per capita** in the two agglomeration areas Bratislava and Vienna is far above the EU27 average (around 150%). In Burgenland, Niederösterreich and Trnava it is around 10%-20% below the EU27 average. Only the NUTS3 region Weinviertel has a specifically weak economic position (around 70%).

The favourable macro-economic situation is also indicated by the average **economic growth** in the programme area, which was substantially higher than the EU27 average throughout the last decade including the crisis period 2009-2011.

Also in terms of **labour market** conditions the programme area shows a favourable situation since unemployment rates have been continuously below the EU27 average. Similar evidence can be found in employment growth and employment rates. Common problems relate to the low employment rates of elderly people (age of 55 to 64 years) and to a specifically high unemployment rate of low-qualified people.

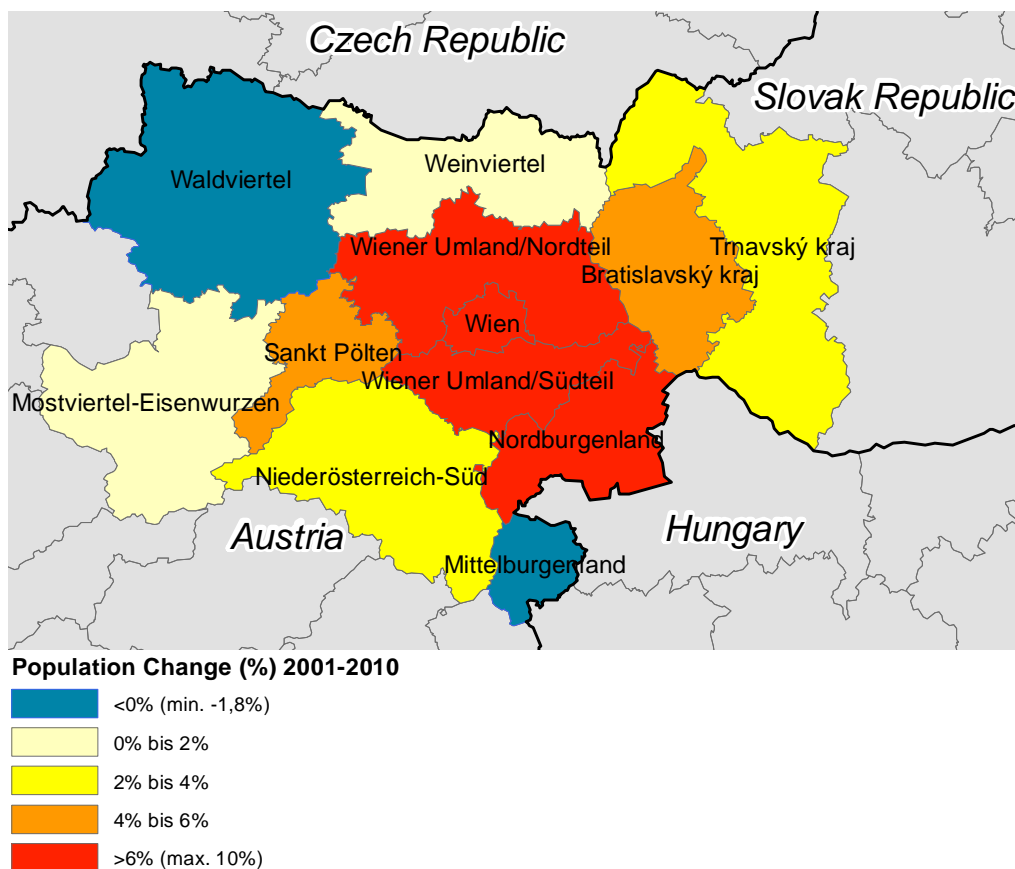
A further problem concerns **social inclusion** since about 20% of the total population in Slovakia and Austria are at risk of poverty or social exclusion even in the well developed programme area. Due to the lack of data on poverty at NUTS 3-level it is not possible to map the most deprived areas in detail.

Regarding **demographic trends** the programme area is one of those favoured areas in Europe which show a still increasing population (with the exception of small peripheral parts of the programme area such as Mittelburgenland and Waldviertel). In Slovakia the positive population development is strongly focused on the Bratislava agglomeration benefiting from in-migration while the Slovak population in general is expected to shrink by 10% until 2050. Except for the southern part with a shrinking perspective, population in Austria is expected to grow by 10% until 2050.

² Statistical data are based on the EU27 average. The EU reached its current size of 28 member states with the accession of Croatia on 1 July 2013

³ Including the NUTS2 regions AT11 *Burgenland* (AT11) and SK02 *Západné Slovensko* (SK02) (NUTS3 data are not available).

Map 2. Population development



Source: ESPON TERREVI, January 2013, Metis

Ageing of the population is a ubiquitous phenomenon across Europe, however, the Slovak part and more peripheral Austrian regions such as the Waldviertel are more affected. In the next two decades, the increasing share of the economically inactive population and the decreasing active population of an age between 15 and 64 years (i.e. more elderly and less young people) may cause a shortage of labour force and economic strain at regional/local level. The demographic trend can be mitigated by the continuous increase of the activity rate (lifelong learning systems, however, are weak in Slovakia), enhanced labour mobility across borders and integrating labour force with migration background.

1.1.1.4 Needs related to research & innovation

Policy framework

Under its priority "Smart growth" (development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation), the Europe 2020 strategy pursues the Flagship Initiative "Innovation Union". In order to ensure the diffusion of technology across the EU territory, Member States will need to reform national and regional research and innovation systems to foster excellence and smart specialisation, to reinforce cooperation between universities, research and business, to implement joint programming and enhance

cross-border co-operation in thematic fields with EU value added. Cross-border cooperation programmes are specifically asked to contribute to the “Innovation Union”.

The macro-regional EU Strategy for the Danube Region which is relevant for the programme area is targeting research and innovation in particular under its priority area C7: To develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies.

The CENTROPE⁴ 2013+ strategy which covers main parts of the programme area emphasises that policies for growth and employment must increasingly be geared towards research and innovation and proposes a focus on a knowledge region.

Apart from strategies with a supra-regional scope the policy field research and innovation is promoted by a number of strategies on the national and regional level (e.g. regional innovation strategies in Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland). The support to innovation is one of the key priorities in the Slovak National reform programme. In November 2013, the Slovak government adopted the National strategy for smart specialisation of research and development (RIS3), which sets the strategic framework for activities to be funded from EU resources.

The specific needs to develop research and innovation within the scope of cross-border cooperation were identified in the RECOM SK-AT potential analysis (November 2013) and by CENTROPE studies⁵.

Characteristics

The SK-AT CBC area is composed of research and innovation systems at very different stages of development with rather heterogeneous starting conditions and institutional settings.

Austria has clearly a regional dimension in the national innovation policy. All Länder took the opportunity and have set up specific agencies, developed strategies and mobilised substantial financial resources to implement regional innovation strategies. Incentives from the central level further contributed to the regionalisation of innovation policies. Regional actors focus on a broad innovation policy (developing R&TD infrastructure, advanced support services, technology transfer and cooperation networks) while R&D is mainly funded by national actors. The regionalisation of innovation policies allows tailor-made solutions to region-specific issues. However, the design and delivery of regional innovation policy is a very demanding task in terms of achieving critical mass and coherence of measures.

In Slovakia the responsibilities for innovation policy are divided between several public sector institutions. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy are key stakeholders with budgetary and legislative powers. On a regional level the self-governing regions are responsible for the implementation of innovation policy through regional innovations strategies. Innovation policy has not been a central strategic priority of any government in Slovakia during the last decades. This resulted in delays in the creation of a coherent and functional innovation system on national and regional level.

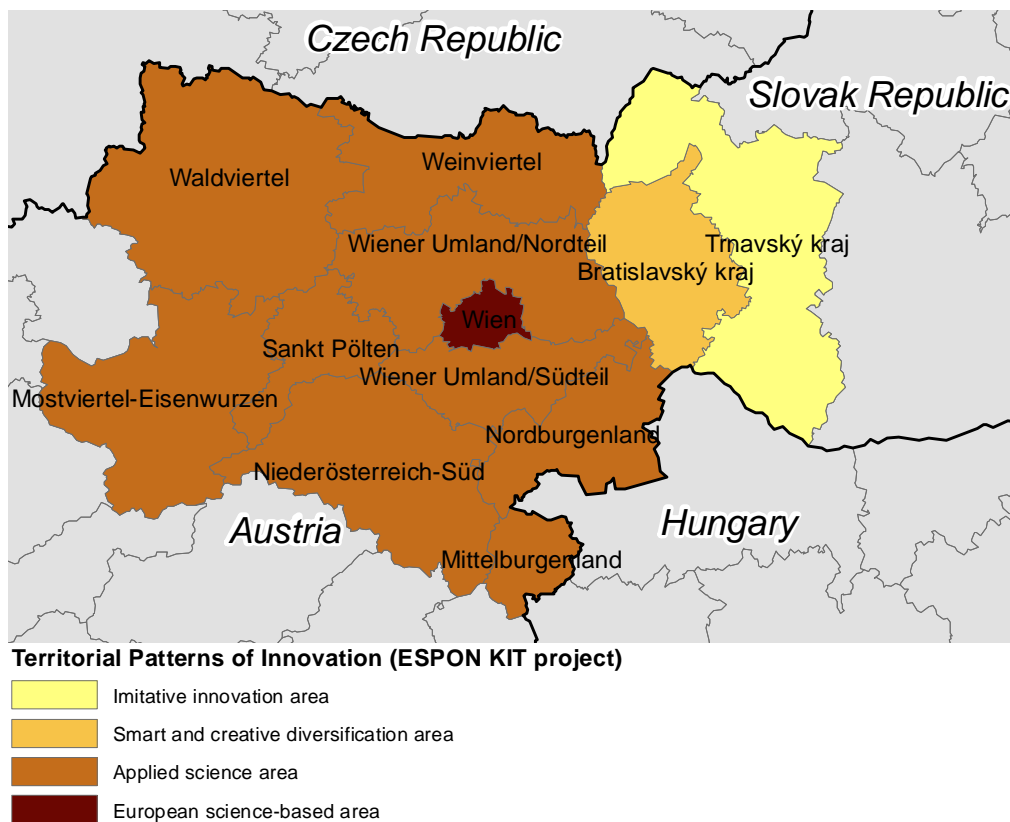
In the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2010 Austria is considered to be an “innovation follower” among the EU27 countries (7th position), whereas Slovakia is classified as “moderate innovator” (23rd position). Both Member States want to improve their

⁴ See <http://www.centrope.com/en/centrope-project/strategy-2013>

⁵ <http://www.centrope.com/en/centrope-project/downloads2>

position through enhancing the national (and regional) innovation system and more spending on R&D. However, Slovakia experienced very slow growth rates in the period from 2005 to 2010.

Map 3. Disparities in the territorial pattern of innovation



Source: TERREVI, January 2013, Metis

The distribution of R&D expenditures and R&D personnel is very unbalanced revealing a high concentration in the capital regions (48,782 R&D personnel out of 56,609 in total is located in Wien and Bratislava, 2009). The two capital cities and their surroundings are the backbone of the research and innovation system. The other, often more industrialised, regions are mostly involved in more practically-oriented innovation activities (applied research).

Challenges and needs for cooperation

- The institutional environment for research and innovation policy is relatively well developed in Austria at national *and* regional level, whereas it is not very stable in Slovakia, where institutions and intermediaries (such as agencies) are largely missing. Thus the framework reveals gaps and there are definitely difficulties for certain institutions to identify adequate counterparts.
- The university system is – despite the lack of world class universities – an advantage of the programme area. There is a strong concentration of research institutions and research personnel in the two capital cities. Also the number of university students per inhabitant is higher than in other EU regions and has

increased more rapidly. However, only a few research institutes have an international reputation.

- Cross-border students exchange seems to be limited due to the insufficient international reputation of universities. Student mobility is mostly directed to countries with higher attractiveness.
- Cluster initiatives exist but co-ordination of institutional support for the formation of cross-border enterprise networks through cluster policies is limited. Moreover it is challenging for (fragmented) cluster initiatives to achieve critical mass and coherence of measures.
- There is some room to develop more locally-based enterprise networks consisting of young and small enterprises, which need substantial support to utilise opportunities in cooperation in the cross-border region.
- Strong specialisation can be found in the automotive sector and related industries. However, in general, only few technology fields with strong specialisation exist and also few signs of functional specialisation of regions.
- Innovation has to be seen from a broader perspective and not only related to advanced technology fields (automotive sector). Instead, innovation comprises also the further development of the cross-border knowledge-intensive service industry and social innovation.
- Environmental technologies are a dynamic sector of the economy and offer the possibility to create more “green jobs”. There is a strong need for a wider application of innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency. Targeted capacity-building for local and regional administration and policy-makers, awareness-raising and know-how transfer meets significant interest.

1.1.1.5 Needs related to preserving biodiversity and natural heritage

Policy framework

The EU's Biodiversity Strategy (2011) in line with the Europe 2020 strategy (2010) sets the goal of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem functions by 2020, and of restoring them to the extent feasible. In this respect, the Natura 2000 network, which consists of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), provides a common EU framework to safeguard natural assets and serves as the main European instrument to achieve the biodiversity objectives.

Currently strategic conservation priorities for Natura 2000 for the 2014-2020 period are defined by the Member States under the “Prioritised Action Frameworks”. Additionally, Slovakia updated its National strategy for the protection of biodiversity (December 2013).

The effective management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas and the development of green infrastructures (in order to connect different bio-geographical regions and habitats) are also goals of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The macro-regional EU Strategy for the Danube Region is targeting environmental issues in particular under its pillar B) setting out actions to manage environmental risks and challenges, to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and to maintain the quality of air, waters and soils.

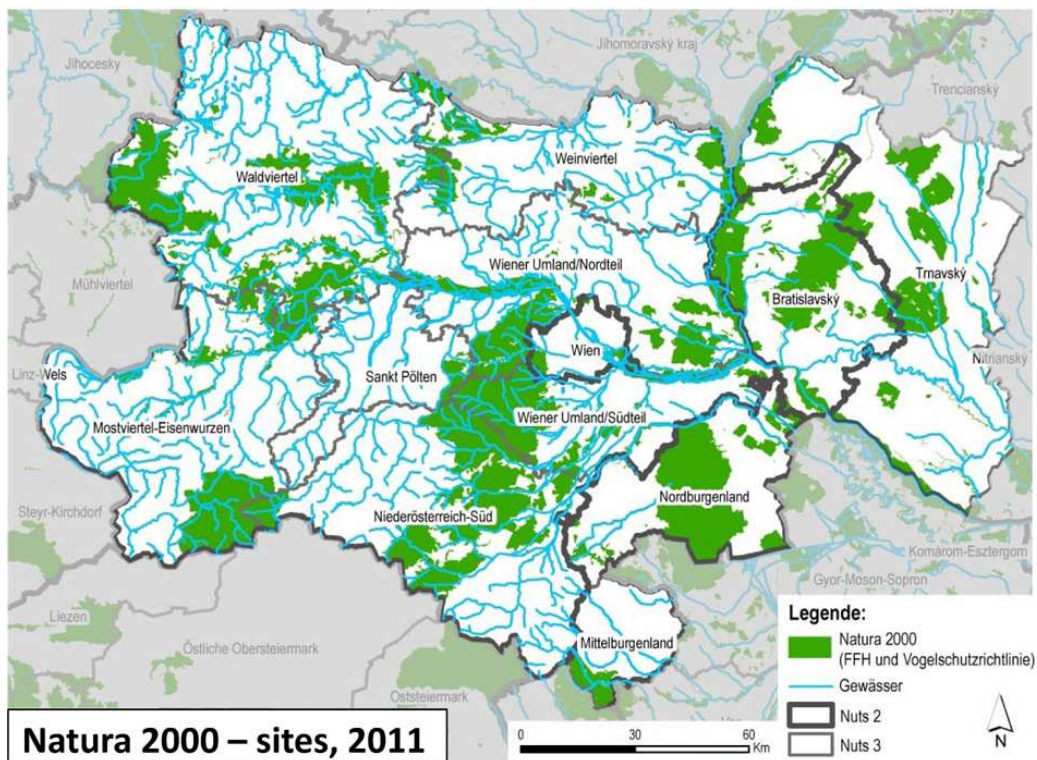
Another relevant policy instrument is the EU Water Framework Directive (2000), which establishes a common basis for actions in the field of water policy and integrated river basin management.

The specific needs to develop biodiversity and natural heritage by cross-border cooperation were identified in the RECOM SK-AT potential analysis (November 2013).

Characteristics

In the Austrian programme area (Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland), **56 sites** with an area of around **5,600 km²** and, on the Slovak side (Bratislavský kraj, Trnavský kraj), **98 sites** with an area of around **1,755 km²** are protected under Natura 2000.

Map 4. Environment presenting NATURA 2000 sites



Source: RECOM, Nov. 2013

Overall, there are still gaps in the coverage of Natura 2000 sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive. While in Austria 89% of the proposed areas have been implemented, this share lies at 74% in Slovakia⁶.

Moreover, 118,209 ha are protected under the Ramsar Convention (overlaps exist between Natura 2000 sites, areas under Ramsar Convention and nationally designated sites). The first systematic assessment of the conservation status of Europe's most vulnerable habitats (in the period 2000-2006, composite report from 2009) revealed that only a small proportion of the habitats and species of Community interest are in a favourable conservation status. More specific results for the programme area (covering

⁶ Source: DG Regional Policy, Country Fact Sheets, 2012

parts of continental and Pannonian bio-geographical region) indicate that around 80% of the habitats in Austria are in an unfavourable state of protection and management. In Slovakia 24% of habitats and fauna are in a good preservation status, 17% in an unknown state and the remaining ones are in an unfavourable state of protection.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

- The development of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures (including the large Natura 2000 conservation areas and the existing river systems) for the preservation of biodiversity constitutes a particular challenge for the different policy strands since management and restoration of natural assets has to be based on integrated concepts of land and water management. Partly existing initiatives have to be extended in order to better interlink natural habitats and wildlife corridors, reduce barriers and improve use management and nature protection. Restoration and conservation measures of natural assets should be accompanied by investments in sustainable tourism, awareness-raising, training and education as well as communication and information activities. Focus should be given to green infrastructures such as Alpine-Carpathian Corridor, Danube, March/Morava and Thaya/Dyje, Little Carpathians and Lake Neusiedl.
- Severely conflicting goals exist between the development of ecological networks on the one hand and expansion of transport infrastructure and urban sprawl on the other hand. These have to be negotiated and a sensitive approach is needed for the construction of new road infrastructure and extensive development activities along the contact zones of protected areas.
- For Natura 2000 financing a more integrated approach is needed. Financing from the ESI Funds for Natura 2000 sites should be consistent with measures and financial sources for these measures as set out in “Prioritised Action Frameworks” developed by Member States (which are not yet finalised). Moreover, complementarity and coordination with the LIFE biodiversity strand (which focuses on supporting Natura 2000 sites) should be strengthened.
- A better coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management needs to be achieved. While national flood-protection systems and organisational cooperation (i.e. the integrated protection system, flood forecast and alert services, conceptual strategies) as well as infrastructure development is well functioning, cross-border detailed planning and pilot measures to harmonise flood protection and rehabilitation of river systems are still pending, e.g. along the river March/Morava (first steps, i.e. detailed planning for a pilot stretch of 15 km have been taken in the framework of the ETC-project MoRe).
- A specific need concerns the improved connection between environment and tourism. The development and utilisation of natural heritage (e.g. rural landscape, lakes and rivers) needs to be done in a sustainable way, e.g. through enhanced eco-tourism.

1.1.1.6 Needs related to developing cultural heritage and tourism

Policy framework

Cultural heritage is targeted prominently in the EU-Lisbon Treaty. As said in Article 3.3. TEU “(...) *The Union shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced*”. However, the European Union does not have a specific competence in this field. The upkeep, protection, conservation and renovation of cultural heritage are primarily a national

responsibility. Therefore, the Union's action is complementary to national or regional action. Since the valorisation of cultural heritage will trigger economic opportunities and employment at regional level, it is part of the EU policy to develop SMEs in emerging fields such as cultural industries and new forms of tourism.

Promotion of tourism in a sustainable way is addressed by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in Priority Area A3 (To promote culture and tourism).

A focus is set by the CENTROPE 2013+ strategy on culture and tourism and it promotes a form of tourism that looks at the cross-border region as a whole and makes attractions and services mutually better accessible, makes the cultural heritage of the neighbours more visible and co-ordinates the development of tourism infrastructure.

The specific need to develop cultural heritage and tourism by cross-border cooperation was identified in the RECOM SK-AT potential analysis (November 2013). On the one hand the analysis reflects on the objectives set for the protection of cultural heritage in Slovakia (2010). The Slovak national development strategy for tourism is supposed to provide a strategic orientation for investments in the period 2014-2020. On the other hand tourism is a major pillar of the Austrian service economy and thus an explicit element of numerous strategies at regional and local level and a substantial number of institutions at regional and micro-regional level is active in tourism development..

Characteristics

Cultural heritage comprises both tangible objects and site such as architecture (churches, castles, monasteries, etc.) and intangible cultural practices such as folk culture and folk tradition.

The Austrian-Slovak border region has a unique diversity of cultural heritage.

Areas highly attractive for tourism development are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These are the Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn, the Historic Centre of Vienna, and the Lake Neusiedl Cultural Landscape. Moreover, three monuments in the Bratislava and Trnava region are currently on the so-called 'Tentative List' of the UNESCO, which is the first step in the registration process for the World Heritage List. These are the Limes Romanus, the Roman antique monuments on the Middle Danube, the Memorial of Chatam Sófer in Bratislava and Serial cross-border property Sites of Great Moravia: the Slavic Fortified Settlement in Mikulčice and the Church of St. Margaret of Antioch in Kopčany.

The strongest concentration of cultural heritage can be found in the cities of Vienna, Bratislava and Trnava, which also offer many and diverse cultural and educational institutions such as theatres, museums and galleries, libraries and others.

Intangible heritage is represented by folk traditions, crafts and music. Historical developments have resulted in diverse patterns of cultural heritage, often at a micro-regional scale. Part of this is, for instance, also the cultural tradition of the Burgenland Croats, a minority which has spread to the urban fringes of Bratislava or the settlements of the Habana in the region Záhorie. Examples of shared heritage can be found in architecture or in typical customs in viticulture.

The link between cultural heritage and tourism development is obvious. In terms of tourist visits the programme area in total shows 9.7 million arrivals and 23.7 million overnight stays in the year 2011. In the period from 2006 to 2011 arrivals in the programme area increased by 20% and overnight stays by 14%. The capital cities of

Vienna and Bratislava account for around 60% of the arrivals and the overnight stays. Vienna and Bratislava are called centres of MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events). In Burgenland a major regional tourist attraction is Lake Neusiedl, in Trnava region the famous spa Piešťany. Lower Austria has diverse tourist offers ranging from ski resorts to vine and spa tourism.

An emerging field is cycle tourism. Some sections of the network of cycle routes in the programme area are part of the European cycle network EuroVelo. The Danube cycle route, for instance, is part of EuroVelo 6. The section between Vienna and Bratislava, however, is the least developed and frequented. Whereas only 33,000 cyclists were counted in 2010 at the reporting point "Orth an der Donau", this figure amounted to 161,000 cyclists in Spitz-Dürnstein (latest figures from 2010, both directions). Also the cycle routes along the river March/Morava and the circular cycle route between Hainburg and Bratislava have untapped potential. It is necessary to invest in the attractiveness of the cycle routes, to eliminate dangerous spots, to develop accompanying offers as well as joint management and marketing activities.

With respect to cross-border marketing of tourist products during the last years some web-based travel guides with cross-border scope have been developed (e.g. www.tourcentrope.eu). Cross-border destination management and common marketing of tourist products, however, are still lacking.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

- The development of the natural and cultural heritage in the programme area strongly needs awareness-raising for a sound strategy/institutional framework in order to better embed local pilot actions. Based on promising sites, theme paths and joint products common approaches have to be established and guided by a shared policy framework. This should allow for a better cross-border coordination of cultural and natural heritage development plans and initiatives.
- Developing a tourism product from the cross-border perspective not only involves producing a facility or (small) infrastructure, or delivering a service, but also planning, conceptualising, branding and packaging this product. Thus, the entire service chain of a journey needs to be considered, from making the customer aware of the product in the first place to ensuring satisfaction during the holiday.
- Another aspect to be targeted is cycle tourism. One development need relates to the improvement of the connections between the regional cycle networks on both sides of the border and their joint promotion in order to improve to the European cycle network.
- The field of natural and cultural heritage includes ecological values, environmental quality and cultural assets which are crucial to well-being and local economic prospects. Overexploitation of natural values and lacking conservation of cultural assets are recognised a threat to territorial development. Accordingly, natural and cultural heritage has to be developed in a sustainable, environment friendly and resource efficient way.

1.1.1.7 Needs related to transport and mobility

Policy framework

The achievement of the targets of the Flagship Initiative "Resource efficient Europe" in the framework of the **Europe 2020 strategy** is a major challenge for transport policy.

This flagship initiative is aimed at modernising and decarbonising the transport sector thereby contributing to increased competitiveness. According to **the Common Strategic Framework** cross-border cooperation programmes can focus on providing support for the coherent planning of transport infrastructure and the development of environmentally friendly and interoperable transport modes in larger geographical areas. Cross-border cooperation, in particular among less developed regions, can focus on missing cross-border links which represent bottlenecks in transport flows.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) targets transport, mobility and intermodality under Priority Area A1.

Under its focus area “Spatial integration” the CENTROPE 2013+ strategy promotes efforts to meet the demand for modern, efficient transport links as a basis for improved mutual accessibility taking into account low-impact, sustainable urban and spatial development.

The specific needs to develop transport and mobility by cross-border cooperation were identified in the RECOM SK-AT potential analysis (November 2013) and by the CENTROPE study INAT (Infrastructure Needs Assessment Tool, 2012). Slovakia has developed transport master plans at national and regional level for the period 2014-2020.

Characteristics

In general, the programme area is characterised by favourable accessibility through a dense network of major motorways and railway corridors (existing Trans-European Corridors IV and VII consisting of motorway, railway and waterway axes). However, parts of Trnava region reveal a less favourable position and there are gaps in border-crossings along the river March/Morava.

Despite the fact that the agglomeration area of the programme area benefits from good accessibility, the future development of transport brings about significant challenges for the region. Due to expected further dynamic integration of the AT-SK region, the growth of the cross-border traffic will continue. Nearly 80% of all passenger cross-border trips are car trips. Cross-border freight traffic has nearly doubled in the last decade and is expected to further grow in line with GDP growth.

A significant development trend which affects the whole programme area is the massive growth of the use of cars, in particular in the areas where public transportation services are difficult to access. The only exception is urban centre of Vienna, where the degree of motorisation is decreasing. The trend reversal in Vienna is caused by the high-quality and competitive public transport, a developed system of bicycle transport infrastructure and parking restrictions.

Considering the estimated significant growth of the traffic volume by 2025, the implementation of transport infrastructure development plans is slow and the road network connecting Vienna, Bratislava and Trnava is expected to reach its limits. Another significant bottleneck is the lack of the vital D4-Bratislava motorway bypass.

Transport policy is required to channel the growing demand into sustainable mode of transportation. Under the EUSDR the development of an intermodal strategy for transport and mobility is pursued under the Priority Areas 1a and 1b in order to tackle the dynamic growth of cross border freight traffic. This includes the further development of the Danube waterways and of intermodal hubs. The Danube river is

underutilized and has a large potential to create sustainable transportation in the future. The function of ports as multimodal hubs needs improvement.

With respect to cycling, it is becoming increasingly popular and the cycling network in the border region still has potential for improvement (see section on tourism).

Challenges and needs for cooperation

- Improve regional mobility by new transport solutions for the capital cities (especially metropolitan region of Bratislava spreading across the border) and growth poles and improve accessibility in rural areas (e.g. by public transport associations, improved (cross-border) public transport information, approaches for more environmentally friendly transportation, mobility management, on demand public transport, promotion of multimodal mobility with car-sharing, (e-)bike-sharing, promoting cycle and pedestrian traffic).
- Continue to improve a coherent network of cycle paths and to close key gaps with a view to safety improvement. An important aspect in the development of cycle routes is the joint development of a comprehensive information platform for cycling in the region.
- Promotion of a more environmentally friendly tourist transport (focus on the last mile to the real destinations, luggage logistics, tourist mobility offers for people with handicaps).
- Strengthen multi-modal hubs along the Danube as inland waterway, promotion of emission reducing and energy efficient freight logistics along the Danube River (multimodal hubs) by the preparation of expert studies and spatial planning documents.

1.1.1.8 Needs related to education and qualification

Policy framework

Education has traditionally been one of the key pillars of the European Union's strategic documents. The importance of a well-educated and qualified labour force is emphasised also in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. Systematic modernisation of national educational systems at all levels promoting smart investments to increase quality and relevance of educational outcomes in relation to labour market needs will be pursued through the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the Move".

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region is targeting education and qualification under its priority area C7): To develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies and C9) To invest in people and skills.

It is a declared goal of the CENTROPE 2013+ strategy to strengthen the "human capital" of the cross-border region through co-operation in training and skill-building measures and among educational institutions.

The specific needs to develop education and qualification in the programme area were identified by CENTROPE studies⁷. The reform of education in Slovakia is stipulated and fostered by strategies at national and regional level. The prominent position of education in the Slovak National Reform Programme documents the comprehensive intents in this field.

⁷ <http://www.centrope.com/en/centrope-project/downloads2>

Characteristics

The education and qualification system in the programme area is at very different stages of development with rather heterogeneous starting conditions and institutional settings.

Slovakia is one of the countries with the lowest expenditure on education and training in EU. The low level of investment has negative impacts on the quality of the education and training system. Available resources are not sufficient for modernisation of infrastructure and attracting young and talented people to the teaching profession.

In Austria the budget for education and training increased and stays above the EU average. Savings due to declining number of pupils are being offset by higher expenditure on the recent reforms (smaller classes, new middle school, quality assurance, all-day schools, etc.). At the same time, Austrian regions need to pay attention to young population with a migrant background since they have high achievement gaps compared to native peers.

Reform initiatives in the system of pre-school education in both countries reflect on the fact that educational deficits in the early childhood lead to further deficits which tend to add up. Both educational systems perform well in attracting pupils into early childhood education (Austria 91% and Slovakia 77%). A growing number of Slovak children participate in early childhood education in Austrian border municipalities. The participation level in primary education is satisfactory in all border regions. However, the key mid-term challenge for actors involved in provision of primary education seems to be the quality of education as an important factor of the further educational/carrier path.

Furthermore, there is a lack of foreign language skills in order to fully utilize the opportunities in the cross border region.

The growing number of young people, who are facing problems in transition from education system to work, puts more emphasis on “dual education” that combines school based education and in-company training. “Dual VET⁸ system” (*Lehre*) constitutes the main scheme related to upper secondary level of education in Austria. At the moment Slovakia lacks of programmes that integrate the company-based training into curricula.

Lifelong learning (LLL) is more widespread in Austria than in Slovakia. 13% of the population aged 25-64 takes part in LLL in Austria, while in Slovakia the value is critically low and reaches only 4%. To address this problem, Slovakia adopted the National strategy for life-long learning in 2011.

The cross border student´s mobility between Austria and Slovakia is low due to lacking attractiveness of universities.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

- Existing partnerships and links between municipalities (and towns), which are providers of pre-school and primary education, offers a good basis for an extension of cooperation also to the field of education.
- Common objectives for increasing the participation of children in early childhood education can be transformed into joint strategies promoting an individualised

⁸ VET = Vocational Education and Training

approach, all-day care programmes, better instruction of language and integration of children with migrant background, etc.

- Existing systems of primary and secondary education seem to have limited capacity in providing a high quality of education leading to improved educational attainments.
- For an increased efficiency in public education it is important to improve the links between the education system and labour market demand, particularly for young people taking part in dual vocational education and training (VET).
- Prospective growth sectors with high added value (knowledge intensive) are expected to demand a considerable amount of university graduates; from a cross-border perspective the need for targeted high-quality education offers may stimulate cooperation between tertiary education institutions.
- A better quality of universities located in the SK-AT programme region through specialisation and cooperation can increase the attractiveness of the universities for domestic as well as for foreign students.
- The critically low participation of the adult population in life-long learning in Slovakia can be seen as a point of departure for know-how transfer and implementation of joint actions.

1.1.1.9 Needs related to regional governance and institutional cooperation

Policy framework

Strengthening institutional and administrative capacity at all levels and in all fields and promoting good governance is a key target addressed by the EU regulations governing the ESI⁹ Funds. Strengthening the institutional cooperation across the border is the major *raison-d'être* of ETC: the relevant EU-regulation acknowledges this fact and even broadens the notion of the corresponding investment priority – next to inter-administrative capacity-building also cooperation of institutions and citizens should be fostered.

Furthermore, to strengthen institutional capacity and cooperation is an objective of the Priority Area 10 (D10) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

Given the dynamic development of the region with two urban growth poles regulatory policies which reconcile resource protection and development deserve particular attention: one of these regulatory policies is spatial planning. Under its focus area "Spatial integration" the CENTROPE 2013+ strategy promotes a co-ordinated approach to regional and spatial planning. Regional development is not only regarded as a task of the individual regions but considered a common, transregional agenda that engages the partners in a continuous information and exchange process to co-ordinate regional and spatial development. Moreover joint planning instruments should be developed and implemented in order to facilitate harmonised spatial development.

Goals for spatial development at the regional level are laid down in development plans (e.g. Landesentwicklungsplan Burgenland, Landesentwicklungskonzept Niederösterreich, STEP 2025 Wien, Územný plan Bratislavského kraja, Územný plan Trnavského kraja, plány hospodárskeho a sociálneho rozvoja krajov).

⁹ EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

Next to the broad regulatory frameworks set-up in spatial and regional planning a number of specific policy fields require action. A prominent example is social policies and health care but also emergency services, disaster management would benefit significantly from efficient cooperation frameworks. The specific needs to better coordinate spatial planning and social and health infrastructure provision by cross-border cooperation were identified in the RECOM SK-AT potential analysis (November 2013).

Characteristics

While Austria, an EU Member State since 1995, is a federal country with three tiers of government with elected government institutions, independent decision making powers and budgetary autonomy, Slovakia, which joined the EU in 2004, is marked by a much more centralised administration although a framework of territorial self-government was introduced in 2001: The eight Slovak self-governing regions have competencies mainly in the areas of transport, education, social and health services. However, the huge differences in the legal and institutional framework in Austria and Slovakia affect the preparation and implementation of cross-border activities, which depend to a great extent on actors at local and regional level.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

Governance as such and the role of administration and public equivalents is embedded in a dynamic environment. Important challenges for the governance system are the following:

- The rapid pace of economic integration, a higher mobility and growing population in the urban agglomerations requires a strengthening of the strategic planning capacity (development of strategic frameworks and shared perspectives) and to develop new approaches on a common basis. The programme area is today one of the most economically dynamic regions in Europe. Particularly between the two capitals Vienna and Bratislava, the region is characterised by conflicting goals of nature preservation, economic activities, a growing population and the construction of transport infrastructure. The population of the Vienna region is expected to grow by 400,000 inhabitants until 2030. At the same time, the Bratislava region expects an increase of 100,000 inhabitants. This development will also trigger settlement activities in the cities' surroundings, where also economic activities are concentrated. This trend is set to continue in the future. Moreover, the two capital cities constantly work on growing together by improving the connecting transport infrastructure. A number of infrastructure investments will be completed in the near future such as the bypass around Bratislava (D4) and new motorways in Austria (A5, A6, S8). This will further increase the already high pressure on land use. Also the conflicts between economy and ecology are serious, which urgently calls for a solution to combine ecological requirements with economic activities. However, what is actually missing is a more holistic approach how to implement actions across different priority areas in a more concerted way. In this dynamically developing region, problems are largely linked to a lack of coordinated planning, funding and implementation on a distinct operative level. Moreover, participatory planning processes should be strengthened as standard approach to planning in order to move away from hierarchical models and allow for more participation of citizens in a structured way.

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- The dynamic development is an obvious current and future challenge for many types of public or semi-public infrastructures but it also offers many opportunities for win-win situations provided that efficient cooperation frameworks can be established: obvious examples are healthcare infrastructure, services provided at local level, emergency services or approaches to disaster management.
 - The two countries show differences in the capacity and approach to CBC project development as found in the ongoing Evaluation of the SK-AT programme 2007-2013. The enabling environment, the attitudes, the policy framework, regulations, organisational settings and practices that stimulate and support effective and efficient implementation of cross-border cooperation reveal serious bottlenecks. Especially the imbalance in governance capacity at regional level requires a prudent approach to partnership-building.

1.1.1.10 Strategic response by the programme to contribute to Europe 2020

Links to the overarching framework

In 2010, the European Union and its Member States launched the Europe 2020 strategy as a ten years roadmap, which is an overall strategic framework (quantified by five EU headline targets) putting forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The link of the present cooperation programme to the Europe 2020 strategy goals is ensured through the definition of thematic objectives (Article 9, Reg. (EU) 1303/2013) and the requirement for thematic concentration (Article 6, Reg. (EU) 1299/2013).

The thematic objectives are further broken down into investment priorities (Article 5, Reg. 1301/2013) on ERDF) and specific objectives for ETC programmes (Article 7, Reg. 1299/2013 on ETC). Priority axes are set out to combine investment priorities (IPs) from one or from different thematic objectives in order to achieve synergies.

Programme objectives and priorities

The priorities for the present cooperation programme are based on the specific characteristics and needs of the programme area which have been identified and agreed through an extensive programming and consultation process among the programme stakeholders and a wider cross-border community. Moreover, the programming took into account lessons learned from previous programming periods, the given financial framework and the existence of suitable implementation and administration structures.

The SK-AT cooperation programme will contribute to Europe 2020 through investing in the following thematic objectives (TOs) which are:

- TO 1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (IP 1b)
- TO 6) Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (IPs 6c, 6d)

- TO 7) Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key infrastructure networks (IP 7c)
- TO 11) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities, and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting cooperation (according to Reg. (EU) 1299/2013, Article 7 (a) iv)

100% of the ERDF allocation of the SK-AT cooperation programme will be concentrated on the four thematic objectives 1, 6, 7 and 11.

Based on the strong and relatively stable economic and political development of the programme area the SK-AT cooperation programme aims at further socio-economic and administrative integration for a well-performing European region based on sustainable development.

Targeted cross-border cooperation will include the

- Development of strategic frameworks and shared perspectives in a number of areas where action cannot be taken effectively without coherent frameworks, and
- Where awareness of shared needs, challenges and opportunities exists, pilot actions can enable actors to develop new approaches on a common basis.

Due to the advanced stage of cooperation in most of the policy fields addressed by the programme, the activities should be implementation-oriented and – depending on the level of development in a particular field – link following elements:

- the definition of joint objectives,
- the development of concrete action plans,
- the establishment of binding commitments of partners,
- the joint implementation and management of action including training and capacity building.

Project proposals should clearly build on achievements and capitalize on the knowledge and experience gained in previous projects.

The cooperation programme aims specifically at achieving the following objectives under five priority axes (including Technical Assistance):

Priority axis 1: Contributing to a smart cross-border-region

- Strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in order to enhance knowledge transfer, capacity building and the establishment of common frameworks, common research and innovation activities and joint research facilities.
- Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system.

Priority axis 2: Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity

- Strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way in order to further develop the programme area as an attractive tourism destination.

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- Strengthen the cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures in order to preserve biodiversity and to contribute to the stability of ecosystems.

Priority axis 3: Supporting sustainable transport solutions

- Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally-friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area.

Priority axis 4: Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation

- Strengthen the institutional cooperation in the cross-border area through mobilizing stakeholders and building the capacities for planning and acting in the framework of multi-level territorial governance.
- Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes.

Priority axis 5: Technical Assistance

- Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme.

Contribution to EUSDR¹⁰

The objectives set in the SK-AT cooperation programme will contribute to the implementation of the macro-regional EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in particular to the following Priority Areas:

- PA 1B | Mobility | Rail-Road-Air
- PA 03 | Culture & tourism
- PA 06 | Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils
- PA 07 | Knowledge society
- PA 09 | People & skills
- PA 10 | Institutional capacity and cooperation

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities

The justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities presented in the following table summarizes briefly the findings of the analysis and needs assessment and takes into account the results of the ex-ante evaluation.

¹⁰ see <http://www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities>

Table 1. Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
<p>TO 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</p>	<p>1b</p>	<p>The programme area consists of research and innovation systems at very different stages of development with heterogeneous starting conditions and institutional settings. With the capitals Bratislava and Vienna the major RDTI centres of both countries are part of the programme area – the development of these potentialities is vital for the economic competitiveness of both countries. There is a strong need for a better collaboration of research and innovation actors in the programme area by improved networking and exchange, jointly developed solutions and shared research facilities. Furthermore the programme can prepare the ground for a wider application of environmental technologies. Both countries face the challenge to increase the relevance of education to labour market needs and foster lifelong learning. There is a need for high-quality education and training systems in order to support the development of an economy based on knowledge and technology.</p>
<p>TO 6 Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</p>	<p>6c</p>	<p>Coordination of strategies and development plans developed at regional and/or local level remains a key concern if a critical mass and visibility beyond the local level should be achieved. There is a need to develop a common orientation of cross-border offers in the areas of tourism, leisure and culture in particular in the field of eco tourism.</p>
	<p>6d</p>	<p>Only a small proportion of the habitats and species of Community interest are in a favourable conservation status. Moreover, the goal of developing ecological networks can be in conflict with the expansion of transport infrastructure and urban sprawl. Also a better coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management needs to be achieved. This calls for more integrated concepts for a better cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures.</p>
<p>TO 7 Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key infrastructure networks</p>	<p>7c</p>	<p>The current trend is a massive growth of road transportation which increases energy consumption and environmental pollution. A truly integrated cross-border network of public transport is not yet visible and will require the establishment of a suitable legal and operating framework. There is a strong need for comprehensive approaches to mobility management fostering environment-friendly modes of transport such as public transport, pedestrian and cycle transport.</p>
<p>TO 11 Enhancing institutional capacity of</p>	<p>Reg. (EU) 1299/2013 Article 7 (a) iv</p>	<p>The rapid pace of economic integration and higher mobility requires a strengthening of the institutional and administrative capacity regarding the strategic planning capacity (more coherent spatial planning), information collection and</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
public authorities, and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting cooperation		evaluation, human resource development and the capacity to implement public investments. Moreover there is a great imbalance between the two countries in the capacity and approach to CBC project development which calls for targeted support for project generation with a cross-border scope. Both countries face the challenge to improve school achievements. Common priorities in early childhood and primary education can be effectively transformed into cross-border actions.

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

The overall programme budget is of EUR 89.3 million (total funding), with an ERDF contribution of around EUR 75.9 million, as detailed in section 3 (Financing Plan). The financial allocation to the chosen thematic objectives reflects:

- The inputs provided by the relevant partners in the course of consultations
- The experiences of the programming period 2007-2013 in particular relating to preparatory steps for key projects and the continuation of efforts in promising policy areas but also with a close view on the capacity of core actors in certain thematic fields
- The estimated financial size of the actions foreseen in each priority axis and the findings of the ex ante evaluation.

Priority axis 1 (TO 1, IP 1b)

The planned ERDF allocation to priority 1 is of around EUR 19.683 million, corresponding to 25.9 % of the programme ERDF, with an estimated number of 9 operations delivering jointly developed major products and services that will be supported. This financial allocation reflects the planned size of actions facing the needs to develop the cross-border innovation system, including the strengthening links between productive sector, R&D and education sector. Education and qualification in a cross-border context is a pre-condition to safeguard economic competitiveness in the long run.

Moreover, the proposed financial allocation reflects the high interest shown by the relevant partners. All partner regions have expressed their interest in this priority and a very high number of project ideas and intents have been collected in the consultation events.

SK-AT stakeholders have a long tradition and a growing need of cooperation in the field of innovation, technology transfer, skills, with around 20 projects committed in these thematic fields¹¹ during the 2007-2013 programming period, further justifying the planned financial allocation.

¹¹ Including activity fields (AF) 1.1, 1.3 and parts of 2.4 of the programme 2007-2013

Priority axis 2 (TO 6, IP 6c, 6d)

The planned ERDF allocation to priority 1 is of around EUR 27.820 million corresponding to 36.7 % of the programme ERDF, with an estimated number of 24 operations delivering jointly developed major products and services that will be supported. This financial allocation reflects the expected size of actions facing the needs to strengthen common approaches to better develop promising sites, theme paths and joint products guided by a shared policy framework (e.g. in the areas of eco-tourism, cycling, agro-tourism, vine culture, antique Roman culture). Accordingly, a better cross-border coordination of cultural and natural heritage development plans and initiatives should be achieved. Furthermore cross-border cooperation is an evident precondition for effective approaches to preservation and management in particular when it comes to large-scale bio-corridors such as the Alpine-Carpathian corridor or the wetlands along the border river March-Morava and the Danube.

Moreover, the financial allocation to this priority is aligned with the high interest shown by the relevant partners in the consultation process. All partner regions expressed their interest in this priority; the potential interest expressed in consultation meetings during programming has been significant.

SK-AT stakeholders have a long tradition and a growing need of cooperation in the field of natural and cultural heritage development and biodiversity protection, with around 30 projects approved in similar thematic field during the 2007-2013 period. The broad variety of beneficiaries and approaches in the period 2007-2013 clearly documents the interest for cooperation.

Priority axis 3 (TO 7, IP 7c)

The planned ERDF allocation to priority 3 is of around EUR 9.655 million corresponding to 12.7 % of the programme ERDF, with an estimated number of 7 operations delivering jointly developed major products and services mainly by soft action but also hard pilot investments may be supported.

Priority 2 focuses on sustainable forms of transport to reduce the environmental impact of transport in terms of air and noise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

It is intended to support sustainable multimodal mobility in cities, city-regions and rural areas including improvement of public transport services, mobility management, better integration of the different modes, more attractiveness of walking and cycling and improvement of the efficiency of urban logistics. Also multimodal hubs are promoted to contribute to emission reducing and energy efficient freight transport to tackle the dynamic growth of cross border freight traffic.

Investments in border crossings along the river March / Morava are not foreseen in the programme since the planned projects are either too expensive or are not accepted by parts of the local population.

Programme stakeholders have shown sustained interest in cooperation projects in the 2007-2013 period, with around 9 project approved in this thematic field (AF 2.1), in line with the planned financial allocation. It is important to note that preparatory steps for infrastructure investment in this programme have been agreed and financed in the period 2007-2013.

The allocation is aligned with the interest shown by the relevant partners in the consultation process. All partners expressed their interest in this priority.

Priority axis 4 (TO 11)

The planned ERDF allocation to priority 4 is of around EUR 14.181 million, corresponding to 18.7 % of the programme ERDF, with an estimated number of 13 operations delivering jointly developed major products and services that will be supported.

It is envisaged to improve institutional coordination and strategic planning through development of common planning processes, tools and data bases, enhance institutional cooperation in areas with major societal challenges (e.g. health, risk management) and build up more effective frameworks to support small scale projects.

Also common frameworks and offers for education and qualification should be improved (intercultural learning, basic language training, better school achievements of pupils, and higher quality in early childhood).

Table 2. Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

Priority axis	ERDF support – in EUR (rounded)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support to the CP			TO	IP	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
		ERDF	ENI	IPA				
1	19,683,142	25.9			1	1b	<p>1.1 Strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in order to enhance knowledge transfer, capacity building and the establishment of common frameworks, common research and innovation activities and joint research facilities.</p> <p>1.2 Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system</p>	<p>Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the regional innovation system</p> <p>Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve higher education and lifelong learning</p>
2	27,820,000	36.7			6	6c	2.1 Strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way in order to further develop the programme area as an attractive tourism destination	Monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March)
						6d	2.2 Strengthen the cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures in order to preserve biodiversity and to contribute to the stability of ecosystems	Number of major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor
3	9,655,000	12.7			7	7c	3.1 Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally-friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area	Capacity in public cross-border transport on an average work day
4	14,180,979	18.7			11	ETC Reg. Article 7 (a) iv	<p>4.1 Strengthen the institutional cooperation in the cross-border area through mobilizing stakeholders and building the capacities for planning and acting in the framework of multi-level governance</p> <p>4.2 Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes</p>	<p>Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen institutional capacities</p> <p>Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions</p>
5 TA	4,553,560	6.0					5.1 Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme	Not applicable

2 Description of the priority axes

2.1 Priority axis 1: Contributing to a smart cross-border-region

The priority axis includes one investment priority (1b) corresponding to the thematic objective 1 (Strengthening research, technological development and innovation).

Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective

Not applicable.

2.1.1 Investment priority 1b) promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

2.1.1.1 Specific objective No 1.1 Strengthen collaboration in the innovation system

Strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in order to enhance knowledge transfer, capacity building and the establishment of common frameworks, common research and innovation activities and joint research facilities.

The result to be achieved

The research and innovation system in the programme area is at very different stages of development. Austria is considered to be an “innovation follower” among the EU27 countries whereas Slovakia is classified as “moderate innovator”.

Moreover the distribution of R&D expenditures and R&D personnel is very unbalanced revealing a high concentration in the capital regions. The other, often more industrialised, regions are mostly lacking of R&D capacities.

As an overall policy objective both Member States want to improve their position through enhancing the national and regional innovation system.

Cross-border cooperation can contribute in particular in developing the innovation system at the regional level by fostering the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system which have a specific interest in the programme area (and are not solely focused on global relationships) such as clusters, agencies for economic development, technology-transfer centres, research bodies, universities with research capacities and innovative enterprises.

In order to support the development of a more deeply integrated cross-border knowledge region the cooperation programme could contribute – by improving institutional cooperation and knowledge exchange – to the development of the cross-border university system, fostering of collaborative research and innovation activities, better coordination of cluster policies and the development of joint smart specialisation

approaches. Important is also the involvement of actors with an economic orientation to enhance the commercial use of research results.

Furthermore the cooperation programme can prepare the ground for a wider application of environmental technologies in order to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency through building up partnerships and improving the know-how transfer between Slovak and Austrian regions. This could be done for instance in the framework of Smart City or Smart Region initiatives.

Moreover the programme intends to invest in a research facility to improve the integrated river management along the Danube river as basis for collaborative research.

Fostering innovation in the cross-border area has to be seen from a broader perspective and not only related to advanced technology fields (such as Life Science). Instead, innovation comprises also the further development of the cross-border knowledge-intensive service industry and social innovation.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- More collaborative research and innovation activities and competent networks between R&D centres, higher education, enterprises and the public sector to establish longer term cooperation in technological and non-technological fields and to enhance the commercial use of research results
- Establishment of a research facility to improve the integrated river management along the Danube river

The capital cities Bratislava and Vienna are the major RDTI centres of both countries and offer – as part of the programme area – rich potentialities to further collaborative research and innovation activities.

The specific objective to strengthen collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system is measured by a result indicator which reflects the (evolving) cooperation intensity. The “cooperation” indicator is designed as a “survey based composite indicator” which reflects the intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in the different fields of action addressed by a specific objective. The result indicator is measured at the level of detailed results (specific level) and subsequently aggregated at the level of the specific objective (overall level). The baseline of the result indicator was established through a survey among key actors in the programme area. Actors (non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries) from the programme area were asked to what extent they cooperate with each other partner in the programme area in a specific field of action. Answer options are on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 indicating “no interaction at all” and 7 indicating a fully developed cooperation level between SK and AT actors.

Table 3. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 1.1

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) ¹²	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the regional innovation system	Ordinal scale min 1, max 7	2.8	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)	Survey among key actors in SK and AT linked to the regional innovation system (potential actors in the CBC area)	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

2.1.1.2 Specific objective No 1.2 Improve higher education and lifelong learning to provide competent and skilled work force

Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system.

The result to be achieved

Despite the differences between the system of higher education in Slovakia and Austria, the cross-border regions face common challenges in the field of education. Firstly, the education sector and its capacity to produce quality human resources is one of the determining factors for competitiveness of regions (countries). Institutions providing higher education and adult education (lifelong learning) must be able to flexibly respond to changing needs of the regional labour markets, especially rapidly growing industries. Additionally, graduates with relevant knowledge, skills and competences have better chances to find a job.

Skilled and competent labour force is a key component of the regional innovation system. The system in order to function effectively requires interaction between the productive sector, R&D and education sector. Therefore, the cross-border activities concentrate on the strategic collaboration of stakeholders in the regional innovation systems resulting in enhanced educational offer. Location of considerable number of universities in the cross-border region, including top universities in both countries, offers good opportunities for development of cooperation. Tertiary education can substantially benefit from strengthening the links with relevant industries. On the other hand, productive and R&D sectors need workforce to actively participate in the innovation processes.

Institutions providing secondary and tertiary education, should concentrate on making the education more relevant to requirements of businesses. Acquisition of knowledge and skills required by productive sector is a critical factor in determining chances of graduates to find a job. Promotion of dual education has also high potential to improve attractiveness of technical secondary schools in the border region. Due to limited intensity of collaboration, supported interventions will seek development of policy framework together with implementation of pilot actions of strategic character.

¹² Target values can be qualitative or quantitative.

The cooperation programme can play an important role in adapting the higher education system through mobilized and committed organisations/entities, jointly developed education programmes, training schemes, joint curricula in cross-border initiatives.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- Better cooperation between education institutions and the economic sector to promote dual education at secondary level education
- Improved cooperation between institutions of tertiary education for targeted high-quality education offers

Cooperation projects under the investment priority will be in principle non-investment actions. Small scale investments will be allowed in fully justified cases contributing to the achievement of objectives.

The specific objective to contribute to the enhancement of higher education and lifelong learning schemes by means of cross-border cooperation is measured by a “survey based composite indicator” measuring the intensity of cooperation between key actors in the field of higher education and lifelong learning in the CBC region.

Table 4. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 1.2

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve higher education and lifelong learning	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.5	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)	Survey among higher education and adult education key actors (potential actors in the CBC area)	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

Type and examples of actions to be supported to contribute to specific objective No 1.1 Strengthen collaboration in the innovation system and No 1.2 Improve higher education and lifelong learning to provide competent and skilled work force

In accordance with the SFC2014 model, the following part provides an overview of the types of interventions planned to be supported by the cooperation programme. This overview is complemented by concrete thematic examples.

Types of actions:

- Awareness raising, strategy and action plan development (as the sole result accepted only in fields where early policy development is justified, i.e. in fields which until now have not been touched by significant projects in the previous funding periods; otherwise obviously accepted as one of the elements of a project)

-
- Development and practical implementation of cross-border tools and services (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools)
 - Development and practical implementation of investments to finance products, infrastructure and construction works and to finance equipment to carry out project activities
 - Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews)
 - Accompanying information and publicity measures to inform stakeholders and the wider public about project activities and outcomes

Examples of actions under the objective No. 1.1: Strengthen collaboration in the innovation system

The following examples of action should be supported in order to strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in terms of knowledge transfer, capacity building, common frameworks, common research and development of products and services. Actions have to take into account the Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3) which have been established in SK and AT.

- Development & expansion of cluster initiatives (joint trainings, joint market research, coordination of cluster support programmes)
- Joint development of innovation related services and qualification offers; improvement of knowledge and skills for an advanced economic and social innovation
- Developing institutional cooperation between Austrian and Slovak universities in order to develop joint offers (e.g. to develop knowledge transfer centres)
- Promoting collaborative research & innovation activities in the fields:¹³ Life Science/Biotechnology, Renewable Energy, Smart Mobility/Post-Carbon transport, Materials, ICT. In addition also in sectors/niches of regional importance such as creative industries, social innovation (examples)
- Promoting innovative environmental technologies and common resource efficiency standards and benchmarks to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency; development of common Smart Regions concepts.
- Investing in research facilities (e.g. laboratory investment and equipment) to improve the integrated river management along the Danube river (water research) as basis for collaborative research of AT, SK (and other) research actors including the support for field research and accompanying activities (e.g. awareness raising and environmental education).

Examples of actions under the objective No. 1.2: Improve higher education and lifelong learning to provide competent and skilled work force

The following examples of action should be supported in order to improve higher education and lifelong learning to provide competent and skilled work force:

- Collaboration on development, upgrade and implementation of joint educational programmes (curricula) with involvement of relevant partners;

¹³ See RECOM potential analysis, November 2013, p 76

- Establishment and development of joint platforms for effective cooperation between the secondary schools and employers/employers associations;
- Elaboration and upgrade the quality of joint education and training schemes reflecting the changes in skills and competences required by labour market;
- Promotion of dual education at secondary level education, especially in technical schools;
- Programmes for ex-change of students, researchers and teachers;
- Development of joint curricula and pilot implementation in universities.

Main target groups supported under the investment priority

- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Innovation, science and technology centres (parks, incubators)
- Universities and research institutions
- Business support organisations
- Educational institutions
- Pedagogic staff
- Students

Types of beneficiaries supported under the investment priority (indicative)

- Regional authorities and organisations established and managed by regional authorities
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities
- Networks, clusters and associations
- Research and development institutions
- Universities
- Secondary education institutions
- Training and vocational training institutions
- Business support organisation (e.g. chamber of commerce, business innovations centres, regional development agencies)
- European grouping of territorial cooperation

Specific territories targeted under the investment priority

- No specific focus areas are defined. The entire programme area is eligible.

The guiding principles for the selection of operations under the investment priority

To specify the general principles for project selection described in section 5.3 the following theme specific principles should guide the selection of operations:

- Contribution to longer term cooperation between R&I actors (not only focus on short term research outputs)
- Clear contribution to the dissemination of technologies

- Usability of project deliverables
- Clear elements of awareness-raising, training, capacity building
- Concreteness and usability of project deliverables (e.g. education programmes, training schemes)

The planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable

Common and specific output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 5. Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1b.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in research & innovation related collaboration activities (P)	Number	25	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation (P)	Number	5	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes related to research & innovation (P)	Number	125	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.1.4	No of research facilities developed (P)	Number	1	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.1.5	No of new researchers in supported entities (EU)	Number in FTE	20	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.1.6	No of research institutions participating in cross-border projects (EU)	Number organisations	6	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.2.1	No of jointly developed major products & services related to higher education and lifelong learning (P)	Number	4	Monitoring system	yearly
1b.2.2	No of institutions directly involved in cooperation aiming at better quality of higher education and lifelong learning (P)	Number	20	Monitoring system	yearly

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1b.2.3	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	Number persons	500	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator; baseline is zero

2.1.2 Provisions at priority axis level

2.1.2.1 Performance framework by priority axis

Table 6. The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data
1	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 1	EUR	3,010,363 (13%)	23,156,638	CA
1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	Number	4	9	MA (monitoring system)
1	Output indicator (ID 1b.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	Number	0	5	MA (monitoring system)

2.1.2.2 Categories of intervention by priority axis

Table 7. Dimension 1 Intervention field (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	58 Research and innovation infrastructure (public)	7,000,000
1	60 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	1,512,628
1	62 Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefiting SMEs	1,512,628
1	63 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefiting SMEs	1,512,628
1	65 Research and innovation infrastructure, processes, technology transfer and cooperation in enterprises focusing on low carbon economy and on resilience to climate change	1,512,630
1	66 Advanced support services for SMEs and groups of SMEs (including management, marketing and design services)	1,512,628
1	117 Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	2,560,000
1	118 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	2,560,000

Table 8. Dimension 2 Form of finance (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	01 non-repayable grant	19,683,142

Table 9. Dimension 3 Territory type (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	07 Not applicable	00

Table 10. Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	07 Not applicable	00

A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Not applicable

2.2 Priority axis 2: Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity

The priority axis includes two investment priorities (6c and 6d) corresponding to the thematic objective 6 (Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency).

Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective

Not applicable.

2.2.1 Investment priority 6c) Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage

2.2.1.1 Specific objective No 2.1 Foster natural and cultural heritage valorisation

Strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way in order to further develop the programme area as an attractive tourism destination.

The result to be achieved

Natural and cultural assets are crucial to human well-being and local economic prospects. The valorisation of natural and cultural heritage has to consider ecological functions, restrictions of nature protection and strategies for the revitalisation of cultural assets.

The programme area has a potential to strengthen common approaches to better develop promising sites, theme paths and joint products guided by a shared policy framework (e.g. in the areas of eco-tourism, cycling, agro-tourism, vine culture, antique Roman culture). Accordingly, a better cross-border coordination of cultural and natural heritage development plans and initiatives should be achieved. However, at present a cross-border destination management and marketing of tourist products is still lacking (tourist product means to integrate several elements into a single product which has the potential to attract more visitors).

Cross-border cooperation should encourage actors to develop strategies, plans or new offers which clearly attract the interest of visitors across the border and at the same time strengthen the awareness for natural assets and the cultural ties among the citizens.

With the exception of a few strictly protected nature areas, human influence dominates the programme area and, thus, project approaches will often focus on the combined valorisation of natural and cultural heritage.

Coordination of strategies and development plans developed at regional and/or local level remains a key concern if a critical mass and visibility beyond the local level should be achieved. Support for local approaches which strengthens cross-border linkages in the protection of natural assets and the revitalisation of cultural assets are important cornerstones, but the actions will have to fit into broader strategic frameworks.

Cycle tourism as a particularly environment-friendly type of tourism deserves further attention. Important strategic elements in this regard are to close the gaps between the regional networks on both sides of the border and a consistent and comprehensive guidance and promotion of the common network.

With a view to the urban dimension of the programme region, interesting pilot approaches could focus on cultural niches which highlight cross-border ties.

Overall, through mobilized and committed organisations/entities participating in cultural & natural heritage development, jointly developed products & services and accompanying training a common orientation of cross-border offers in the areas of tourism, leisure and culture should be achieved in particular in the field of eco tourism.

The main envisaged results are:

- Better cross-border coordination of cultural and natural heritage development plans and initiatives by strengthening the governance aspect and capacity development.
- Strengthened common orientations of offers in the areas of tourism, leisure and culture to better develop promising sites, theme paths and joint products with a critical mass and embedded in wider development and growth strategies which contribute to sustainable jobs and growth in a regional dimension.

The specific objective 'to strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way' is measured by a statistical result indicator which reflects the monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the newly established cross-border counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March). The baseline value is calculated on basis of the period August 2014 to April 2015 where in total 135,590 cyclists and pedestrians crossed the bridge between Slovakia and Austria.

Table 11. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 2.1

Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March)	number person	15,066	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)	Counting point	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

Type and examples of actions to be supported to contribute to specific objective No 2.1 Foster natural and cultural heritage valorisation

In accordance with the SFC2014 model, the following part provides an overview of the types of interventions planned to be supported by the cooperation programme. This overview is complemented by concrete thematic examples.

Types of actions:

- Awareness raising, strategy and action plan development (as the sole result accepted only in fields where early policy development is justified, i.e. in fields which until now have not been touched by significant projects in the previous funding periods; otherwise obviously accepted as one of the elements of a project)
- Development and practical implementation of cross-border tools and services (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools)
- Development and practical implementation of physical investments (infrastructure, equipment) to finance pilot investments in products, infrastructure and construction works and financing of equipment to carry out project activities
- Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews)
- Accompanying information and publicity measures to inform stakeholders and the wider public about project activities and outcomes

Examples of actions:

The following indicative examples of action should be supported in order to strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way.

- Develop joint and integrated approaches for sustainable tourism, e.g. in the areas of eco-tourism (e.g. sustainable tourist activities in national parks and nature reserves), cycling, agro-tourism, vine culture, and antique Roman culture. Common approaches for the protection and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage as well as resources are determined by the implementation of common strategies. These strategies can be considered as key factors to ensure sustainable development and to avoid fragmented action and conflicts of diverging interests. In the programme context, the development of a marketing strategy – including a common brand – creates an enabling environment for sustainable tourism strategies which is based on natural and cultural heritage valorisation. In this way the development of broad partnership networks incorporating different programmes, central, regional and local administrations and non-governmental organisations, business support centres and mobility networks is an important instrument.
- Supporting the preservation, reconstruction, development and utilization of cultural and natural heritage with tangible and/or intangible character with cross-border dimension in a sustainable way. With regard to financing cultural heritage from ERDF the EC clearly intends that investments in the renovation of historical buildings or sites and monuments should only be supported if they are part of an overall economic development strategy. The programme cannot replace national budgets in terms of maintenance of cultural heritage. It is evident that the limited financial volume foreseen by the cooperation programme does not allow for larger-scale reconstruction and adaption of cultural heritage investments in the two capital cities Wien and Bratislava. Only pilot investments may be envisaged. In this context it is important to note that a basic joint strategy related to city tourism of the two capital cities is currently lacking.
- Joint promotion of cycle tourism and improvement of cycle tracks with a cross-border dimension taking into account environment-friendly construction.

According to the SEA report cycle tracks are a very good opportunity for awareness raising: e.g. information boards can give details on the area of the cycle track, its specific qualities and how to protect this area, especially when the cycle track leads through nature protection areas.

- Support of mobility management (public transport) as part of cross-border destination management and marketing of tourist products. In particular in rural and more peripheral regions the improvement of sustainable transport facilities is a basic asset to support tourism development. Under IP 6c an integrated approach on transport and mobility is envisaged to develop the “last mile” to the destination. Mobility aspects should form an integral part of project approaches and should not be addressed as purely sectoral issues. According to the SEA report special care should be taken to promote eco-tourism and to enhance environmental transport solutions at the same time since an increase in conventional tourism can lead to an increase in the volume of vehicular traffic, which can cause a multitude of negative environmental impacts.
- Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building to support eco-tourism and environmental transport solutions.

Main target groups supported under the investment priority

- Public and private cultural institutions
- Education and training institutions
- Regional and local authorities
- Border-region communities
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in tourism
- Tourist operators
- Tourist information centres (points)

Types of beneficiaries supported under the investment priority (indicative)

- Local and regional authorities and organisations established and managed by local and regional authorities (including KOOR – Krajské organizácie cestovného ruchu and OOR – Oblastné organizácie cestovného ruchu)
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities
- Non-governmental organisations (including associations and networks)
- European groupings for territorial cooperation

Specific territories targeted under the investment priority

- No specific focus areas are defined. The entire programme area is eligible.

The guiding principles for the selection of operations under the investment priority

To specify the general principles for project selection described in section 5.3 the following theme specific principles should guide the selection of operations:

- Link to a shared policy framework in order to avoid fragmented action and reach a critical mass

- Contribution of a project to the development of the region as a tourist destination
- Link to environment and resource efficiency

The planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable

Common and specific output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 12. Common and programme specific output indicators (by IP)

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
6c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in cultural & natural heritage development (P)	Number	80	Monitoring system	yearly
6c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (P)	Number	16	Monitoring system	yearly
6c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	Number	400	Monitoring system	yearly
6c.1.4	Increase in expected number of visits at supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attraction (EU)	Number	32,000	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator; the baseline is zero

Remark: Output indicators relate to the products or services directly co-financed by the CBC Programme while result indicators relate to change in the region or territory.

2.2.2 Investment priority 6d) Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

2.2.2.1 Specific objective No 2.2 Foster restoration and management of ecological corridors

Strengthen the cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures in order to preserve biodiversity and to contribute to the stability of ecosystems.

The result to be achieved

Suitable habitats and ecological stepping stones are sharply decreasing in the densely populated areas of Europe. The interlinking of natural habitats is of great importance for the sustainment of a functional ecological network. Preserving wildlife corridors ranks among the most important strategies to preserve biodiversity, which enlarges the strategy for the conservation of explicitly protected areas.

However, only a small proportion of the habitats and species of Community interest (Natura 2000 areas) are in a favourable conservation status. Moreover, the goal of developing ecological networks can be in conflict with the expansion of transport infrastructure and urban sprawl. Also a better coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management needs to be achieved. This calls for more integrated concepts with a cross-border perspective.

Cross-border cooperation is an evident precondition for effective approaches to preservation and management in particular when it comes to large-scale bio-corridors such as the Alpine-Carpathian corridor or the wetlands along the border river March-Morava and the Danube river.

An important quality aspect – as well as one of the keys to sustainability – of the initiatives is to include awareness-raising and steps towards local acceptance. The latter point deserves particular attention in the more rural parts of the programme region. Promising examples in terms of awareness-raising are the use of specific species for 'branding' of corridors or pilot actions involving local citizens.

Another major quality aspect refers to the cross-border partnerships. Projects in the period 2007-2013 have provided the room for multi-sectoral partnerships – spanning from universities and NGOs over nature protection authorities to road planning institutions – in order to develop comprehensive approaches. Such broad partnerships could cover all essential results from strategy development to model approaches at local level. Longer-term cooperation of the partners is another key element for the sustainability of results.

Along with the further integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures, integrated flood risk prevention plans along the Danube river and March river should be further extended which take into account ecological principles.

Finally, surface waters (e.g. Lake Neusiedl) and in particular the cross-border river systems of the programme region, i.e. mainly March/Morava and Danube, which form the green backbone, have to be highlighted. Plans for prudent preservation of wetlands and water protection have to harmonise a number of conflicting requirements such as flood risk prevention, the role as transport corridors, in case of Danube in particular the role as waterway, tourism development etc.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- Better managed, protected and gradually upgraded natural habitats including Natura 2000 areas
- Reduced barriers in wildlife corridors to better interlink natural habitats
- Better coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management in the cross-border river system
- Enhanced awareness of the population and the local communities on natural habitats including Natura 2000 areas

The specific objective to strengthen the cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures is measured by an area-based result indicator which reflects the interconnectivity of protected areas in the framework of the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor (ACC). Interconnectivity of areas is essential for the functioning of the ACC as wildlife corridor. For the calculation of the baseline an aggregate of SPA (Special Protection Areas) and SCI (Sites of Conservation Interest)

was used. The major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor were counted based on a common methodology. Target is the reduction of the number of major bottlenecks by around 25% of the baseline situation.

Table 13. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 2.2

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Number of major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor	Number	12	2014	9 (reduction by 25%)	Environmental authorities, WWF	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

SPA (Special protection areas) were designated under the directive on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive). SCI (sites of conservation interest) were designated under the directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

Type and examples of actions to be supported to contribute to specific objective No 2.2 Foster restoration and management of ecological corridors

In accordance with the SFC2014 model, the following part provides an overview of the types of interventions planned to be supported by the cooperation programme. This overview is complemented by concrete thematic examples.

Types of actions:

- Awareness raising, strategy and action plan development (only in truly justified cases since action plans were established in the 2007-2013 period)
- Development and practical implementation of cross-border tools and services (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools)
- Development and practical implementation of physical investments to financing infrastructure and construction works (e.g. green bridge) and financing of equipment to carry out project activities
- Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews)
- Accompanying information and publicity measures to inform stakeholders and the wider public about project activities and outcomes

Examples of actions:

The following examples of action should be supported in order to better integrate cross-border functional ecological networks and green infrastructures

- Interlinking of natural habitats and wildlife corridors by reduction of barriers (e.g. through “green bridges” over transport infrastructures), improvement of land and water management and nature protection; integrated management of habitats, improvement of spatial planning and of the land use policies. Focus should be given on green infrastructures such as Alpine-Carpathian Corridor and other key green infrastructures. Support should target protected areas and their relevant adjacent areas.
- Promoting an integrated approach to better coordinate environmental interest with flood protection, water protection and the further expansion of transport infrastructure by establishing multi-sectoral partnerships.
- Interlinking planning and pilot measures to harmonize flood protection and rehabilitation of cross-border river systems based on the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Flood Directive. It is important to note that this IP does not allow to build flood protection infrastructure (e.g. dams); in general large-scale investment cannot be implemented due to the limited allocations at programme level. **There is a clear focus of specific objective 2.2 on green infrastructure, ‘grey infrastructure’ will not be financed from this programme.**
- Supporting accompanying research and evaluation activities including development of advanced tools for mapping, diagnosing, protecting and managing natural landscapes.
- Promoting of awareness-raising and environmental education as part of wider project action. According to the SEA report teaching activities should promote the integration of environmental education into current curricula. This can trigger a significant environmental change.
- Promoting green infrastructure solutions and urban biodiversity in urban environments.

Main target groups supported under the investment priority

- Organisations responsible for management of protected areas
- Local and regional authorities
- Regional development organisations
- Non-governmental organisations
- Owners of the land in the protected areas
- General public who has an interest in preserving biodiversity

Types of beneficiaries supported under the investment priority (indicative)

- Local and regional authorities and organisations established and managed by local and regional authorities
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities (including the state nature protection of Slovak Republic Štátna ochrana prírody SR)

- Non-governmental organisations
- Environmental organisations
- Research institutions (including universities with research facilities)
- European grouping for territorial cooperation

Specific territories targeted under the investment priority

- Alpine-Carpathian Corridor, wetlands along the rivers Danube, March and Thaya, Little Carpathians and Lake Neusiedl. Territories targeted include Natura 2000 areas and surrounding / interlinking areas.

The guiding principles for the selection of operations under the investment priority

To specify the general principles described in section 5.3 the following theme specific principles should guide the selection of operations:

- Establishment of multi-sectoral partnerships
- Relevance of actions for the development of wildlife corridors or stability of ecosystems

The planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable

Common and specific output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 14. Common and programme specific output indicators (by IP)

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
6d.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of green infrastructures (P)	Number	34	Monitoring system	yearly
6d.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (P)	Number	8	Monitoring system	yearly
6d.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	Number	194	Monitoring system	yearly
6d.1.4	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (EU)	Hectars	1,000	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator

2.2.3 Provisions at priority axis level

2.2.3.1 Performance framework by priority axis

Table 15. The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data
2	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824 (13%)	32,729,412	CA
2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	Number	6	16	MA (monitoring system)
2	Output indicator (ID 6c.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	Number	0	16	MA (monitoring system)
2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	Number	4	8	MA (monitoring system)
2	Output indicator (ID 6d.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	Number	0	8	MA (monitoring system)

2.2.3.2 Categories of intervention by priority axis

Table 16. Dimension 1 Intervention field (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	85 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	4,365,000
2	86 Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites	4,365,000
2	90 Cycle tracks and footpaths	6,872,400
2	91 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	6,108,800
2	94 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage assets	6,108,800

Table 17. Dimension 2 Form of finance (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	01 non-repayable grant	27,820,000

Table 18. Dimension 3 Territory type (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	07 Not applicable	00

Table 19. Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	07 Not applicable	00

A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Not applicable

2.3 Priority axis 3: Supporting sustainable transport solutions

The priority axis includes one investment priority (7c) corresponding to the thematic objective 7 (Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key infrastructure networks).

Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective

Not applicable.

2.3.1 Investment priority 7c) Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low noise) and low carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility

2.3.1.1 Specific objective No 3.1 Support environmentally-friendly transport solutions

Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally-friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area.

The result to be achieved

Economic growth has gone and will also in future go hand in hand with massive growth of transportation. The current trend is a massive growth of road transportation which increases energy consumption and environmental pollution. This overall trend is specifically relevant for the programme area which has in most parts an outstanding economic strength. As a consequence, it is confronted with steadily increasing traffic loads and its adverse effects.

Due to the fact that two capital cities Bratislava and Vienna are located in close proximity, the added value of cross-border approaches is quite evident. First, these cities act as transport hubs and are thus major markets for alternative respectively environmentally-friendly transport modes. Second, suburbanisation is a major driver in traffic development. Finally, the suburbanisation of Bratislava has a growing cross-border dimension.

Given the scale and the dimension of the challenge, the programme interventions will be mostly focused on planning though small-scale pilot investments could accompany promising strategies.

Mobility management fostering environmentally-friendly modes of transport such as public transport, pedestrian and cycle transport should be in the centre of project approaches. The cooperation programme will contribute to greener regional mobility by improved planning tools, new approaches to services on demand, smart integration of transport services in tourism management (specifically under IP 6c) or support to traffic safety programmes.

Investments in environmentally-friendly transport solutions should be based on a clear user and demand orientation and a cost-efficient use of public funds to ensure a broad uptake of the supported solutions and – as a result – better environmental outcomes.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- Better provision and organisation of cross-border public transport supply and services (rail, bus interrelated with cycling and walking).
- Improved mobility management in cities, city-regions and rural areas to raise attractiveness and safety of public and non-motorised transport.
- More environmentally-friendly and efficient handling of goods traffic (freight transport).

The specific objective is measured by a result indicator indicating the capacity in public cross-border transport.

The indicator has been established through a traffic study. The target is defined as a **2% increase of the baseline value** until 2023, i.e. **31,314** people (plus 614).

It is evident that the programme allocation to IP 7c) does not allow for large-scale investment in transport infrastructure but still a visible impact of projects in terms of improved policy-making and pilots is expected. This approach is expressed in the result indicator: a modest but still a visible increase of the capacity.

It is important to see that the capacity offered in cross-border public transport is already quite substantial and from the current perspective improvements can be expected rather for bus lines operating in a closer cross-border range around the city of Bratislava.

Table 20. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 3.1

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Capacity in public cross-border transport on an average work day	Total capacity in person	30,700	2014	31,314	Research in the frame of the project BRAWISIMO	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

Type and examples of actions to be supported to contribute to specific objective No 3.1 Support environmentally-friendly transport solutions

In accordance with the SFC2014 model, the following part provides an overview of the types of interventions planned to be supported by the cooperation programme. This overview is complemented by concrete thematic examples.

Types of actions:

- Awareness raising, strategy and action plan development (as the sole result accepted only in fields where early policy development is justified, i.e. in fields which until now have not been touched by significant projects in the previous funding periods; otherwise obviously accepted as one of the elements of a project)

- Development and practical implementation of cross-border tools and services (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools)
- Development and practical implementation of physical pilot investments to finance infrastructure and equipment to carry out project activities
- Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews)
- Accompanying information and publicity measures to inform stakeholders and the wider public about project activities and outcomes

Examples of actions:

The following indicative examples of action should be supported in order to support environmentally-friendly transport solutions.

- Actions to support the removal of specific bottlenecks in cross-border public transport infrastructure (mostly planning approaches but eventually pilot investments). A truly integrated cross-border network of public transport is not yet visible and will require the establishment of a suitable legal, planning and operating framework. The cooperation programme could contribute to improving the framework conditions by soft action but also hard pilot investments may be supported. Action may include support to licences and introduction of new lines of public transport.
- Developing joint strategies, concepts and action plans for sustainable multimodal mobility in cities, city-regions and rural areas, e.g. for better organisation of public transport links (e.g. by transport associations), mobility management, on demand public transport, promoting cycle and pedestrian traffic, e-mobility, traffic safety, including pilot and small scale infrastructure investments.
- Development of cross-border intelligent transport systems, information systems for passengers, on-line time schedules, e-ticketing, mobile applications, common tariff systems.
- Improvement of regional mobility by building cycling routes for connecting municipalities as a part of integrated transport, e.g. in combination with public transport.
- Cycling may be supported under IP 7c as part of sustainable urban mobility linked to functional urban areas (e.g. metropolitan region of Bratislava spreading across the border), whereas mobility management and cycling may be supported under IP 6c as integrated part of sustainable tourism development.
- Promotion of mobility centres and multi-modal platforms in order to enhance the efficiency, reliability and quality of greener transport modes and services.
- Training support for greener regional mobility (training may be necessary to improve planning tools and develop new approaches to services on demand).
- Further develop multimodal hubs and links to promote emission reducing and energy efficient freight transport. The cooperation programme could contribute to the development of an intermodal strategy for transport and mobility which is pursued under the EUSDR Priority Areas 1a and 1b (mainly by coordination and planning approaches which may be complemented by physical pilot

investments) in order to tackle the dynamic growth of cross border freight traffic as outlined in the analysis.

- Investment into corresponding infrastructure may include the purchase of vehicles/cars (in accordance with the respective legal and state aid provisions), small reconstructions and additional equipment for bus and train stations/stops, for improvement of standards of integrated transport system, building multimodal terminals (parking lots, signs, stops, stop information system), building new or investment into existing ports. **It is not planned to finance hard infrastructure in a “fragmented” way. All hard investments must be part of a strategic approach to achieve a critical mass and visibility of actions. Only innovative pilot action contributing to CO₂ reduction can be supported.**

Main target groups supported under the investment priority

- Authorities responsible for transport and mobility
- Transport operators and alliances
- Research institutions, universities
- General public and enterprises who have an interest in improved regional mobility

Types of beneficiaries supported under the investment priority (indicative)

- Local and regional authorities and organisations established and managed by local and regional authorities
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities
- Specialised agencies
- Universities and research institutions

Specific territories targeted under the investment priority

- No specific focus areas are defined. The entire programme area is eligible.

The guiding principles for the selection of operations under the investment priority

To specify the general principles described in section 5.3 the following theme specific principles should guide the selection of operations:

- Action should be part of cross-border transport solutions and management approaches
- Clear demand responsive and cost-effective solutions to deliver better and sustainable outcomes

The planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable

Common and specific output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 21. Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
7c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	Number	23	Monitoring system	yearly
7c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	Number	7	Monitoring system	yearly
7c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	Number	175	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator. Remark: EU common output indicators such as "Total length of new, upgraded or reconstructed railway lines" are not applicable taking into account the small financial allocation for this IP.

2.3.2 Provisions at priority axis level

2.3.2.1 Performance framework by priority axis

Table 22. The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data
3	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559 (6.7%)	11,358,824	CA
3	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7	MA (monitoring system)
3	Output indicator (ID 7c.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (7c)	Number	0	7	MA (monitoring system)

2.3.2.2 Categories of intervention by priority axis

Table 23. Dimension 1 Intervention field (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	36 Multimodal transport	2,896,500
3	43 Clean urban transport infrastructure and promotion	3,862,000
3	44 Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring control and information systems)	2,896,500

Table 24. Dimension 2 Form of finance (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	01 non-repayable grant	9,655,000

Table 25. Dimension 3 Territory type (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	07 Not applicable	00

Table 26. Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	07 Not applicable	00

A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Not applicable

2.4 Priority axis 4: Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation

2.4.1 Investment priority 11) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions (according to ETC regulation Article 7 (a) iv)

2.4.1.1 Specific objective No 4.1 Strengthen the institutional cooperation

Strengthen the institutional cooperation in the cross-border area through mobilizing stakeholders and building the capacities for planning and acting in the framework of multi-level governance.

The result to be achieved

Institutional cooperation is a key target and the vital element of the programme at the same time. Thus it should be considered as a cross-cutting element of the programme: increased cooperation is an implicit result throughout all investment priorities.

Moreover cross-border governance and institutional cooperation should be strengthened in the following areas:

Projects or initiatives which trigger off cooperation in new policy areas, e.g. initiatives with a catalytic function are of importance/interest/etc. Institutions should develop capacities to act as intermediaries and interlocutors thus creating an enabling environment. This is of particular interest in the programme area since there are marked differences in the administrative system and developing partnerships in an environment of multi-level governance remains a challenge.

The increased visibility of new approaches to cooperation at regional and local level is another aspect which should be fostered. Visible actions will help create an interest in neighbouring regions, municipalities or communities and should contribute to increased awareness for various policy issues.

A third major aspect is the support of cooperation in those policy areas where major societal challenges arise in a mid-term or long-term perspective. These challenges are multi-faceted due to the marked urban dimension and the strong rural dimension in the programme region. In policy areas where cooperation is in an early stage the development of shared perspectives based on data analysis can be considered as first a first mile stone. More advanced cooperation will venture into capacity building, mutual learning, and strategy development paired with pilot actions to be tested. These are essential elements on the pathway to sustainable cooperation and new institutional patterns.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- Improved institutional coordination and strategic planning through development of common planning processes, tools and data bases (e.g. powerful cross-border information and planning tools in order to deepen the Twin City concept and better coordinated urban-rural development)

- Improved institutional cooperation in areas with major societal challenges such as health, social inclusion and poverty (e.g. better coordinated development of social infrastructure and services)
- Improved governance systems to prepare for emergency situations (e.g. more powerful civil protection schemes in relation to flood protection, strengthening emergency response services)
- More effective frameworks to support small scale projects (e.g. targeted support for project generation with a cross border scope)

The specific objective to strengthen the institutional cooperation is measured by a result indicator which is reflecting the (evolving) cooperation intensity. The baseline of the result indicator was established through a survey among key actors in the programme area. In a brief questionnaire the actors were asked to assess the intensity and current state of cross-border cooperation related to the specific fields of action under this specific objective. The assessment is expressed on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating “no interaction at all” and 7 indicating a fully developed cooperation level between SK and AT actors.

Table 27. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 4.1

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen institutional capacities	Ordinal scale, min 1 - max 7	2.9	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)	Survey among key actors (potential actors in the CBC area)	2018, 2020, 2023

Remark: The result indicator needs to capture the desired change in the programme area, be close to policy, and not relate only to programme beneficiaries, but to the whole target population. However, result indicators may measure only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved.

2.4.1.2 Specific objective No 4.2 Strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions

Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes.

The result to be achieved

For lower age groups, intercultural learning and basic language training remains a continued focus due to its vital role in establishing a positive notion of the neighbouring country. Cooperation between primary schools will be targeted to systematic actions supporting better school achievements of pupils. Positive change in quality of education will be based on introduction of an innovative content of education and new educational methods. Activities aiming at improvement of educational process (methods, forms and instruments) can effectively support joint efforts in achieving higher quality in early childhood and primary education. Existing networks and already implemented projects in the field offer a good framework for initiating mature and strongly innovative activities.

The cooperation programme can play an important role in adapting the learning system at pre-primary and primary level through collaboration of educational institutions with relevant local and regional stakeholders. The cooperation is expected to produce jointly developed education programmes, joint curricula and participating pupils/teachers/students in cross-border initiatives.

Overall, the main envisaged results are:

- Improved common frameworks and offers for education and qualification (intercultural learning, basic language training, better school achievements of pupils, higher quality in early childhood)

Cooperation projects under the investment priority will be in principle non-investment actions. Small scale investments will be allowed in fully justified cases contributing to the achievement of objectives.

The specific objective to strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education to jointly develop and implement joint educational programmes is measured by a result indicator measuring the intensity of cooperation between key actors in the CBC area.

The baseline value for the indicator was established through a survey among key actors involved in the pre-primary and primary education in CBC area. In a brief questionnaire the actors were asked to assess the intensity and current state of cross-border cooperation. The assessment is expressed on an ordinal scale: 1 stands for no interaction; 7 marks the highest intensity.

Table 28. Programme specific result indicators for specific objective 4.2

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions	Ordinal scale, min 1 - max 7	2.3	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)	Survey among key actors in the field of education (potential actors in the CBC area)	2018, 2020, 2023

Type and examples of actions to be supported to contribute to specific objective No 4.1 Strengthen the institutional cooperation and No 4.2 Strengthening the cooperation between educational institutions

In accordance with the SFC2014 model, the following part provides an overview of the types of interventions planned to be supported by the cooperation programme. This overview is complemented by more concrete thematic examples.

Types of actions:

- Awareness raising, strategy and action plan development (as the sole result accepted only in fields where early policy development is justified, i.e. in fields which until now have not been touched by significant projects in the previous funding periods; otherwise obviously accepted as one of the elements of a project)
- Development and practical implementation of cross-border tools and services (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools)
- Development and practical implementation of investments to finance products and equipment to carry out project activities
- Development and practical implementation of training and capacity building (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews)
- Accompanying information and publicity measures to inform stakeholders and the wider public about project activities and outcomes

Examples of actions under the objective No 4.1: Strengthen the institutional cooperation

The following examples of action should be supported in order to strengthen the institutional cooperation and the capacities for planning and acting in the framework of multi-level territorial governance:

- Establishing frameworks to support small scale projects in order to mobilize a wider public for building up of CBC partnerships.
- Developing coherent and integrated frameworks in spatial planning in particular in the Danube-March-Thaya region, in the Bratislava cross-border agglomeration and in the Twin City context (Vienna & Bratislava). Better coordination of spatial planning and mobility and transport planning (CO₂ sensible spatial planning).
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of strategic and regional planning and development (e.g. more suitable composition of partnerships, better mobilization

of financial resources, to improve participative processes, development of common planning tools and data bases, development of a joint academy for capacity building, fostering evaluation of interventions). This includes common planning tools and data bases for a better flood risk management in the cross-border river system.

- Establishing institutional cooperation to tackle health, social inclusion and poverty challenges. Improving legal and policy frameworks, developing strategies and action plans. Development of joint capacities and coordinated delivery of services.
- Improve the preparedness of public authorities and civil protection organisations to better monitor and manage risks such as floods.

Examples of actions under the objective No 4.2: Strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions

The following examples of action should be supported in order to improve education, training and lifelong learning schemes:

- Cooperation projects promoting active involvement of teachers, providers, school management, parents and wider community in the educational process in kindergartens and primary schools;
- Collaboration on development, upgrade and implementation of joint educational programmes (curricula) with involvement of relevant partners;
- Introduction of new forms of education emphasising the individualised approach to pupils in kindergartens and primary schools, complemented by teacher training to effectively support schools achievements of pupils;
- Development of framework for recognition of qualifications demanded in the cross-border region and implementation of pilot actions;

Main target groups supported under the investment priority

- Local and regional authorities
- Regional development organisations
- Social services providers
- Non-governmental organisations
- Pupils
- Pedagogic staff
- Interest groups
- Population of the cross-border region

Types of beneficiaries supported under the investment priority (indicative)

- Local and regional authorities and organisations established and managed by local and regional authorities (including KOČR – Krajské organizácie cestovného ruchu and OČR – Oblastné organizácie cestovného ruchu)
- National authorities and organisations established and managed by national authorities
- Non-governmental organisations
- Associations, networks

-
- Educational institutions (kindergartens, primary schools)
 - Other supporting institutions (e.g. school inspection)
 - European grouping for territorial cooperation (EGTC)

Specific territories targeted under the investment priority

- No specific focus areas are defined. The entire programme area is eligible.

The guiding principles for the selection of operations under the investment priority

To specify to the general principles for project selection described in section 5.3 the following theme specific principles should guide the selection of operations:

- Relevance of an action to develop the policy on the ground
- Clear approach on capacity building for administrative personnel
- Concreteness and usability of project deliverables (e.g. education programmes)

The planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable

Common and specific output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 29. Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
11.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in institutional cooperation (P)	Number	80	Monitoring system	yearly
11.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools (P)	Number	8	Monitoring system	yearly
11.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	Number	200	Monitoring system	yearly
11.2.1	No of jointly major products & services related to pre-primary and primary education (P)	Number	5	Monitoring system	yearly
11.2.2	No of educational institutions directly involved in cooperation at pre-primary and primary level of education (P)	Number	25	Monitoring system	yearly
11.2.3	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	Number	625	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator

2.4.2 Provisions at priority axis level

2.4.2.1 Performance framework by priority axis

Table 30. The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data
4	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856 (13%)	16,683,505	CA
4	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (11)	Number	4	13	MA (monitoring system)
4	Output indicator (ID 11.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools	Number	0	8	MA (monitoring system)

2.4.2.2 Categories of intervention by priority axis

Table 31. Dimension 1 Intervention field (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	115 Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal pathways for reintegrating into education and training	5,050,000
4	119 Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance	7,304,783
4	120 Capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at national, regional and local level	1,826,196

Table 32. Dimension 2 Form of finance (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	01 non-repayable grant	14,180,979

Table 33. Dimension 3 Territory type (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	07 Not applicable	00

Table 34. Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	07 Not applicable	00

A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Not applicable

2.5 Description of the Priority axis 5 for Technical Assistance

2.5.1 Specific objective No 5.1 Technical Assistance

Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme.

The result to be achieved

The use of Technical Assistance funds should ensure the functioning of all major bodies which act in programme implementation, i.e. in particular the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, the FLC, Audit and Certifying Authorities and the Regional Bodies.

The key results of the programme are successful projects with visible outputs. The services supported from Technical Assistance are considered as a mean to achieve this result. The programme management bodies should ensure competent services to the beneficiaries throughout all stages of the Project Management Cycle, i.e. from project generation, selection and contracting to control and closure.

With a view to the European level the programme management bodies will ensure sound reporting which in the end should contribute to the acknowledgement of the programme achievements by the relevant European Commission services. Thus reporting should assist to demonstrate the value-added of ETC-programmes.

A further dimension is the work in information and communication.

- Firstly a key point is to ensure an easy access to information for all interested applicants and beneficiaries. With a view to more technical information for applicants and beneficiaries the options of internet-based online services should be paired with the offer for face-to-face consultation. Thus the broad variety of potential applicants and beneficiaries as well as their differing communication requirements should be taken into account.
- Secondly publicity and information should contribute to the visibility of programme achievements in the programme region through a broad variety of means such as dissemination of good practice, events for a broader audience, campaigns etc.

An important point is the option to introduce specific anti-corruption and anti-fraud measures next to the general ones taken at level of the Member States; the primary intent is to introduce preventive measures.

Finally funds from TA ensure that the Audit Authority fulfils the tasks according to Article 127 of Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 and Article 25 of Reg. (EU) 1299/2013.

Table 35. Programme specific result indicators by specific objective

Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Not applicable since the contribution of ERDF funds for TA does not exceed EUR 15,000,000 (acc. to Regulation 1299/2013, Article 8, lit. c) and Implementing Regulation 288/2014, Annex II)						

2.5.2 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objective 5.1

Examples of actions supported in order to ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme are:

- Adequate staffing of Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat
- Adequate staffing of FLC and RB(s)
- Office and IT cost for these programme bodies
- Services and staff required by the Audit and Certifying Authorities and evt. bodies established for cooperation related to these tasks
- Development and maintenance of the Monitoring System
- Costs related to meetings of the Monitoring Committee (MC), sub-groups established by the MC (e.g. Steering Group Evaluation) and technical working groups (e.g. for the elaboration of templates and guidance documents, eligibility rules etc.)
- Publicity and information measures
- Services related to evaluation, indicator development and programming for the forthcoming period
- Anti-corruption and anti-fraud measures

Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 36. Output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
5.1.1	No of projects committed and successfully closed (P)	Number	53 (without TA)	Monitoring system	yearly
5.1.2	Number of major publicity events (P)	Number	8 (1 per year in the period 2015-2022)	Monitoring system	yearly
5.1.3	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	Number	10 (2 per year in the period 2015-2019)	Monitoring system	yearly
5.1.4	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA (EU)	Number in Full Time Equivalent	18	Monitoring system	yearly

(EU): EU common indicator (P): Programme specific indicator

2.5.3 Categories of intervention

Table 37. Dimension 1 Intervention field (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5 TA	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	4,027,360
5 TA	122 Evaluation and studies	60,000
5 TA	123 Information and communication	466,200

Table 38. Dimension 2 Form of finance (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	01 non-repayable grant	4,553,560

Table 39. Dimension 3 Territory type (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	07 Not applicable	00

Table 40. Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms (breakdown of Union support)

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
5	07 Not applicable	00

3 Financing plan

3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (EUR)

Table 41. Financial appropriation from the ERDF

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF	0	9,260,773	7,849,265	14,262,065	14,547,307	14,838,253	15,135,018	75,892,681
IPA amounts (where applicable)								
ENI amounts (where applicable)								
Total	0	9,260,773	7,849,265	14,262,065	14,547,307	14,838,253	15,135,018	75,892,681

3.2 Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in EUR)

Table 42. Financing Plan

PA	Fund	Basis for the calculation of the Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)	For information
					National public funding (c)	National private funding (1) (d)			
Priority axis 1	ERDF	Total cost	19,683,142	3,473,496	676,376	2,797,120	23,156,638	85%	
Priority axis 2	ERDF	Total cost	27,820,000	4,909,412	2,023,529	2,885,883	32,729,412	85%	
Priority axis 3	ERDF	Total cost	9,655,000	1,703,824	617,647	1,086,177	11,358,824	85%	
Priority axis 4	ERDF	Total cost	14,180,979	2,502,526	527,001	1,975,525	16,683,505	85%	
Priority axis 5	ERDF	Total cost	4,553,560	803,570	803,570	0	5,357,130	85%	
Total	ERDF		75,892,681	13,392,828	4,648,123	8,744,705	89,285,509		

3.3 Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Table 43. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1	Thematic objective 1	19,683,142	3,473,496	23,156,638
Priority axis 2	Thematic objective 6	27,820,000	4,909,412	32,729,412
Priority axis 3	Thematic objective 7	9,655,000	1,703,824	11,358,824
Priority axis 4	Thematic objective 11	14,180,979	2,502,526	16,683,505
Priority axis 5	Technical assistance	4,553,560	803,570	5,357,130
Total		75,892,681	13,392,828	89,285,509

Table 44. Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
Priority axis 1	1,512,630	2.0%
Priority axis 2	10,364,400	13.7%
Priority axis 3	3,862,000	5.1%
Priority axis 4	0	0%
Priority axis 5	0	0%
Total	15,739,030	20.8%

4 Integrated approach to territorial development

Description of the integrated approach of the cooperation programme

The cooperation programme addresses specifically sub-territories (“hot spots”) within the programme area where an integrated territorial approach – which is mainly understood as a comprehensive and coordinated approach to planning and governance – will be targeted. Such approaches should be supported in the following focus areas:

- Supporting cooperation in spatial planning and social infrastructure provision in the **Bratislava cross-border agglomeration** (focus area 1); cross-border urban sprawl poses a multi-faceted challenge for local and regional governance in the urban territories of Bratislava and the adjacent municipalities on Austrian side.

Priority axis 4 (Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation) will specifically contribute to improved institutional coordination and strategic planning in the Bratislava cross-border agglomeration through development of common planning processes, tools and data bases. Also a better coordinated development of social infrastructure and services should be achieved in this focus area.

- Strengthening coordinated planning, funding and project implementation in the **Danube-March-Thaya Region** (focus area 2) where the differing demands of nature protection, flood protection, agriculture and forestry, transportation and settlement areas require prudent strategy development and negotiation of compromises.

Priority axis 2 (Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity) will contribute to better managed, protected and gradually upgraded natural habitats including Natura 2000 areas in the Danube-March-Thaya region. Also a better coordination of environmental protection and flood risk management in the cross-border river system should be achieved. It is also planned to support joint and integrated approaches for sustainable tourism in this highly sensitive area. Common approaches for the protection and sustainable use of natural heritage are considered as key factors to ensure sustainable development and to avoid fragmented action and conflicts of diverging interests.

- Strengthening the **Smart City cooperation Vienna-Bratislava** (focus area 3).

The capital cities Bratislava and Vienna are the major RDTI centres of both countries and offer rich potentialities to further collaborative research and innovation activities. Priority axis 1 (Contributing to a smart cross-border-region) aims to foster more collaborative research and innovation activities and competent networks between R&D centres, higher education, enterprises and the public sector to establish longer term cooperation in technological and non-technological fields and to enhance the commercial use of research results.

Moreover, the future development of transport brings about significant challenges for the region. Due to expected further dynamic integration of the growth poles Vienna and Bratislava and ongoing suburbanisation, the growth of the cross-border traffic will continue. Priority axis 3 (Supporting sustainable transport solutions) supports improved mobility management in the Vienna-Bratislava agglomeration area to raise attractiveness and safety of public and non-motorised transport. Also a more environmentally-friendly and efficient handling of goods traffic (e.g. via the connecting Danube river) should be achieved.

In order support integrated approaches the establishment of a **common multi-annual action plan** (an internal document) is envisaged to be set up by the SK and AT programme bodies.

4.1 Community led local development (where appropriate)

Not applicable

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Not applicable

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

Not applicable

4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

The SK-AT cooperation programme pays due attention to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) both in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase.

A) Programming process

During the programming process, the definition of the strategy, the selection and description of the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the cooperation programme take into consideration in particular the following actions of the EUSDR Action Plan:

TO	IP	Corresponding EUSDR key actions	Related priority areas (PA)
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action: "To cooperate in implementing the flagship initiative "Innovation Union of the Europe 2020 Strategy" in the Danube Region countries"	PA 07 Knowledge Society
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action: "To foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in areas of competence in the Danube Region." (e.g. establishing a cluster network for the EUSDR)	PA 08 Competitiveness
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action: "To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure"	PA 07 Knowledge Society
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action: "To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points"	PA 07 Knowledge Society
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action: Improvement of the vocational training, subject to participation by the private sector (a dual system of practice and theory) through pilot projects. "To support enterprises through high performing training and qualification schemes.	PA 08 Competitiveness

TO	IP	Corresponding EUSDR key actions	Related priority areas (PA)
1 Research & innovation	1b	Action/Work area: "To support lifelong learning and expanding learning mobility"	PA 09 People & Skills
11 Governance	11	Action: To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies.	PA 09 People & Skills
11 Governance	11	Action "To build Metropolitan Regions in the Danube Region". Facilitate a network of metropolitan areas and systems of cities.	PA 10 Institutional capacity and cooperation
11 Governance	11	Action: To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments.	PA 09 People & Skills
11 Governance	11	Action: To improve cross-sector policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges.	PA 09 People & Skills
11 Governance	11	Action "To facilitate the administrative cooperation of communities living in border regions"	PA 10 Institutional capacity and cooperation
6 Environment	6c	Action: To build on cultural diversity as strength of the Danube Region.	PA 03 Culture & Tourism
6 Environment	6c	Action: To promote sustainable tourism.	PA 03 Culture & Tourism
6 Environment	6c	Action: To further develop and intensify Activity Tourism.	PA 03 Culture & Tourism
6 Environment	6c	Action "To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development"	PA 06 Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils
6 Environment	6d	Action: "To develop and adopt one single overarching floods management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin". Implement Danube wide flood risk management plans to include significant reduction of flood risk by 2021, also taking into account potential impacts of climate change.	PA 05 Environmental Risks
6 Environment	6d	Action: "To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including "green infrastructure")"	PA 05 Environmental Risks
6 Environment	6d	Action "To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats". Maintain ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, including degraded soils.	PA 06 Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils
6 Environment	6d	Action "To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively"	PA 06 Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils
7 Transport	7c	Action: "To promote sustainable freight transport in the Danube Region"	PA 1A Mobility Waterways
7 Transport	7c	Action: To ensure sustainable metropolitan transport systems and mobility	PA 1B Mobility Rail-Road-Air

B) Implementation of the programme

During the implementation, the cooperation programme will ensure appropriate coordination with the macro-regional EU Strategy for the Danube Region by

- Governance arrangements for ongoing mutual information exchange, coordination and joint planning in areas of joint interest during the programme implementation: on Austrian side the “working group CBC” in the framework of ÖROK (the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning) will act as national committee and will ensure a continuous and regular, institutionalised exchange of information on macro-regional strategies among programme partners; vice versa information about programme activities will be reported to the established national coordination platform for the EUSDR (and eventual future macro-regional strategies with AT participation). Furthermore, the implementation of the cross-border cooperation programme will be embedded into the strategic monitoring process STRAT.AT 2020 and the Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic. The coordination will be ensured by the Office of Government, which acts as coordinator of EU SDR and ESIF in the country.
- During the inception phase of the programme closer working relationships between programme partners and EUSDR stakeholders will be sought in order to identify issues and activities of joint interest in the implementation phase; this should foster the awareness among programme partners who are involved in project generation as well as prepare the ground for capitalisation actions at a later stage (i.e. once the programme can show relevant results)
- Establishing a EUSDR specific category in the monitoring system. Consequently, funding activities and/or projects contributing to the EUSDR will be identified in an appropriate way. This approach includes the consideration of EUSDR aspects in programme evaluations and reports, specifying how the cooperation programme contributes to the challenges and priority actions identified by the EUSDR.

5 Implementing provision for the cooperation programme

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 45. Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of authority/body	Head of the authority/body
Managing authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Dobrovičova 12, 812 66 Bratislava, Slovak Republic	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
Certifying authority, where applicable	Section of European Funds, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovak Republic	General director of the Section of European Funds
Audit authority	Audit and Control Section, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovak Republic	General director of the Audit and Control Section

Table 46. The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

The Certifying authority	Section of European Funds, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
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Table 47. Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

Authority/body	Name of authority/body	Head of the authority/body
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Dobrovičova 12, 812 66 Bratislava, Slovak Republic	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovak Republic
	Provincial Government of Lower Austria Landhausplatz 1, 3109 St. Pölten, Austria Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH Marktstraße 3, 7000 Eisenstadt, Austria City of Vienna Schlesinger Platz 2, 1080 Wien, Austria	Head of the respective control unit
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	Audit and Control Section, Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovak Republic	General director of the Audit and Control Section

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

The Managing Authority in agreement with the programme partners from Austria and Slovakia set up the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) for the programme in compliance with the Article 23, paragraph 2 of the Regulation (EU) 1299/2013.

The head office of the JTS is located in the Slovak Republic, within the official structures of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MA):

Joint (Technical) Secretariat for the OP Slovakia-Austria 2014-2020
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
Department of the Cross-border Cooperation Programmes
Prievozská 2/B
825 25 Bratislava
Slovak Republic

Next to the head office a branch office of the JTS will be established in Vienna on the location and under the same organisational and employment structure the JTS of the 2007-2013 programme, i.e.

Municipal Department for European Affairs of the City of Vienna
Schlesingerplatz 2
1080 Vienna

The main role of the JTS is to closely cooperate with the MA and Monitoring Committee to effectively support the implementation of the programme. Further activities of the JTS comprise the support to the Audit and Certifying Authorities. Activities of the JTS during the programme period 2014-2020 will be financed from the Technical Assistance resources.

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

The smooth and effective launch and effective implementation of the programme will be based on the close cooperation between the programme partners, i.e. the programme authorities [Managing Authority, (MA); Certifying Authority (CA) and Audit Authority (AA)] and the five participating regions.

Managing Authority (MA)

The MA acts in accordance with the Article 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 and the additional functions related to programme management in accordance with Regulation 1299/2013, Article 23.

The MA bears the overall responsibility for the programme management, in particular the financial management which is based on the principle of sound financial management and is being documented in a computerised (monitoring) system. More detailed provisions at programme level will be laid down in the management and control system. The MA is also responsible for the comprehensive and complete information for the work of the Monitoring Committee and the reporting towards the European Commission.

A key function of the MA is to guide and supervise the process of project selection based on the approved selection criteria taking into account the criteria set out in Chapter 8 of this document. Adequate provisions at the assessment stage shall ensure that the MC can take its decision in full awareness of the contents and preparedness of the project.

Upon selection the MA is in charge of the contracting procedure (for more details please see the section on the project cycle). The contract will ensure that key obligations of the beneficiary (such as the use of a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code) are being met.

Prior to contracting also compliance with state aid rules (in particular de-minimis support) will be ensured in close cooperation with the Austrian authorities. Where assistance is granted from the Funds to a large enterprise, the MA will make a plausibility check in order to ensure that the financial contribution from the Funds does not result in a substantial loss of jobs (i.e. a volume of more than 500 jobs) in existing locations within the Union.

The MA will also be in charge of establishing an effective procedure for the handling of complaints. If the applicant considers that basic rules for contribution from ESI Funds were not respected he can follow the legal remedies defined in national legislation (Slovak Republic and Austria). All arrangements for the examination of complaints concerning the ESI Funds will be described in the manuals for applicants/beneficiaries.

With a view to the cornerstones of financial management of the programme the responsibility for the verification process (also briefly labelled as First Level Control – FLC) has been assigned to both Member States. The MA will ensure that the designated controllers carry out the functions in accordance with the relevant Regulations and that control procedures follow the legal hierarchy of the key documents such as the Delegated Act 481/2014 and the eligibility rules at programme level as well as eventual national provisions. Since the participating Member States share the ultimate responsibility for the verification process close cooperation on this key task is foreseen.

The MA has a major role in guiding and coordinating the process for the timely annual accounting. Thus appropriate coordination procedures with CA and AA will be set-up.

The MA will ensure that an evaluation plan is drawn up and submitted for approval to the MC.

Monitoring Committee (MC)

The MC will act in accordance with the provisions in the Regulation (EU) 1299/2013, Articles 12, 18 as well as Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, Articles 49, 110 and 127 and the Rules of Procedure as approved in its first meeting upon constitution.

The MC will ensure that the participating Member States establish eligibility rules at programme level. The MC will select the operations in accordance with the approved selection criteria and the underlying methodology for assessment and selection. Further on the MC will have a supervisory function for the programme management, i.e. it will review regularly the implementation and performance of the programme based on indicators, performance reviews and evaluations and it may make observations to the MA if deemed appropriate. The annual and final implementation reports will be approved by the MC. Proposals for programme amendments will be presented by the MA to the MC for approval.

The MC will meet at least once per year.

Certifying Authority (CA)

The Certifying Authority (CA) acts in accordance with the Article 126 of Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 and bears the main responsibility for drawing up and submitting the payment applications to the European Commission (EC). The shared information basis of MA and CA will be the computerised (monitoring) system which also provides all necessary information on the execution of verifications by the FLC. Based on the financial information delivered through the system the CA will certify the annual account: in order to deliver the information requested by the EC in time, the MA, CA and AA will closely cooperate.

Due emphasis will be paid to ensure quick and full transfer of information between MA, CA and AA related to detected irregularities and recovery procedures. Adequate provisions in the management and control system ensure that information between CA and the Audit Authority (AA) is exchanged regularly and in case of the detection of irregularities. Based on the computerised (monitoring) system the CA will keep an account of the amounts recovered and withdrawn and will ensure respectively control the repayment of recovered funds.

Audit Authority (AA)

The single Audit Authority (AA) will act in accordance with Article 127 of Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 and Reg. (EU) 1299/2013. The AA is mainly responsible to perform system and sample audits in compliance with the relevant Regulations thereby taking internationally accepted audit standards into account. The audits will be performed on basis of an audit strategy. The AA will ensure that the audit opinion and the control report is delivered in due time to draw up the annual account.

Joint Secretariat (JS)

The JS supports the MA and the MC in their functions. The key task is the smooth implementation of the project cycle in the programme. This refers to all stages of the Cycle starting from guidance to applicants over selection and contracting procedures to monitoring project implementation and managing payment requests.

At the application stage the JS will ensure the provision of comprehensive information and consultation for applicants from both Member States. This will be done in close cooperation with the representatives of the regions. Information will be offered on the programme website, in information events and upon request in individual consultation meetings. The advice and information will be supported by comprehensive guidance documents.

As regards registration and assessment of applications the JS will be in charge of the registration of applications and perform the administrative (formal and eligibility) as well as the quality assessment. For the quality assessment the JS might be – where necessary – supported by regional experts.

The JS will be in charge of informing the potential beneficiaries about the results of the selection procedure. At the contracting stage the JS will prepare the draft ERDF contract as well as support the Austrian and Slovak institutions in the elaboration of co-financing contracts through the provision of data.

At the implementation stage the JS will assist beneficiaries in all tasks and requirements in order to safeguard an effective and efficient implementation. The key

function of JS at this stage is the management of payment requests. Throughout the programme period the JS will monitor the performance of projects.

Referring to programme management the JS will support the MA in particular in the set-up of the computerised (monitoring) system, the elaboration of the annual and final reports on implementation, the preparation and implementation of the communication strategy, and upon prior agreement between MA and AA the JS will also support the single AA in the fulfilment of its tasks (mostly through provision of data).

Project cycle

Guidance for applicants

Applicants may use the option to consult their project ideas or applications with the JS or the representatives of the participating regions.

- Burgenland represented by Regionalmanagement Burgenland
- Amt der Niederösterreichischen Landesregierung
- Magistratsabteilung 27 der Stadt Wien
- Bratislava region, department of Strategy, Regional Development and Project Management
- Trnava region

Guidance in writing will be provided in the Manuals which are available as downloads on the programme website.

Assessment and selection

- The JTS has the overall responsibility for carrying out the assessment of received applications and may consult regional experts on certain criteria. For the selection of projects for receiving assistance under the programme, the responsibility stays exclusively with the MC.
- The assessment process consists of three distinctive phases, each of them using a specific set of criteria: 1. Formal Check, 2. Eligibility assessment and 3. Quality assessment.
- During the assessment process the national authorities and organisations responsible for nature protection may be asked for their statement to clarify the impact of the operation on environment. Detailed provisions will be described in the other programme documents.
- Each application will be approved by consensus within the MC. During the selection process the MC should take into account and discuss JTS remarks. In case remarks can be clarified, the reasoning should be specified in the MC meeting minutes.

The lead partners get informed on the results of MC by the JTS which sends the decision on approval/disapproval to the lead partner. In case of conditions formulated by the MC the lead partners should submit required documents or the revised application form to the JTS complying with the conditions set by the MC

Selection criteria

The guiding principles for the selection of operations - as well as for the qualitative assessment by the JTS prior to selection - are based on the principles which have been applied in the 2007-2013 programming period:

- **Relevance of the contents for the programme** (focus on the intended activities and outputs)
- **Quality of methods, management and organisation** (logic of the project, approach and capacity for management)
- **Justification of budget** (economy, efficiency, transparency)
- **Regional dimension** (contribution to respectively coherence with key strategies at regional and national level)
- **Cooperation criteria** (synthesis of several aspects based on the four cooperation criteria as defined for the programme; at this stage the cooperation criteria will be considered from a qualitative perspective; the check whether the minimum requirements according to Article 12.(4) of Regulation 1299/2013 are met (i.e. that a minimum of three criteria is met and that joint development and implementation is among these criteria) will be checked as part of the formal and eligibility assessment)
- **Quality of partnership** (balance, capacity, policy relevance and potential outreach, potentialities for synergies)
- **Cross-border impact** (clear rationale and evidence for increased policy lever or effectiveness due to CBC approach)
- **Sustainability** (provisions for shared use after project end, synergies with other ongoing or planned major projects/initiatives)

The key instrument to ensure the compliance of the selected operations with the three horizontal principles, i.e. sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and equality between men and women will be a comprehensive section in the quality assessment of the operations. In this case a thorough front-of-pipe check and eventual subsequent binding agreements related to improvement of the application are considered far more effective than end-of-pipe monitoring. However, the aspect will also be monitored during project implementation.

The quality check will be based on the guiding questions presented in the previous section. At this stage a thorough compliance check of the application with a view to the horizontal principles is most effective since:

- Potentially adverse impacts can be subject to clarification with the applicant in order to provide additional information to the MC prior to the selection procedure.
- The MC can react to potentially non-compliant elements of the application and consider it in decision-making since it is part of the assessment sheet provided by the JTS.
- Remedial action related to visible adverse impacts or neglect of horizontal principles can become a condition as part of the approval.
- Specific reporting duties can be anchored in the contractual agreements with the beneficiary and can be checked as part of the regular project monitoring (based on the regular progress reporting done by the beneficiaries).

The key elements of the compliance check – i.e. primarily the guiding questions the check is based on – will be presented and explained in the guidance documents for the applicants and beneficiaries in order to make sure that the requirement is visible and transparent.

Where assistance is granted from the Funds to a large enterprise, the Managing Authority shall assure itself that the financial contribution from the Funds does not result in a substantial loss of jobs in existing locations within the Union. In order to ensure that the requirement is met a plausibility check will be carried out by the Managing Authority and the JTS as part of the assessment of the operation.

Information to applicants

The applicant will be informed about the result of the selection procedure. The notification of the Monitoring Committee's decision for the applicants will explain eventual conditions and – in case of rejection – also the underlying reasons.

After the applicant has received the Decision on approval/approval with condition or disapproval of the project he can appeal against the Decision. The appeal procedure is defined in more detail in Slovak Act No. 292/2014 (par.22) – the procedure will also be outlined in the Manual for Applicants.

Procedure for the signature of the ERDF subsidy contract

The ERDF subsidy contract is concluded between the Managing Authority as providers of financial contribution and the applicant - the Lead Partner, whose application has been approved by the MC. After project approval the JTS elaborates the draft ERDF subsidy contract and forwards it to the Lead Partner. This draft contract is elaborated in triplicate and shall contain the signature and stamp of the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority shall determine the deadline for acceptance of the draft contract by the applicant.

On behalf of the Managing Authority the ERDF subsidy contract is signed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The contract shall be signed after issuing the decision on approval (signed by minister) of the project and after the signing of the Partnership Agreement between the project partners.

The JTS checks the received signed original of the contracts and the electronic versions of the contract are inserted to the programme monitoring system.

Designation of financial control bodies

The body designated to carry out control task in Slovakia is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR. Designated controllers for Interreg V-A SK-AT are within the same body which is responsible for carrying out management verifications for cooperation programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal. Controllers for Interreg V-A SK_AT and controllers for the programme under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal programme work within different departments in the same ministry. Controllers for four Interreg V-A programmes (SK-AT, HU-SK, PL-SK, SK-CR) are grouped in one ministry unit that is specialized for controlling the CBC projects.

In Austria, the bodies designated to carry out control tasks are the same as in the period 2007-2013:

- Regionalmanagement Burgenland, Abteilung Controlling
- Amt der Niederösterreichischen Landesregierung, Gruppe Raumordnung, Umwelt, Verkehr. EU Finanzkontrolle und Kreditverwaltung
- Magistratsabteilung 27 der Stadt Wien, Dezernat Ausgabenkontrolle

5.4 Apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or by the Commission

Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid (according to Article 122(2) of the CPR), the Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the Lead Partner. The Project Partners shall repay the Lead Partner the amounts unduly paid in accordance with the agreement existing between them (according to Article 27(2) of the Regulation (EU) 1299/2013).

Upon request of the responsible Member State which reimbursed the amount to the Programme budget, the Managing Authority shall provide to this Member State all relevant information concerning the claim of recourse against a Lead partner and/or a project partner or sole beneficiary within two months from the date of request.

If the Lead Partner does not succeed in securing repayment from other beneficiaries or if the Managing Authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the Lead Partner, the Member State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the Managing Authority any amounts unduly paid to that beneficiary. The Managing Authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union (according to Article 273) of the Regulation (EU) 1299/2013.

For a systemic irregularity or financial correction on programme level that cannot be linked to a specific Member State, the liability shall be jointly borne by the Member States in proportion to the ERDF claimed to the European Commission for the period which forms the basis for the financial correction.

For technical assistance expenditure incurred by the MS the liability shall be borne by the MS concerned.

In the case of irregularities that result from the actions taken by the Managing Authority and/or the Joint Technical Secretariat, liability towards the European Commission and the Monitoring Committee shall be borne by the Member State hosting the Managing Authority. In case of irregularities caused by the body hosting and administrating the JTS branch in Vienna the liability shall be borne by the host institution.

Detailed provisions on the division of responsibilities between the Member States in case of irregularities will be provided in the relevant programme documentation.

5.5 Use of the Euro

Not applicable.

5.6 Involvement of partners

Developing programmes according to the “partnership principle” is a distinct requirement by EU legislation. According to Article 5 of Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 the preparation of the cooperation programme should involve a partnership with competent regional and local authorities. The partnership shall also include the following partners: competent urban and other public authorities; economic and social partners; and relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non discrimination.

The main reason for involving stakeholders in programming is to identify mutual interests and needs, secure commitment and ownership for the programme and ensure its practical implementation.

The programme introduced a number of platforms for effective communication with relevant partners and stakeholders throughout the programming process.

The programming group for preparation of the programme for 2014-2020 was established in January 2012 and held 19 meetings. It encompasses primarily strategic partners for the cross-border cooperation at national and regional level, namely:

- From Slovak national level the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Finance and the Office of Government
- The five participating regions, i.e. Bratislava and Trnava self-governing regions in Slovakia as well as the Austrian Länder Burgenland, Niederösterreich and Vienna
- From Austrian national level the Austrian Federal Chancellery and Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

All relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme including bodies responsible for sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination are listed in chapter 9 (separate elements).

Representative of the European Commission were regularly invited and participated in the programming group sessions. For particular themes, ad-hoc/thematic sub groups have been used in order to support the work of the programming group.

Additionally, Slovak and Austrian regions (regional bodies) were responsible for ongoing surveys among social and economic actors in respective regions. This process served as important input into the programming, especially in identifying investment priorities, verification of demand for various types of activities and establishing the financial plan.

Within the framework of the preparation of the cross-border cooperation in 2014-2020, two bilateral events addressing competent regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners and non-governmental organisations were organised. The events with distinct thematic focus were carried out in Hainburg on 30 April 2013 and in Senec on 14 May 2013 with participation of more than 200 persons. They offered a unique opportunity to discuss the programme strategy and priorities with a wide range of stakeholders during its development phase.

The list of participants of the stakeholder meetings at Kulturfabrik Hainburg/Austria and at Hotel Dolphin Senec/Slovakia is annexed.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the programme was based on a public consultation process. A wider public in Slovakia and Austria had an opportunity to comment the programme, particularly taking into account the expected environmental impacts of implementation.

Representatives of relevant state administration and regional/local authorities as well as other socio-economic partners from both Member states actively participate in the implementation of the programme. They are members of the the Monitoring Committee, which among other tasks is responsible for approval of appraisal and selection criteria and selection of operations to be funded from the programme.

6 Coordination

Coordination in Austria

The overall coordination of ESIF in Austria falls within the competence of the Federal Chancellery which represents the fund corresponding resort for the ERDF. As the coordination function derives from regional policy as well as spatial planning, the execution takes place from the outset in close cooperation with the Länder. The institutional framework for the national coordination of cohesion policy takes place in the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK), which is also responsible for the elaboration of the Austrian Partnership Agreement “STRAT.AT 2020”. This coordination efforts aim at ensuring the complementarity of ESI funds specific activities and avoiding overlaps.

The coordination platforms organised by the ÖROK for the ERDF are the Working Group “Managing Authorities” for the objective regional competitiveness and employment & convergence phasing out Burgenland, the Working Group “Cross-Border-Cooperation” (AG CBC) for the objective European territorial bilateral cooperation and the National Committee for transnational and network programmes. The AG CBC assures important linkages to other committees, enhances synergies and increases the visibility of Interreg V-A in other committees for structural funds. Through better information on existing concerns and possibilities of other ETC stakeholders it enables more rapid and better harmonized decisions. These three working groups are installed at the ÖROK Subcommittee on Regional Economy, which represents the central coordination committee for regional policy questions in Austria as well as their implementation.

The AG CBC consist of representatives of the Länder (“regional bodies”), managing authorities of the CBC programmes fulfilled by Austrian institutions, representatives of the Federal Chancellery and the federal ministries which are relevant for the implementation of Interreg V-A programmes (Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, Ministry of Science and Research, Ministry of Education the Arts and Culture, Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology) as well as economic and social partners and a representative of the National Contact Point for transnational and network programmes. Thus, Ministries responsible for the national ESF and EAFRD programmes as well as some Priority Area Coordinators for the EUSDR are in direct exchange with the programme partners.

Coordination of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria programme with the EAFRD-funded programme (“Österreichisches Programm für ländliche Entwicklung 2014 – 2020”) is an explicit task of the AG CBC.

As the working group is installed in the framework of the ÖROK, a close coordination with the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal (IGJ) is ensured as well.

The main focal points of the AG CBC are:

- Co-ordination of perspectives, positions and contents on the role and tasks of cross-border-cooperation ETC programmes in the Austrian EU regional policy: ETC programmes and their anchorage in the partnership agreement “STRAT.AT 2020”, influence of national / macro-regional strategies on ETC programmes (need for co-ordination between cross-border and transnational strand), mutual information, co-ordination and exchange on the programming 2014-2020, project development and selection, etc.

- Recommendations for technical / administrative questions for programme and project implementation: Programme closure, evaluation, cross-programme implementation processes, etc.
- Co-ordination of information flows in Austria and to European processes.

In the framework of the strategic monitoring process of the Partnership Agreement "STRAT.AT 2020" all ESI funds and objectives will be considered be it in common events, seminars, studies, evaluations, etc. The strategic monitoring process will be built upon the good experiences gained from the coordination mechanism of the implementation of the NSRF in the current structural funds period, the so called "STRAT.ATplus process". As regards contents, the process pursues the objective of promoting the exchange of experiences and reflection, as well as to generate practical impulses. This establishes a framework in Austria, which in addition to administrative and ESI funding-related issues, supports a content-based or dialogue-driven discussion for information, reflection and learning processes for all Austrian regional policy actors in charge. This coordination mechanism strengthens the strategic discussions, the interaction, exchange of experience and use of synergies among ESI funds.

Besides the coordination between ESI funds, the integration of EU co-financed bilateral measures in various policy fields on national and regional level is of importance. In this respect, the ÖROK takes over a "informative" role as both levels are integrated. However, the embedding of ESI co-financed measures in the (regional) development policy is in the competency of the Länder.

Furthermore, coordination with other union instruments relevant for policy areas concerned by the ERDF is important. In the programme area particularly HORZION 2020 and LIFE are relevant for the selected objectives of the programme.

In Austria HORZION 2020 will be accompanied in its implementation by the Ministry of Science and Research. The regional contact points (for the current 7th Framework Programme) are responsible for the coordination of RTDI policy and regional development strategies as well as for the embedding of the European research and development funding measures at the regional level. As a result of the preparation of the partnership agreement, the corresponding ministry intends to install a platform for responsible ESI funds actors and stakeholders of RTDI policy in Austria.

The LIFE programme will be accompanied by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The thematic objective 6 (environment and resource efficiency) will be addressed in the cooperation programme, where an adequate attention will be paid to the connection with LIFE. A representative of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management will participate in Monitoring Committee meetings to assure coordination with the LIFE programme.

In view of the described coordination mechanisms, the principle of proportionality has to be considered as the coordination between the cooperating two member states of the cross-border cooperation programme as such is challenging.

Table 48. Complementarities with Investing in Growth and Employment objective programmes in AT

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria		AT “Investing in growth and employment” objective programmes (only overlapping IPs are listed)		
Priority axis	IP	Programme	Priority axis	IP
PA 1 Contributing to a smart cross-border-region	1b	OP ERDF Austria	PA 1 RDTI	1b
PA 2 Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity	6c			
	6d			
PA 3 Supporting sustainable transport solutions	7c			
PA 4 Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation	11			

Coordination in Slovak Republic

In the programme period 2014-2020, the Slovak Republic will participate in cross-border cooperation programmes, which will be in the line with national and macro-regional strategies. The programming phase was used not only for the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement and operational programmes (OPs), but also for an assessment of potential overlaps and synergies between funding instruments. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the function of the Managing Authority for the CP CBC Slovakia-Austria initiated bilateral meetings with representatives of programmes implemented under the *Investing in Growth and Employment Objective*. The complementarities between programmes were identified and mechanisms for coordination between actions agreed.

Cross-border cooperation programmes do not have the financial capacity to trigger off statistically significant socio-economic developments at macro level, but such programmes can contribute to positive changes in the lives of citizens and communities. The impact of investments into cross-border cooperation will be seen in improved quality of living, and it will derive mainly from improved functioning of public and private institutions located in the cross-border regions and a limited number of improved public infrastructures. Therefore, cross-border cooperation will concentrate on exploitation of endogenous potential in favour of balanced development of cross-border territories. Complementarity with EU and national programmes will be sought in the areas such as transport, environment, research and innovations, education, strengthening of institutional capacities and effective public administration.

A demarcation line with the OP Quality of the Environment 2014-2020 will be defined by SK bodies.

Table 49. Complementarities with Investing in Growth and Employment objective programmes in SK (draft version¹⁴)

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria		SK “Investing in growth and employment” objective programmes (only overlapping IPs are listed)		
Priority axis	IP	Programme	Priority axis	IP
PA 1 Contributing to a smart cross-border-region	1b	OP Research and Innovation	1 Support to research, development and innovations	1b
		OP Research and Innovation	2 Support to research, development and innovations in Bratislava region	1b
PA 2 Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity	6c			
	6d	OP Quality of Environment	1 Sustainable use of natural resources through development of environmental infrastructure	6d
PA 3 Supporting sustainable transport solutions	7c	Integrated Regional OP	1 Safe and ecologic transport in regions	7c
PA 4 Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation	11	OP Effective Public Administration	1 Strengthening of institutional capacities and effectiveness of public administration	11

In the field of nature conservation and biodiversity the links the Slovak OP Quality of the Environment need to be highlighted where complementarity in activities such as linking biocorridors by reducing barriers, support green infrastructure, support awareness raising and environmental education. Projects under Interreg V-A SK-AT are characterized by the focus on the creation, the enhancement of sustainable cross-border interconnectivity of ecological corridors. Moreover, the cross-border projects are characterized by their impact on target groups on the both sides of border. Given the financial allocation SK-AT cooperation programme cannot support large-scale investment activities; such investment will be supported under the OP Quality of the Environment.

The programme Interreg V-A will be open to support for mapping and monitoring of species and habitats but in contrast to the OP Quality of the Environment the cooperation programme will target only areas of cross-border relevance

Moreover, under the investment priority 6d) Interreg V-A SK-AT will support planning and pilot measures in order to harmonize flood protection and the ecological rehabilitation of river systems.

A representative of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic will participate in Monitoring Committee meetings to assure coordination with the LIFE programme.

¹⁴ At the stage of drafting this programme, the Slovak programme on “Investing in growth and employment” has not been approved yet.

The Office of Government (Central Coordinating Authority - CCA), bearing the overall responsibility for the coordination of ESI Funds in Slovakia in the 2014-2020 period, will take a set of measures to foster better coordination:

- Active cooperation and provision of guidance in setting up the systems for implementation of operational and cooperation programmes in order to standardize procedures and eliminate potential risks. In the framework of monitoring as one of the tools for the management of ESIF in the period 2014-2020 the CCA will supervise to which extent the objectives of cohesion policy are met. The CCA will report to the Government on the implementation of ESIF and an implementation plan provided by the MA will be part of the report. The CCA will nominate a representative who will take part in MC meetings in the capacity of an observer.
- Establishment of the Working commission, which is supposed to support the coordination between the operational and cooperation programmes implemented under both objectives as well as other funding instruments. A member of the government being responsible for the coordination and absorption of ESIF will chair the Working commission, while representatives of the relevant institutions responsible for implementation of programmes will be members. The call documents and corresponding time schedules of OPs will be submitted on a regular basis for coherence checks to the Commission prior to publication. The chairman may request amendments at this but also at later stages of programme implementation.
- Regular reporting of the Commission's chair, i.e. to the relevant representative of the government, as well as to the government on the application of coordination mechanisms outlining the identified gaps and remedial actions.
- Fostering the establishment of working groups and expert groups as sub-groups to Monitoring Committees in order to discuss and agree upon concrete actions for efficient coordination.

Coordination with EAFRD-funded programmes

A characteristic feature of Programme Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria is the cross-border dimension and the cross-border effects of the activities financed in the eligible area. This characteristic feature allows determining the demarcation line between cross-border programmes (covering rural areas) and national respectively regional programmes co-financed from EU funds.

In the rural areas measures supported under Priority axis 2 "Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity" might create synergies with the Rural Development Programme (RDP). The RDP in Slovakia will support also investment in forests and rural areas which is not directly related to production, inter alia, measures to strengthen the leisure function of forests, respectively rural areas (including marking/signposting, building and reconstruction of tourist tracks, cycling tracks, nature pedagogical and educational elements, rest stations, shelters, information boards, etc.), respectively building of small infrastructures. Similar investment can be also supported through activities of local action groups in the frame of LEADER-type actions. By interconnecting investment supported in the Slovak part of the programme region, it might be possible to achieve greater territorial effects (for example, forest tracks can lead to the supported activities and can serve to a greater number of tourists); or investment supported from RDP can be included e.g. in promotion documents and concepts developed and implemented as part of project in this programme. Owing to

options for such complementary actions mutual synergies between both programmes might be achieved.

Coordination between the Interreg V-A SK-AT Programme and the RDP will be strengthened also by the participation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR (acting as the Managing Authority of the RDP programme) in the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg VA SK-AT programme.

7 Reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries

There is a mutual understanding among all stakeholders of programme administration that the administrative burden for beneficiaries is a disincentive for applicants and beneficiaries. However, the need to provide sound documentation for all – even minor - aspects of project cycle management is a requirement which will also govern this funding period. The quality of documentation has to be such that it allows for control and audit activities even after considerable time spans have passed.

Thus one has to acknowledge the fact that significant parts of documentation will be required during the implementation of this programme. The major need for documentation will again be related to the evidence to demonstrate the eligibility of cost. Efforts to reduce the administrative burden will be taken along the following main strategic lines:

Client-oriented guidance

- Sound manuals and ample guidance via internet phone, e-mail and in face-to-face meetings is a key point to support a targeted approach of the applicant respectively the beneficiary in order to avoid trial and error which in many cases leads to frustration for all parties involved
- Guidance of bodies involved in verification of expenditures (also called First Level Control – FLC) upon approval but before start of implementation will be intensified in order to prevent misunderstandings front-of pipe and to minimise time consuming clarification needs at later stages which impede verification procedures

Understandable and concise templates

- Use of more standardized forms in a user-friendly format which do not duplicate unnecessary information should help to save time; to the extent possible forms will be harmonised in order to support the work of actors involved in several programmes

E-Governance

- Guided and stepwise introduction of e-governance which will in a mid-term perspective reduce the need to submit documents in hard copy and electronic version

Simplified requirements for the eligibility of expenditures

- There is the intent to establish eligibility rules at programme level in accordance with the option foreseen in Regulation 1299/2013, Article 18; the basis for these rules will be the provisions of the Delegated Act (EU) 481/2014 – the ultimate aim of these rules is the reduction of the administrative burden for the beneficiary and the control bodies as well as transparency and legal certainty in order to avoid time-consuming end-of-pipe repairs in projects
- With due attention to the provisions in Regulation 1303/2013 (in particular Articles 67 and 68) some of the options for simplifications in the verification of expenditures which are now possible according to regulations and delegated acts will be introduced – in particular those related to staff and overhead cost as cost categories which have entailed a significant workload in terms of documentation on the one hand and disproportionate efforts in verification on the other hand
- These simplifications would reduce the work burden for control bodies and beneficiaries thus reducing the work time and cost imposed by control routines

for all parties involved; at the same time simplifications which are communicated properly and adequately anchored in all relevant programme documents provide more legal certainty for beneficiaries

The Managing Authority will do all necessary steps in order to safeguard that the measures under these strategic lines become effective as soon as possible. The first two items, i.e. consultation offer and user-friendly templates should be effective at the start of the programme implementation, whereas e-governance and simplifications of the control regime will become effective at a later stage, i.e. in 2016.

8 Horizontal principles

8.1 Sustainable development

The principle of sustainable development at programme level will be based on the provisions in the Partnership Agreements of the Slovak Republic and Austria. The overarching objective according to the principle is to ensure that growth is social and inclusive and takes environmental sustainability and the protection of the environment into account.

The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR, Article 8) states: *“Member States and the Commission shall ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes.”*

Important sources to systematically consider the sustainable development principle in the programme preparation phase are the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the ex-ante evaluation.

The purpose of the SEA is to *“provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.”*

The ex-ante evaluation verifies the adequacy of planned measures in the programmes to promote sustainable development. The SEA process was introduced in parallel to the ex-ante evaluation, and main findings were incorporated into the ex-ante report.

At the operational level the following aspects should be considered during programme implementation (indicative list to be considered if applicable):

- Selection of investment-related projects in view of highest resource efficiency and sustainability
- Prevention of investments with considerable negative environmental and climate effects
- Develop a long-term perspective when comparing life-cycle costs of various investment options
- Increased use of sustainable procurement (green public procurement).

According to the SEA report networking activities across investment priorities should consider ecological event management (e.g. taking into account mobility behaviour of the participants, choice of a centrally located venue, sustainable catering and accommodation). Moreover the possibility should be examined to use virtual meetings as substitute for some of the physical meetings to limit negative environmental effects.

The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals should be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all priority axes and investment priorities (see the provisions in chapter 5.3 on the selection of operations)

As a technical tool for the assessors the following aspects should to be considered in project selection (indicative list to be considered if applicable):

- Contribution to energy efficiency, renewable energy use and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

- Contribution to efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse
- Application of green public procurement in a systematic manner
- Contribution to efficient waste management, re-use and recycling
- Contribution to the development of green infrastructures including Natura 2000 sites
- Contribution to reduced transport and mobility-related air pollution
- Contribution to sustainable integrated urban development
- Contribution to enhanced awareness of adaptation to climate change and risk prevention
- Contribution to more employment opportunities, education, training and support services in the context of environment protection and sustainable development

The estimated decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, the increase in energy efficiency and in renewable energy production are EU 2020 headline target indicators and should be monitored across supported operations (if applicable).

The process of monitoring will be based on progress (activity) reports at project level. These reports summarise the activities and the results at project level and allow for an assessment to which extent projects might contribute to the principle of sustainable development. In critical cases (i.e. in case of certain activities or vulnerable areas or large projects with substantial investment elements) on-spot verifications will be undertaken by the MA/JTS. Thus the actual contribution of such projects will be assessed.

In Slovakia the Office of Government is in charge of the analysis and the underlying methodology for the monitoring of the contribution to the principle of sustainable development. The MA will support the Office of Government with data and results of the above mentioned monitoring at programme level.

8.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

The Common Provisions Regulation (Reg. (EU) 1303/2013, Article 7) states: *“Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.”*

Non-discrimination covers not only women (and men), but any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. While anti-discrimination legislation is an acquired aspect of EU legal systems, the practical implementation of anti-discrimination practices is lagging behind. In terms of equal access to ESI funding this could mean, for example, that ESI funded tourism projects are not accessible to people with disabilities (and that nobody checks whether they are) or that people with a migrant background do not have equal access to e.g. business-related funding because they do not have access to the information on the funding or do not know how to apply. Equal access to information and an adequate system of checking whether equality and non-discrimination requirements are being met are an issue.

The European Commission leaves the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the programming and implementation up to the Member States.

In the preparatory phase of the cooperation programme, the MA provided a wider public, including organisations promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination, with the opportunity to comment on the content of the programme.

In order to adequately implement the horizontal principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination the following issues should be taken into account and the following non-exhaustive list of questions can be asked:

- **Project selection:** The principle of equal access is essential for this point. Related questions are, for instance: Are different social groups adequately informed of the availability of funding? Are there barriers in terms of how the projects/measures are promoted (e.g. where they are advertised, language etc)? Were special needs of people with disabilities considered during the conception of measures (e.g. eligibility of costs for barrier free solutions)? Is equal access taken into account in the selection criteria for projects? Are projects required to demonstrate their equal opportunity procedures? Equality checklists and questionnaires for the project promoters could be developed. For the fulfilment of equal opportunity and non-discrimination criteria bonus points could be introduced.
- **Project realisation and project implementation:** Are project promoters aware of non-discrimination issues? Have equal opportunity targets been set? Have equal opportunities trainings or diversity management courses been considered? Is childcare available? Are the measures accessible to all in terms of location (e.g. accessible by public transport) and infrastructure (e.g. wheelchair access)?
- **Monitoring:** Are relevant indicators planned and used in order to be able to judge to what extent equal opportunity principles have been respected? Have the relevant stakeholders (NGOs, associations, equal opportunity officers etc.) been involved in the Monitoring Committees? In order to measure the progress of the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, the involvement of potentially discriminated groups should be considered in monitoring and evaluation planning. If data protection laws allow it, the number of minority groups (migrants, people with migrant backgrounds, Roma, ethnic minorities etc) participating in measures could be counted.
- **Evaluation:** The topic of equal opportunities and non-discrimination and the way the programme contributes to these principles should be taken into consideration.

In practice, each project will be subject to the verification of compliance with equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles defined in EU and national legislation within the assessment and selection procedure. In order to increase the efficiency of the implementation of these principles, internal and external assessors will participate in a special training on this issue. Compliance with equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be part of the assessment criteria (see chapter 5.3 on the selection of operations).

8.3 Equality between men and women

The aim of equality between women and men is part of the fundamental values of the European Union. Article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon sets out that the Union shall “*combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child*”.

The elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men are also included in the consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

These fundamental values must be respected in the implementation of the ESI Funds of the European Union as stated in the Reg. 1303/2013: “*Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is promoted in the preparation and implementation of programmes*” and that the “*Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes*”.

The following issues should be taken into consideration and the following non-exhaustive list of questions should be asked:

- **Project selection:** Gender mainstreaming means making sure that the principles of equal access are actually applied. Important questions are, for instance: Is gender mainstreaming taken into account in the formulation of the selection criteria for projects? Is a gender expert involved in any stages of the process? Do projects have to demonstrate their equal opportunity procedures?
- **Gender budgeting** takes this approach one step further to ensure the fair distribution of EU funding to women and men by looking at expenditure on women and men and the types of measures being funded. Relevant questions can be, for instance: Are women and men benefiting equally from high-quality measures? Or does a significant number of women take part in cheaper, shorter measures while men take part in more expensive, longer measures?
- **Project realisation and project implementation:** Are project promoters aware of gender and non-discrimination issues? Which significance is given to the gender perspective in the projects? Have gender and equal opportunity targets been set? Has training been considered? Is childcare available? Are the measures accessible to all in terms of location (e.g. accessible by public transport)?
- **Monitoring:** Are the relevant indicators planned and used in order to be able to judge to what extent gender and equal opportunity targets have been reached? In order to measure the progress of the promotion of equality between women and men and non-discrimination, the involvement of women and men and potentially discriminated groups should be considered in the monitoring and evaluation planning. Basic features of ‘gendered’ monitoring include:
 - counting the number of women and men participating in measures
 - counting the number of women and men benefiting from funding
 - calculating how much support and for which measures women and men are receiving funding (broken down by types of measure)

Without indicators broken down by gender, the equal distribution of funding will be impossible to evaluate at a later stage. Therefore, it is proposed to include the monitoring and evaluation measures with respect to gender equality and non-discrimination in the Evaluation Plan (EP).

- **Evaluation:** Have output and financial indicators been set in the programme? Have the necessary steps for monitoring been prepared in the EP? What is the specific contribution of the programme to promote equality between men and women?

In practice, each project will be subject to the verification of compliance with equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles defined in EU and national legislation within the assessment and selection procedure. In order to increase the efficiency of the implementation of these principles, internal and external assessors will participate in a special training on this issue. Compliance with equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be part of the assessment criteria (see chapter 5.3 on the selection of operations).

9 Separate elements

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

Not applicable

9.2 Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 50. Performance framework (summary table)

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
1	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 1	EUR	3,010,363 (13%)	23,156,638
1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	Number	4	9
1	Output indicator (ID 1b.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	Number	0	5
2	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824 (13%)	32,729,412
2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	Number	6	16
2	Output indicator (ID 6c.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	Number	0	16
2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	Number	4	8
2	Output indicator (ID 6d.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	Number	0	8
3	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559 (6.7%)	11,358,824
3	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7
3	Output indicator (ID 7c.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (7c)	Number	0	7
4	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856 (13%)	16,683,505
4	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (11)	Number	4	13

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
4	Output indicator (ID 11.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools	Number	0	8
Total (PA 1 - 4)		Total funding certified to EC	EUR	10,198,600	83,928,379
		No of contracted projects	Number	21	53

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

The following partners participated in the preparation of the SK-AT cooperation programme as members of the Programming Group:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
- Office of Government of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Economy and Labour of Austria
- Federal Chancellery of Austria
- Bratislava region
- Trnava region
- City of Vienna, Magistrat der Stadt Wien, MA 27 - Europäische Angelegenheiten, Dezernat für EU-Förderungen
- Burgenland, Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH
- Lower Austria, Amt d. NÖ Landesregierung, Abt. Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik, Geschäftsstelle für EU-Regionalpolitik
- Association of Slovak towns and municipalities

Institutional bodies which were consulted during programme preparation in Slovakia (including bodies responsible for sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination)

- City of Bratislava (Environmental department)
- City of Trnava (Environmental department)
- Ministry of education, science, research and sport of the Slovak republic (Department of environmental assessment)
- Ministry of Environment of the Slovak republic (Section of the nature conservation and landscape management)
- State nature protection of the Slovak republic
- Ministry of transport, construction and regional development of the Slovak republic (Department of transport infrastructure development)

Institutional bodies which were consulted during programme preparation in Niederösterreich (including bodies responsible for sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination)

- Büro Landesrat Mag. Schwarz
- Abteilung Landesamtsdirektion-Europareferat
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Umweltwirtschaft und Raumordnungsförderung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Naturschutz
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Gesamtverkehrsangelegenheiten
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Kunst und Kultur
- Kulturvernetzung Niederösterreich
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Wissenschaft und Forschung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Landesstraßenbau
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Wirtschaft, Tourismus und Technologie
- ecoplus - NÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Landwirtschaftsförderung
- Agrarbezirksbehörde St. Pölten
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Allgemeine Förderungen F3, Frauenreferat
- Land NÖ, Abteilung F3 Arbeitnehmerförderung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Kindergärten und Schulen
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Wasserwirtschaft
- NÖ Landesakademie
- Wirtschaftskammer Niederösterreich
- NÖ Landesklinikenholding
- Regionalmanagement Niederösterreich, RM-Büro Waldviertel
- Regionalmanagement Niederösterreich, RM-Büro Weinviertel
- Regionalmanagement Niederösterreich, RM-Büro Industrieviertel
- Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Weinviertel - Europaregion Weinviertel
- Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Industrieviertel
- Energie- und Umweltagentur Niederösterreich (ENU)
- Industriellenvereinigung Niederösterreich

Institutional bodies which were consulted during programme preparation in Burgenland (including bodies responsible for sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination)

- Umweltanwalt Burgenland
- Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung - Landesamtsdirektion
- Land Burgenland - Büro Landeshauptmann
- alle mit der Programmerstellung EFRE, ESF und ELER befassten Stellen (Parallelprozess)

Institutional bodies which were consulted during programme preparation in Vienna (including bodies responsible for sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination)

- Geschäftsgruppe - Bildung, Jugend, Information und Sport
- Geschäftsgruppe - Finanzen, Wirtschaftspolitik und Wiener Stadtwerke
- Geschäftsgruppe - Gesundheit und Soziales
- Geschäftsgruppe - Integration, Frauenfragen, KonsumentInnenchutz und Personal
- Geschäftsgruppe - Kultur und Wissenschaft
- Geschäftsgruppe - Stadtentwicklung, Verkehr, Klimaschutz, Energieplanung und BürgerInnenbeteiligung
- Geschäftsgruppe - Umwelt
- Geschäftsgruppe - Wohnen, Wohnbau und Stadterneuerung
- Hafen Wien
- MA 18 - Stadtentwicklung und Stadtplanung
- MA 19 - Architektur und Stadtgestaltung
- MA 20 - Energieplanung
- MA 22 - Umweltschutz
- MA 23 - Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Statistik
- MA 25 - Stadterneuerung und Prüfstelle für Wohnhäuser
- MA 31 - Wiener Wasser
- MA 42 - Wiener Stadtgärten
- MA 45 - Wiener Gewässer
- MA 48 - Abfallwirtschaft, Strassenreinigung und Fuhrpark
- MA 49 - Forstamt und Landwirtschaftsbetrieb der Stadt Wien
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion - Gruppe Planung
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion - Gruppe Umwelttechnik
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion - Strategische Energieangelegenheiten
- Stadtschulrat für Wien
- TINA VIENNA Urban Technologies & Strategies GmbH
- Wiener Linien
- Wiener Stadtwerke
- Wiener Wissenschafts-, Forschungs- und Technologiefonds
- Wirtschaftsagentur Wien – Cluster Wien
- ZIT Zentrum für Innovation und Technologie GmbH
- EUSDR PAC10 Geschäftsstelle
- departure-die Kreativagentur der Stadt Wien
- Fonds Soziales Wien

During the **public consultation two events** with thematic focus were carried out in Hainburg on 30 April 2013 and in Senec on 14 May 2013 with a participation of more than 200 persons from Slovakia and Austria.

They offered a unique opportunity to discuss the cooperation programmes' strategy and priorities with a wide range of stakeholders during its development phase.

A high proportion of participants came from regional, local, and other public authorities. In addition, participants came from the following areas: regional development agencies in the fields of regional management structures, cluster organisation, environment, SME development, innovation, culture, tourism, mobility; social and economic partners; Non-profit organisation, NGO; private companies and consultants; research institution, universities and education; and other types of organisations.

The list of participants of the stakeholder meetings at Kulturfabrik Hainburg/Austria and at Hotel Dolphin Senec/Slovakia is annexed.

Details on participating type of organisations are given in the following table.

Table 51. Participation at public consultation events according to type of organisation

Type of organisation	Total no of person per type of organisation (Hainburg, Senec)	%
National public authority	17	8%
Regional or local public authority	61	29%
Other public or equivalent body (e.g. regional development agency, cluster organisation, environmental agency, SME development agency, Regionalmanagement, innovation centre, culture agency, tourist agency)	32	15%
Social and economic partners (e. g. ÖGB, Arbeiterkammer)	7	3%
Non-profit organisation, NGO	25	12%
Private company, consultancy	31	15%
Research institution, university, FH	17	8%
Other type of organisation (RECOM, Energiepark; JTS, Naturparke, international organisation)	17	8%
Total	207	100%

Source: participation lists

9.4 Applicable programme implementation conditions governing the financial management, programming, monitoring, evaluation and control of the participation of third countries in transnational and interregional programmes through a contribution of ENI and IPA resources

Not applicable.

10 Annexes (uploaded as separate files)

Uploaded to the electronic data exchange system as separate files

A	Final report of the ex-ante evaluation, with an executive summary (mandatory)
B	Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (mandatory)
C	NUTS-3 regions covered by the cooperation programme; map of the area

01	Description of the Cooperation Programme
02	List of participants of the stakeholder meeting at Kulturfabrik Hainburg/Austria, 30 April 2013; 09:30
03	List of participants of the stakeholder meeting at Hotel Dolphin Senec/Slovakia, 14 Mai 2013; 09:30
04	Methodological note on programme specific result indicators
05	Documenation of the performance framework