



**Interreg**  
**Slovakia-Austria**  
European Regional Development Fund



# Annual Implementation Report 2020

of the

COOPERATION PROGRAMME  
INTERREG V-A SLOVAK REPUBLIC - AUSTRIA



## CONTENT

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT .....	3
2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION .....	3
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS .....	8
4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS .....	32
5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN .....	35
6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY .....	38
7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS .....	38
8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS.....	38



## 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB003
Title	Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria
Version	1.0
Reporting year	2020
Date of approval of the report by the Monitoring committee	24.05.2021

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Annual Report 2020 of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Cross-border Cooperation Programme has been prepared pursuant to Annex X of Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2015/207. The report is intended to give an overview of the activities that were undertaken in the frame of the implementation process, focusing on the year 2020.

In the year 2020, the stress of the Managing Authority (MA) with the involvement of all management bodies was given mostly on the acceleration of the implementation process, with the focus on commitment and disbursement of funds. Actually, the year 2020 was the third year when disbursement of funds could be reported. Following the decision made at the end of 2018, the steps have been taken to shorten the pre-implementation phase - from project approval to its contracting to a maximum of 6 months. As of the end of the reporting period, 47 projects have been approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC) under the Programme in the total amount of EUR 71.79 mn from ERDF, which represents 94.60 % of the programme allocation. For 37 projects, decisions on their approval have been issued. The level of contracting for 34 projects represents EUR 54.14 mn from ERDF – 71.34 % of the programme allocation. Disbursement rate has reached EUR 17.81 mn from ERDF, i.e. 23.48 % of the programme allocation. All the implemented measures throughout 2018, 2019 and 2020 have led, among others, to the successful fulfilment of the N+3 rule also for 2020.

By the end of 2020 only 2 projects have been approved by the MC within PA3. The contracting is expected in 2021. Taking into account that no more project applications are expected to be submitted in PA3 in the foreseeable future (considering previous years of programme implementation) and the significant number of unspent resources within PA3, a potential reallocation between the priority axes is taken under consideration.

The COVID-19 pandemic situation had a rather negative impact on the implementation of the Programme in 2020. It was necessary to proceed with several project changes within the implementation of projects. There were numerous prolongations requested from the project partners resulting in rescheduling of activities. Due to numerous budget shifts under considerations - subjects of changes that were mostly travel costs and personal costs, revisions of budgets had to be taken on. In addition, in many projects considerably lowered expenditures occurred and were submitted to the JS. These issues seriously endangered the cash flow of the Programme, as the reimbursements were not as high as planned. Consequently, reaching the N+3 target for 2020 became a challenge. As the situation in the Programme



was unfortunately not exceptional, but had also emerged in all member states in the EU, the European Commission addressed the issue with specific measures, as stated in the REGULATION (EU) 2020/558 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2020 amending Regulations (EU) No 1301/2013 and (EU) No 1303/2013 as regards to specific measures and provided exceptional flexibility for the use of the European Structural and Investments Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. With a view of alleviating the burden on public budgets responding to the public health crisis, Member States were given the exceptional possibility to request, for cohesion policy programmes, a co-financing rate of 100 % to be applied for the accounting year 2020-2021, in accordance with budget appropriations and subject to available funding. Requests for modification of the co-financing rate had to be submitted to the EC in accordance with the procedure for the amendment of programmes. The modification request was submitted on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and approved by the European Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The programme requested the temporary increase of the co-financing rate to 100 % in all priority axes to ease burden due to COVID-19 crisis. Co-financing rate of 100 % will be applied to expenditure declared in payment applications during the accounting year starting 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 for all priority axes of the Programme. Despite the external factors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the N+3 rule for 2020 was met, by applying the 100 % co-financing rate.

The Programme bodies had several meetings including 1 Monitoring Committee (MC) meeting, 6 Task Force (TF) meetings, out of which 3 were held in the “Programming group” format (TF members + external experts), as well as more than 30 technical meetings with the relevant stakeholders (including representatives of MA, RB’s, JS, national, regional authorities, EC and relevant Ministries).

Four open Calls for proposals (hereinafter referred to as “CfP”) were launched in December 2016, covering the complete budget of the programme for Priority axes 1, 2, 3 and 4, i.e. EUR 71,339,118 from ERDF. After 6 rounds of CfP in 2017, 2018 and 2019 with 69 project proposals submitted, 2 more rounds followed in 2020. Under the 7<sup>th</sup> round with the deadline on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 6 applications were submitted. The deadline for the 8<sup>th</sup> round was set on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and 9 applications were submitted.

The selection of project proposals submitted in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> assessment round of CfP was carried out during the 9<sup>th</sup> MC meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 in Bratislava, Slovakia. Out of 9 submitted project proposals within the 6<sup>th</sup> assessment round totalling EUR 9.58 mn from ERDF, 7 were approved by the MC in the total amount of EUR 8.01 mn from ERDF and out of 6 submitted project proposals within the 7<sup>th</sup> assessment round totalling EUR 4.23 mn from ERDF, 3 were approved by the MC in the total amount of EUR 1.75 mn from ERDF.

As for the CfP for the Technical Assistance (Priority axis 5), which was launched in June 2017, one project proposal has been submitted in 2020 within the 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round.

In the reporting year, 4 audits were carried out on the Programme, 1 system audit on the level of the MA, national controller, JS and paying unit (A985), 1 audit of operations on the Slovak side (A1030), 1 audit of operations on the Austrian side (A1000) and audit of assurance package (audit of accounts) (A1055).



The system audit of the MA and JS (A985) was conducted by the Government Audit Office from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 until 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020. In total, the system audit identified 6 findings (out of which 3 findings were at the level of the MA and 3 findings at the level of the Paying Unit). Neither was of a financial nature.

Audits of operations on the Slovak side identified 8 findings in total. 3 findings on FLC SK level were related to the ineligible expenditures in the total amount of EUR 2,406.31. Another 5 findings were at the MA/JS level (mainly concerning the failure to upload the Quality Assessment summary Report into the ITMS, exceeding the period for issuing of the decisions on grant approval; deficiency of proper check of registration of partners in the Register of public sector partners before concluding contracts). There was also a request from the Audit Authority for better insurance regarding the protection of investments financed from ERDF. The MA adopted effective measures to avoid the occurrence of findings identified by both audits in the future.

2 findings at the level of 2 beneficiaries (out of 5 beneficiaries) were identified during the audit of operations on the Austrian side (failure to respect the eligibility rules associated with the labelling of invoices in order to avoid double funding). No findings were identified during the audit of assurance package (audit of accounts).

Regarding the information and publicity activities, 6 newsletters were sent out to the subscribed readers in 2020. The MA/JS continuously informed the target groups about the stages of the implementation, provided useful information, downloadable documents, and project news via the programme website and through Facebook. In addition, “Keep” database with project information has been regularly updated.

In order to support the effective implementation of projects and of the Cooperation programme, the MA in close cooperation with JS organized “Lead beneficiary and partner seminar” on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in Vienna and due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation also in an online format.

In addition, so-called “Open days” (consultations with applicants) were organized by the JS at 7 different dates during 2020 corresponding to particular assessment rounds of CfP – 4<sup>th</sup> February in Bratislava, 11<sup>th</sup> February in Vienna, 21<sup>st</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> October in Vienna, and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in online form in Bratislava and subsequently in full online mode (due to the deteriorating pandemic situation with COVID-19) on 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

The regular “Annual Event of the Programme” did not take place in 2020, due to the ongoing pandemic situation and the travel restrictions.

In the reporting year, evaluation activities have been carried out in accordance with the updated Evaluation plan (approved by the MC at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting in October 2018). In line with the Inception report of the Mid-term evaluation of the Programme, 3 Interim reports as well as Final evaluation report have been submitted by the external evaluators in 2020. The Mid-term evaluation has thus been successfully concluded. A more detailed description can be found in the section 4. Synthesis of the evaluations of this Annual Inception Report.



## Reimbursement of funds

### Disbursement

#### Disbursement on national level

Cumulative expenditures approved by the Certifying Authority (hereinafter referred to as "CA") as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 amounted to EUR 22,163,864.93, out of which EUR 17,871,907.89 from ERDF. In 2020, expenditures in the amount of EUR 10,264,892.34 were approved, which after deducting irregularities and recoveries from ERDF in the amount of EUR 55,493.47 amounts to 23.48 % of the total programme allocation (EUR 75,892,681.00).

Progress in disbursement in comparison to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 represents an increase of EUR 10.21 mn from ERDF, i.e. increase of 13.46 percentage points.

#### Disbursement towards the EC

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the CA declared expenditures in the total amount of EUR 20,354,881.02 from ERDF (out of which 2 interim payment applications in the total amount of EUR 12,379,710.20 from ERDF in 2020), which amounts to 26.82 % of the total programme allocation. The N+3 rule was successfully achieved by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, by applying the 100% co-financing rate.

#### Financial flows towards the EC

In 2020, the CA received payments on its account for Interreg V-A SK-AT from the EC in the total amount of EUR 13,418,519.61 from ERDF, out of which:

EUR 2,276,780.43 constitutes the pre-financing for the year 2020;

EUR 11,141,739.18 represents 90 % of the reimbursement of interim payment applications approved by the EC.

Cumulative payments of EUR 27,141,917.08 were received from the EC within the programme.

#### Interests

The cumulative amount of generated interest as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 is EUR 2,000.14 (out of which EUR 448.17 in 2020), which is used to finance the programme on an ongoing basis.

### Certification of expenditures and of Management and Control Systems

In 2020, two certification verifications were carried out within Interreg V-A SK-AT, of which one certification verification at the Managing authority and Paying unit, and one thematic certification verification at the Managing authority. The latter focused on the process of assessment of applications and administrative financial control of the list of declared expenditures and payment requests with regard to four demand-oriented projects. Verified sample of expenditures amounts to EUR 80,859.12 (all sources) and public procurement in the overall amount of EUR 21,488.24 was verified.

Two findings were identified concerning potential ineligible expenditures with approval of the 1<sup>st</sup> deposit declared by the beneficiary on the basis of an advance invoice in violation of the System of Financial



Management of the Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for the 2014-2020 programming period, non-registration of the camera as an asset in the beneficiary's accounting and failure to prove its delivery. Based on the additional proof of the use of the said deposit, the actual use of the camera for the purposes of the project and registration of the camera in the beneficiary's accounting, the said expenses were marked as eligible.

Other findings involved in particular failure to close the application procedure within set deadlines, missing documentation and procedures of the Managing Authority proving the verification of conflict of interest within the contract control and insufficient evidence proving the verification of the cost-effectiveness of expenditures within the administrative financial control of the list of declared expenditures by the Managing Authority.

No certification verification is open and all findings are closed on the basis of the adoption of appropriate measures by the Managing Authority.

### Irregularities and financial corrections

In the reporting period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the CA permanently deducted irregularities within Interreg V-A SK-AT payment requests towards the EC and within Accounts in the total amount of EUR 33,415.56 for all sources of funding (out of which EUR 28,403.22 from ERDF). Within Interreg V-A SK-AT, no expenditures were temporarily excluded by the CA for the 5<sup>th</sup> accounting year.

**Table: Overview of the amounts deducted at the level of the Priority Axis**

Priority Axis	Amounts permanently deducted		Amounts temporarily excluded from Accounts according to Art. 137 (2) CPR					
			Amounts temporarily excluded		Amounts re-declared towards EC		Balance of amounts temporarily excluded	
	Total Amount (w/o Pro-rata)	ERDF Contribution	Total Amount (w/o Pro-rata)	ERDF Contribution	Total Amount (w/o Pro-rata)	ERDF Contribution	Total Amount (w/o Pro-rata)	ERDF Contribution
305020	3,075.00	2,613.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
305040	27,535.19	23,404.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
305050	2,805.37	2,384.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,415.56</b>	<b>28,403.22</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: CA, MF SR

### Implementation Process and Measures taken

After a rather sluggish start of the Programme (with reasons explained in previous AIRs and mainly in chapter 5 in current AIR), the MA together with programme partners continued to follow the measures adopted in 2018 (see AIR 2018). These measures were further developed and consistently applied in 2019 and 2020, which resulted in a steady progress in Programme implementation.



In addition, further measures were adopted, in particular weekly monitoring of the FLC performance, with the aim to accelerate the verification of expenditures in order to achieve financial targets. The N+3 goal for 2020 was successfully reached.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

#### 3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
PA 1	<b>Contributing to a smart cross-border-region</b>	<p>Open call for proposal (hereinafter referred to as “CfP”) was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with the total amount of EUR <b>19,683,142</b> from ERDF (25.9 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 1b)<sup>1</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 15 project applications submitted (EUR 24.9 mn) and 3 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 11.2 mn). 2 projects were approved with conditions at the 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in the amount of EUR 1.4 mn under the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of CfP in 2018.</p> <p>Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rounds launched in 2018, 4 and 1 projects were submitted respectively in the total amount of EUR 5.9 mn. At the 6<sup>th</sup> MC meeting, 2 projects (one with conditions) under the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of CfP were approved in the overall sum of EUR 1.6 mn. At the 7<sup>th</sup> MC meeting, the only submitted project within this PA under 4<sup>th</sup> round was approved in the amount of EUR 1.54 mn.</p> <p>Under 5<sup>th</sup> round, no project application was submitted, thus the MC did not select projects within this PA at the 8<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6<sup>th</sup> round, 5 projects were submitted in the total amount of EUR 4.19 mn and under 7<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project was submitted in the total amount of EUR 0.78 mn.</p>

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>The project selection from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> round took place at the 9<sup>th</sup> MC meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, where 3 projects were approved in the total amount EUR 2.62 mn.</p> <p>Overall, EUR 18.36 mn from ERDF was allocated to 11 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2020 out of which 7 projects were contracted by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.</p>
PA 2	<p><b>Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with the total amount of EUR <b>27,820,000</b> from ERDF (36.7 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on the Investment Priorities 6c) and 6d)<sup>2</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 14 project applications submitted (EUR 21.3 mn) and 8 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 15.9 mn). 3 projects were approved with conditions at the 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in the amount of EUR 2.7 mn under the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of CfP in 2018.</p> <p>Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rounds launched in 2018, 3 and 1 projects were submitted respectively in the total amount of EUR 3.8 mn. At the 6<sup>th</sup> MC meeting, 2 projects under the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of CfP were approved with conditions in the overall sum of EUR 2.6 mn. At the 7<sup>th</sup> MC meeting, the only submitted project within this PA under 4<sup>th</sup> round was approved in the amount of EUR 0.62 mn.</p> <p>Under 5<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project application was submitted in the amount of EUR 4.41 mn, which was subsequently approved at the 8<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project was submitted in the total amount of EUR 0.52 mn and under 7<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project was submitted in the total amount of EUR 0.82 mn.</p> <p>The project selection from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> round took place at the 9<sup>th</sup> MC meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, where 1 project was approved in the total amount of 0.52 mn.</p>

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>Overall, EUR 26.75 mn from ERDF was allocated to 16 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2020 out of which 15 projects were contracted by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.</p>
PA 3	<p><b>Supporting sustainable transport solutions</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with the total amount of <b>EUR 9,655,000</b> from ERDF (12.7 % of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 7c)<sup>3</sup>. The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area.</li> </ul> <p>Within 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round of CfP, no projects were submitted. In 2018, the first project under this PA was submitted within 3<sup>rd</sup> assessment round of CfP in the amount of EUR 5.03 mn from ERDF. However, the assessment of this project (“VYSOMARCH”) was suspended due to the fact that declarations on property ownership were not submitted within the given deadlines – condition which was valid at the time of the project submission.</p> <p>The same project was resubmitted within 4<sup>th</sup> assessment round of CfP and was subsequently approved at the 7<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 5<sup>th</sup> round, 2 project applications were submitted in the total amount of EUR 3.53 mn, however, none of them was approved at the 8<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project was submitted in the total amount of EUR 3.07 mn. No project was submitted under the 7<sup>th</sup> round CfP.</p> <p>The project selection from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> round took place at the 9<sup>th</sup> MC meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, where 1 project was approved in the total amount of EUR 3.07 mn.</p> <p>Overall, EUR 8.09 mn from ERDF was allocated to 2 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2020.</p> <p>The factors that determine the underperformance of this PA are, among others, the financial and organisational complexity of projects, which implies that there is only a limited number of potential beneficiaries (almost exclusively from public sector) with the capacity to undergo such challenge. Moreover, the investments in cross-border infrastructure</p>

<sup>3</sup> in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>projects are often subject to public opinion of residents concerned, which may vary.</p> <p>Taking into account that no project applications are expected to be submitted in the foreseeable time frame (in consideration of the previous years of programme implementation) and the significant amount of unspent resources within this priority axis, a potential reallocation between the priority axes is taken under consideration.</p>
PA 4	<p><b>Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with the total amount of <b>EUR 14,180,979</b> from ERDF (18.7 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 11<sup>4</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 10 project applications submitted (EUR 17.4 mn) and 4 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 5.4 mn). 3 projects were approved with conditions at the 5<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in the amount of EUR 4.3 mn under the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of CfP in 2018.</p> <p>Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rounds launched in 2018, no projects were submitted under this PA, thus the MC did not select projects within this PA at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> MC meetings.</p> <p>Under 5<sup>th</sup> round, 1 project application was submitted in the amount of EUR 0.29 mn, however, the project was not approved at the 8<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6<sup>th</sup> round, 2 projects were submitted in the total amount of EUR 1.80 mn and under 7<sup>th</sup> round, 4 projects were submitted in the total amount of EUR 2.63 mn.</p> <p>The project selection from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> round took place at the 9<sup>th</sup> MC meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, where 5 projects were approved in the total amount of 3.56 mn.</p>

<sup>4</sup> in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>Overall, 13.26 mn EUR from ERDF was allocated to 12 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2020 out of which 7 projects were contracted by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.</p>
PA 5	<p><b>Technical assistance</b></p>	<p>The call for proposal was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 with the total amount of <b>EUR 4,553,560</b> from ERDF (6% out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme.</li> </ul> <p>In 2017, 5 project applications in the total amount of EUR 4.30 mn from ERDF were submitted and out of them 4 were approved. The remaining TA project of MA/JS (TA004) in the amount of EUR 1.97 mn from ERDF was approved in January 2018 within <i>per rollam</i> procedure.</p> <p>All 5 TA projects in the total amount of EUR 4.30 mn from ERDF had been contracted prior to the reporting period of this AIR.</p> <p>Furthermore, in 2020, 1 additional TA project has been submitted in the total amount of EUR 0.13 mn from ERDF. The project was subsequently approved by the MC in the full requested amount and contracting is expected in February 2021.</p> <p>TA beneficiaries proceeded with their tasks related to the overall management, implementation, control and audit as well as the publicity of the programme.</p> <p>Overall, EUR 4.55 mn from ERDF was allocated to 6 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2020 out of which 5 projects were contracted by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.</p>



### 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators

**Tab 1: Result indicators (by priority axis and specific objective)**

Priority Axis	Specific objective	ID	Indicators	Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Observations
PA1	1.1	R1.1	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)					2.6		2.5	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
	1.2	R1.2	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)					2.2		2.1	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
PA2	2.1	R2.1	Monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March)	persons	15,066	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					21,020		13,732	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
	2.2	R2.2	Number of major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor	number	12	2014	9 (reduction by 25%)							N/A	According to information from relevant institutions, the bottlenecks have been improved; however, the actual fulfilment of the indicator was not defined. The MA expects its fulfilment by the end of the programme.
PA3	3.1	R3.1	Capacity in public cross-border transport on an average work day	Total capacity in person	30,700	2014	31,314					38,280		31,340	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
PA4	4.1	R4.1	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)					2.2		2	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
	4.2	R4.2	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)					2.0		2.1	Significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Tab. 2: Common and programme specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority)<sup>5</sup>

Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
PA1	*F	1b.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in research & innovation related collaboration activities (P)	number	25		0	0	0	2	4	11				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 11
	*S											7				
	*F	1b.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation (P)	number	5		0	0	0	0.1 <sup>6</sup>	0.2	7.6				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 7.6 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											15				
	*F	1b.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes related to research & innovation (P)	number	125		0	0	0	5	117	552				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 552 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											445				
	*F	1b.1.4	No of research facilities developed (P)	number	1		0	0	0	0.1	2.2	4.5				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 4.5 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											6				
*F	1b.1.5	No of new researchers in supported entities (EU)	number in FTE	20		0	0	0	1	4	2				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 2	
*S											2					

<sup>5</sup> All data were obtained on the basis of the recalculation in ITMS2014+ from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 with the status as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Value from approved Monitoring report represents a partially developed product.



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	*F	1b.1.6	No of research institutions participating in cross-border projects (EU)	number of organisations	6		0	0	0	0	0	0				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	*S											0				
	*F	1b.2.1	No of jointly developed major products & services related to higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	4		0	0	0	0	1	1				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 1
	*S											2				
	*F	1b.2.2	No of institutions directly involved in cooperation aiming at better quality of higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	20		0	0	0	0	11	13				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 13
	*S											14				
	*F	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)	persons	500		0	0	0	0	856	1,862				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 1,862 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											4,050				



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
PA2	*F	6c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	80		0	0	0	12	20	36				Value for completed projects: 3 Value for partially implemented projects: 33
	*S											46				
	*F	6c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	16		0	0	0	2	7	11				Value for completed projects: 3 Value for partially implemented projects: 8
	*S											97				
	*F	6c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	400		0	0	0	0	881	961				Value for completed projects: 61 Value for partially implemented projects: 900 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											3,855				
	*F	6c.1.4	Increase in expected number of visits at supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attraction (EU)	number	32,000		0	0	0	0	3,150	6,115				Value for completed projects: 6,115 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	*S											20,699				
	*F	6d.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of green infrastructures (P)	number	34		0	0	0	0	11	40				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 40 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											36				
	*F	6d.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (P)	number	8		0	0	0	8	13	24				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 24 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											58				
*F	6d.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	194		0	0	0	83	3,800	6,722				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 6,722 The target value has been already achieved.	
*S											10,460					



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
*F	6d.1.4	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (EU)	hectares	1,000		0	0	0	1.50	72.5	35,609				Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 35,609 The target value has been already achieved.
*S										40,947					



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
PA3	*F	7c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	persons	23		0	0	0	0	0	0				By 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 2 projects have been approved by the MC within PA3. The contracting is expected in 2021.
	*S											0				
	*F	7c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	number	7		0	0	0	0	0	0				
	*S											0				
	*F	7c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	175		0	0	0	0	0	0				
	*S											0				



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)		
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
PA4	*F	11.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in institutional cooperation (P)	number	80		0	0	0	23	152	172				Value for completed projects: 37 Value for partially implemented projects: 135 The target value has been already achieved.	
	*S											61					
	*F	11.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools (P)	number	8		0	0	0	0	3.5	3.8					Value for completed projects: 5 Value for partially implemented projects: 0.8
	*S											18					
	*F	11.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	200		0	0	0	0	938	1,396					Value for completed projects: 1,099 Value for partially implemented projects: 297 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											2,457					
	*F	11.2.1	No of jointly developed major products & services related to pre-primary and primary education (P)	number	5		0	0	0	0	0	0					Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	*S											4					
	*F	11.2.2	No of educational institutions directly involved in cooperation at pre-primary and primary level of education (P)	number	25		0	0	0	97	116	116					Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 116 The target value has been already achieved.
	*S											116					
	*F	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		0	0	0	0	0	0					Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	*S											0					



Priority Axis		ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
						2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA5	*F	5.1.1	No of projects committed and successfully closed (P)	number	53		0	0	0	0	1	2				
	*S													53		
	*F	5.1.2	Number of major publicity events (P)	number	8 (1 per year in the period 2015-2022)		0	0	1	5	7	10				
	*S													12		
	*F	5.1.3	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	number	10 (2 per year in the period 2015-2019)		0	0	1	5	9	13				
	*S													17		
	*F	5.1.4	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA (EU)	number in FTE	18		0	0	9.7	12.9	14.035	16.167				
	*S													14.450		

\*F = Aggregate (cumulative) value - outputs realized through projects [actual achievement of outputs]

\*S = Aggregate (cumulative) value - outputs to be implemented through selected projects [forecasts provided by beneficiaries]

Data source: ITMS2014+

### 3.3. Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework<sup>7</sup>

**Tab. 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework**

PA	ID	Indicator Type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Final target 2023	Actual status in 2020	Observations
PA1	F0001	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 1	EUR	3,010,363	23,156,638	6,615,856	Value for completed projects: 0 Value is for partially implemented projects: 6,615,856
	K1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	number	4	9	7	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 7
	1b.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	number	0	5	7.6	The milestone for 2023 has already been achieved. Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 7.6
PA2	F0002	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824	32,729,412	7,766,453	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 7,766,453
	K2.1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	number	6	16	9	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 9
	6c.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	number	0	16	9	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 9
	K2.2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	number	4	8	6	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 6
	6d.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	number	0	8	21	The milestone for 2023 has already been achieved. Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 21
PA3	F0003	Financial Indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559	11,358,824	0	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	K3	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7	0	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	7c.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment friendly and low carbon transport systems (7c)	number	0	7	0	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
PA4	F0004	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856	16,683,505	4,723,194	Value for completed projects: 442,650 Value for partially implemented projects: 0
	K4	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (11)	number	4	13	7	Value for completed projects: 1 Value for partially implemented projects: 6
	11.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools	number	0	8	3.8	Value for completed projects: 0 Value for partially implemented projects: 3.8

Data source: ITMS2014 +

<sup>7</sup> Submitted in Annual Implementation Reports from 2017 onwards



### 3.4. Financial data

Tab 4.: Financial information at priority axis and programme level

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
The financial allocation of the priority axis based on the Cooperation programme						Cumulative data on the financial progress of the Cooperation programme					
Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for the calculation of Union support* (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Total funding (EUR)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%) [column 7/ column 5 × 100]	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR) ERDF	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%) [column 10/ column 5 × 100]	Number of operations selected <sup>8</sup>
PA1	ERDF		Total eligible cost	23,156,638.00	85	20,413,938.48	88.16	20,285,951.02	6,615,855.64	28.57	7
PA2	ERDF		Total eligible cost	32,729,412.00	85	30,749,223.47	93.95	30,404,434.38	8,222,715.69	25.12	15
PA3	ERDF		Total eligible cost	11,358,824.00	85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PA4	ERDF		Total eligible cost	16,683,505.00	85	12,138,611.94	72.76	11,902,296.63	4,750,728.9	28.48	7
PA5	ERDF		Total eligible cost	5,357,130.00	85	5,313,573.8	99.19	5,313,573.8	2,650,777.14	49.48	5
<b>Total</b>				<b>89,285,509.00</b>		<b>68,615,347.69</b>	<b>76.85</b>	<b>67,906,255.83</b>	<b>22,240,077.37</b>	<b>24.91</b>	<b>34</b>

Data source: ITMS2014 +

<sup>8</sup> Number of contracted projects

Tab. 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention for the transmission made by 31 January

Categorisation dimensions											Financial data			
1.	2..	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	
Priority axis	Fund	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected	
PA1	ERDF	58 Research and innovation infrastructure (public)	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable	1		24	SK010	2,894,573.67	2,894,573.67	770,123.09	1	
								24	SK021	2,963,201.26	2,963,201.26	788,381.98	1	
								24	AT130	2,896,175.86	2,896,175.86	770,549.37	1	
								24	AT127	4,757,336.85	4,757,336.84	1,265,725.20	1	
		60 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking				20		SK010	436,244.54	436,244.54	202,601.33	1		
						20		AT021	436,244.53	436,244.53	202,601.33	1		
						20		AT130	436,244.54	436,244.54	202,601.33	1		
						24		SK010	142,930.93	142,930.93	10,625.80	1		
						24		AT111	106,455.24	106,455.24	7,914.12	1		
						24		AT121	106,455.24	106,455.24	7,914.12	1		
						24		AT122	106,455.24	106,455.24	7,914.12	1		
						24		AT112	106,455.24	106,455.24	7,914.12	1		
		65 Research and innovation infrastructure, processes, technology transfer and cooperation in enterprises focusing on low carbon economy and on resilience to climate change				24		SK021	103,347.83	103,347.83	7,683.10	1		
						11		SK010	421,893.02	411,129.81	205,332.90	1		
						11		AT111	421,893.02	411,129.81	205,332.91	1		
						11		AT112	421,893.02	411,129.81	205,332.91	1		
						11		SK021	421,893.02	411,129.81	205,332.90	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				11		AT127	421,893.02	411,129.81	205,332.91	1		
						1		SK010	1,437,141.88	1,400,056.18	691,267.95	3		
								1	19	AT130	1,375,210.53	1,338,124.83	645,374.15	3

Categorisation dimensions										Financial data			
1.	2.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Priority axis	Fund	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA2	ERDF	85 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable	6		22	SK010	4,400,689.01	4,324,026.01	969,171.75	7
								22	AT122	342,352.68	339,041.41	141,559.20	1
								22	SK021	1,544,206.16	1,527,242.04	659,826.68	4
								22	AT125	687,985.50	682,794.88	382,788.53	1
								22	AT130	1,851,705.43	1,791,813.51	576,866.18	4
								22	AT126	2,885,166.14	2,822,205.70	867,784.64	5
								22	AT127	587,590.95	581,887.48	277,038.15	2
		90 Cycle tracks and footpaths				6		19	SK010	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	SK023	49,779.22	49,779.22	14,263.49	1
								19	AT112	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	SK021	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	AT127	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	SK010	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	SK023	49,779.22	49,779.22	14,263.49	1
								24	AT112	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	SK021	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	AT127	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
		91 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas				6		15	SK010	725,080.31	725,080.31	491,215.45	1
								15	AT112	725,080.31	725,080.31	491,215.45	1
		94 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage assets				6		15	SK010	1,219,929.73	1,203,096.95	491,391.08	1
								15	AT123	1,219,929.73	1,203,096.95	491,391.08	1
								15	AT125	1,219,929.73	1,203,096.95	491,391.08	1
								19	SK010	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	SK023	49,779.22	49,779.22	14,263.49	1
								19	AT112	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	SK021	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								19	AT127	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1



								23	SK010	1,700,531.89	1,694,162.41	235,838.77	3
								23	AT111	133,609.75	132,161.72	56,726.19	1
								23	AT122	133,609.75	132,161.72	56,726.19	1
								23	AT112	479,516.17	469,272.57	138,303.04	2
								23	SK021	2,747,091.39	2,733,324.08	467,167.04	4
								23	AT124	133,609.75	132,161.72	56,726.19	1
								23	AT124	1,343,499.84	1,337,130.41	312,234.89	3
								23	AT130	1,427,378.89	1,425,930.86	212,195.73	2
								23	AT126	1,293,769.13	1,293,769.13	155,469.54	1
								24	SK010	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	SK023	49,779.22	49,779.22	14,263.49	1
								24	AT112	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	SK021	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1
								24	AT127	31,112.01	31,112.01	8,914.68	1



Categorisation dimensions										Financial data			
1.	2.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Priority axis	Fund	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA3	ERDF	36 Multimodal transport	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0

Categorisation dimensions										Financial data				
1.	2.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.				
	Fund	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected	
PA4	ERDF	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	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable	11		19	SK010	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
									AT112	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
									SK021	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
									AT130	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
									AT126	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
									AT127	712,225.68	694,746.95	364,991.89	1	
		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				11			18	SK010	1,170,261.55	1,170,261.55	435,342.94	4
										AT111	144,417.90	144,417.90	80,315.43	1
										AT112	360,885.07	360,885.07	80,315.43	2
										AT212	111,090.70	111,090.70	61,781.10	1
										AT123	106,650.00	106,650.00	36,121.59	1
										SK021	360,885.07	360,885.07	80,315.43	2
										AT124	360,718.41	360,718.41	80,222.75	2
										AT130	735,887.05	735,887.05	337,347.54	1
										AT126	323,117.17	323,117.17	36,121.59	2
										AT127	323,117.17	323,117.17	36,121.59	2
										SK010	168,556.75	168,556.75	81,400.17	1
										AT112	168,556.74	168,556.74	81,400.17	1
										AT126	168,556.75	168,556.75	81,400.17	1
										AT127	168,556.75	168,556.75	81,400.17	1
120 Capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectorial and territorial pacts to mobilize for reform at national, regional and local level	11		19	SK010	718,660.84	689,085.75	218,516.83	1						
				AT121	333,041.74	319,336.05	101,265.05	1						
				AT112	333,041.75	319,336.06	101,265.05	1						
				AT123	477,089.45	457,455.75	145,064.36	1						
				SK021	333,041.75	319,336.06	101,265.05	1						



									AT124	333,041.75	319,336.06	101,265.05	1
									AT126	333,041.75	319,336.06	101,265.05	1
									AT127	333,041.75	319,336.06	101,265.05	1

Categorisation dimensions										Financial data			
1.	2.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Priority axis	Fund	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA5	ERDF	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable	13		18	SK010	276,818.15	276,818.10	131,070.37	4
									AT111	357,772.54	357,772.58	180,064.11	5
									AT121	87,499.86	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
									AT122	87,499.86	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
									AT112	357,772.54	357,772.54	180,064.06	5
									AT123	87,499.86	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
									SK010	276,816.50	276,816.55	131,070.11	4
									AT124	87,499.86	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
									AT124	87,499.90	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
									AT130	276,816.50	276,816.50	131,070.11	4
									AT126	87,499.86	87,499.86	30,934.10	2
		AT127				87,499.86		87,499.86	30,934.10	2			
		122 Evaluation and studies				13		18	SK101	235,149.97	235,150.09	124,367.33	3
									AT111	235,150.09	235,149.97	124,367.33	3
									AT121	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT122	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT112	235,149.97	235,149.97	124,367.33	3
									AT123	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									SK021	235,149.97	235,149.97	124,367.33	3
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT125	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
123 Information and communication	13	18	AT124	235,149.97	235,149.97	124,367.33	3						
			AT124	316,106.01	316,106.01	173,361.28	4						
			AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1						



									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT124	316,106.01	316,106.01	173,361.28	4
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT124	235,149.97	235,149.97	124,367.33	3
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT124	235,149.97	235,149.97	124,367.33	3
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1
									AT124	45,833.33	45,833.33	24,231.32	1

Data source: SFC2014



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

1	2	3	4	5
	The amount of ERDF support <sup>9</sup> envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)	Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area	0	0	0	0

Data source: ITMS2014 +

<sup>9</sup> ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.



#### 4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

Updated Evaluation plan approved by the MC at its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting in October 2018 foresees an evaluation in two phases:

- 1<sup>st</sup> phase (2018-2019): focus on three main tasks: a) revisiting the programme strategy; b) investigating options to reduce the administrative burden and c) evaluating and illustrating key impacts of the programme. If possible, at this stage, the evaluation will seek to build a bridge to the strategic objectives of the forthcoming period 2021-2027.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> phase (2021-2022): focus on programme impacts and achievements towards specific objectives. In the second stage, it is intended to assess the achievements also from a broader perspective, i.e. from the perspective of the strategic EU objectives.

According to the updated Evaluation plan, evaluation activities have been initiated in 2019. In terms of time range, the evaluation covered progress from the beginning of the programming period, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 till 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 (cut-off date). The subject of the evaluation activities was the Co-operation Programme Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria 2014 – 2020, its management structures and all interventions implemented within the framework of this programme. From the geographical point of view, it covered all the regions eligible for the support of the programme on both sides of the border between Slovakia and Austria. The evaluation activities did not include activities carried out within the priority axis Technical assistance, due to its different nature not related to the evaluation assignment.

The evaluation reviewed the programme's relevance and assessed whether the programme interventions correspond with the current needs of the concerned regions. The evaluation further dealt with the evaluation of the administrative processes/procedures and identification of possible measures to make these more efficient. The final stage of the assignment focused on the produced outputs and potential results and/or impacts as well as the likelihood to achieve programme objectives.

The evaluation assignment comprised the following three tasks:

1. revisiting the programme strategy,
2. investigating options to reduce the administrative burden, and
3. evaluating and illustrating key impacts of the programme.

The evaluation outputs consisted of the Inception report, Interim report 1 and 2, and the Final report. The 1<sup>st</sup> Interim report describing findings specified for task 1 concerning the programme relevance, conclusion and recommendations was submitted in January 2020. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Interim report describing findings specified for task 2 concerning the programme efficiency, conclusion and recommendations was submitted in September 2020. The Final evaluation report containing summary of interim report 1 and 2 plus findings specified for task 3 related to the effectiveness, sustainability, impact, partnership and cooperation, conclusions and recommendations was submitted in September 2020.



## Summary of the final mid-term evaluation report

The aim of the mid-term evaluation of the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria 2014 – 2020 was to assess the programme outputs, its impact on the programme territory and need for a revision of the programme, while examining possibilities for reducing the administrative burden. The cut-off date of the report was 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.

A non-experimental evaluation design was applied to answer three separate sets of descriptive questions representing individual tasks of the assignment. Both, quantitative and qualitative methodological tools and instruments were applied to gather and analyse data. To increase the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings, triangulation of data sources as well as triangulation of tools were applied. The data collection was largely carried out in parallel by the Slovak and Austrian part of the evaluation team.

Due to delay at the initial phase of implementation, the first projects started implementation in summer 2018. Therefore, it was not possible to answer some of the evaluation questions in terms of impact or their contribution to horizontal principles and selected European strategic documents. Equally, due to the timing of the assignment, some of the measures recommended for the administration and management processes came late to improve the current Programme implementation but can be implemented in the next Programme. One of the limitations concerned the restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic and limited availability of stakeholders however, it did not have any significant influence on the timely submission of outputs.

The intervention logic was content-wise coherent and reflects the needs and numerous challenges of the regions, the current structural set up, however, shows substantial space for improvement in terms of causality and indicators' setting at both, outputs as well as results levels.

As concerns the focus of the Programme, the originally identified needs remain relevant and the recent statistical figures confirm a persistent need for support in the selected priority areas. The findings indicate that the needs to be addressed in the next programming period would not practically differ from the current ones and a few additional priority areas were identified. However, there might be a slight change in the proportion of allocated resources to individual priorities that need to be agreed by the regions. By the end of 2019 about three quarters of the financial sources for priority axes 1, 2 and 4 have been contracted. This was not the case of priority axis 3 dealing with transport infrastructure, which, by its nature, requires considerable time to prepare projects. Therefore, a more strategic approach will be needed in a future to increase the absorption capacity in this area.

The challenges identified for the Programme have been closely linked to the management and administration processes. The transfer of the Managing Authority from Austria to Slovakia caused numerous difficulties due to significant differences in the legal frameworks applied for the administration of EU funded interventions in both countries. The central and unified management of the Slovak operational programmes could not cover specific features of the cross-border programmes, the national monitoring system (ITMS2014+) was not prepared to work in German version and public procurement processes represent a continuous challenge for all projects funded from public sources. All these factors slow down the Programme implementation. Moreover, the initial high turnover of staff in the management position influenced by political changes in Slovakia did not help the smooth start of the Programme. The



management and administration processes were thus complicated and time consuming. The bilingual preparation of the project documents was identified by the beneficiaries as one of the bottlenecks.

Although, some of the problems have been resolved, the unresolved issues indicate the need to change and simplify the management system of the Programme in the future. The interviewed respondents unanimously agreed that administrative burden within the Programme is high, which is discouraging future applicants and it shrinks the number of potential applicants and creates small and closed circle of partners.

To communicate the results of the Programme which provides support in four so different areas is a very challenging task; therefore, the need to communicate special topics, address particular target groups and use more current forms of communication was identified. It was repeatedly expressed that the small projects fund is a tool with significant contribution to the visibility of the cross-border programmes.

Following the findings and the conclusions drawn from the evaluation, it is recommended to assist the potential applicants and prepare example of a completed application, publish a short check list of all necessary annexes and documents, elaborate a “dictionary” providing clear definitions of the basic terms, and examples of (non)eligible expenses, ensure the automatic announcement of changes/updates of documents, submit a solemn declaration instead of the Partnership Agreement at the application stage, continue in provision of adequate training for the applicants and take into account the technical qualification of the applications to avoid a risk of losing the interest of applicants.

In the current implementation phase, it is recommended to provide the changed guidelines with the track changes, if necessary, apply for reallocation of funds (and revised Programme indicators) and ensure the personnel continuity to retain historical memory and know-how to speed up the Programme implementation.

For the next programming period there would be a need to pay special attention to the Programme intervention logic and proper determination of relevant output and result indicators including their baseline and target values, and to preparatory work of any large-scale investment project. The Small Project Fund should be considered as well as support of areas that are currently excluded due to legislative restrictions. The future role of the Programme has to be clarified and at the same time decision should be made on future desired composition of the future partnerships (experienced or new partners). The Programme should not be included under the central management system of the national ESIF and a unified community management system for all cross-border programmes supported from EU sources or other alternative could be considered. The official communication within the Programme could be simplified and new monitoring system should enable fully electronic administration of the Programme. The communication activities should focus on new contemporary approach with a professional support during the whole programming period.



## 5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN

### 5. a) Issues and measures taken

After a rather sluggish start of the Programme, in 2020 the MA together with programme partners continued to follow the measures adopted in 2018 and further developed in 2019 and 2020 to ensure the smooth implementation of the programme. However, 2 circumstances occurred in 2020 that negatively affected the programme performance, i.e.: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2) the transition of the MA from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the SR to the newly established Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the SR as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. In general, a significantly negative effect on the overall implementation of projects was evident, what reflected in the level of expenditures submitted for verification and on the level of payment requests submitted.

These issues seriously endangered the cash flow of the Programme, as the reimbursements were not as high as planned. Consequently, reaching the N+3 target for 2020 became a challenge. As the situation in the Programme was, unfortunately, not exceptional but emerged in all member states in the EU, the European Commission addressed the issue with specific measures as stated in the REGULATION (EU) 2020/558 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 April 2020 amending Regulations (EU) No 1301/2013 and (EU) No 1303/2013 as regards to specific measures to provide exceptional flexibility for the use of the European Structural and Investments Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. With a view to alleviating the burden on public budgets responding to the public health crisis, Member States were given the exceptional possibility to request, for cohesion policy programmes, a co-financing rate of 100 % to be applied for the accounting year 2020-2021, in accordance with budget appropriations and subject to available funding. Requests for modification of the co-financing rate had to be submitted to the EC in accordance with the procedure for the amendment of programmes.

The Programme requested the temporary increase of the co-financing rate to 100 % in all priority axes to ease the burden caused by the COVID-19 crisis. The co-financing rate of 100 % is applied to expenditures declared in payment applications during the accounting year starting 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 for all priority axes of the Programme. The modification request was submitted on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and approved by the European Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

#### 1. Taking steps for fulfilment of N+3 rule for 2020:

- Further simplification of application package and programme documentation for applicants and beneficiaries
- Setting 2 deadlines for CfP round in 2020 – the deadline for 7<sup>th</sup> round was set on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and the deadline for 8<sup>th</sup> round was set on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020)
- Increasing frequency of consultations for applicants and beneficiaries in online format
- Interactive communication with applicants and beneficiaries on a daily basis
- Enhance public-awareness about the Programme
- Ongoing monitoring of status of Programme's implementation on a weekly basis
- Providing active assistance to applicants with the submission of applications, including the organisation of ITMS seminars (17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in Bratislava and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 in Vienna).



- “Open days” (consultations with applicants) were organized by the JS at 7 different dates during 2020 corresponding to particular assessment rounds of CfP – 4<sup>th</sup> February in Bratislava, 11<sup>th</sup> February in Vienna, 21<sup>st</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> October in Vienna and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in online form in Bratislava and subsequently in full online mode (due to the deteriorating pandemic situation with COVID-19) on 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020
  - Providing specific assistance to Austrian applicants with ITMS2014+
  - Providing active support for beneficiaries during the project’s implementation (mainly with submission of expenditures and payment requests)
2. Implementing measures to improve the efficiency of the implementation and to accelerate the disbursement of funds:
- At the FLC level:
    - Shortening of periods for verification of lists of expenditures from 90 days to shorter periods (currently approximately 60 days on SK side);
    - Providing a possibility to submit expenditures below the set threshold of 10 000 €;
    - Active communication with beneficiaries on a daily basis and providing support with submission and completion of necessary documentation.
  - At the JS level:
    - Active communication with beneficiaries on a daily basis with the aim to increase the number of submitted lists of expenditures and payment requests;
    - Providing active assistance to beneficiaries with submission of expenditures;
    - Providing active support with uploading of relevant documentation into ITSM2014+;
    - Providing specific assistance to Austrian beneficiaries with ITMS2014+;
    - Accelerating the processes on each stage of project cycle;
    - Shortening of periods for processing the payment requests.
  - At the MA level:
    - Monitoring of the status of submitted and processed lists of expenditures and payment requests on a daily basis;
    - Active communication with beneficiaries with the aim to increase the number of submitted lists of expenditures and payment requests;
    - Uploading documents into ITMS2014+ together with beneficiaries in order to facilitate and accelerate the process of submission and approval;
    - Issuing instructions and guidance for ITMS2014+.
3. Ensuring the fulfilment of programme indicators:
- Setting deadlines of CfP rounds in a continuous manner;
  - Continuation of publishing CfP rounds on the basis of information from consultations and “open days” with the aim to commit remaining allocation and secure the fulfilment of N+3 rule for remaining years and the fulfilment of programme indicators through approval and implementation of good projects;



- Providing a sufficient number of trainings, seminars and “open days” for applicants and beneficiaries;
- Active communication with applicants, regional partners and other partners within the programme;
- Continuation of intensive communication with beneficiaries with the aim to accelerate the process of submission of expenditures, minimise errors on the beneficiary side and secure the submission of payment requests according to agreed schedules;
- Ongoing monitoring of status of Programme’s implementation on a weekly basis (or shorter if necessary).

In addition, pursuant to the Decree of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019, the Programme was put under “crisis management” (according to Slovak national legislation) due to non-satisfactory results achieved in 2018, which resulted in closer monitoring from the Central Coordination Body (CCB). The Government decree bound the MA to provide from September 2019 on regular weekly reports per PA’s (contracting and disbursement status) and monthly reports on progress in Programme implementation and fulfilment of goals. The closer monitoring and reporting continued also in 2020 and shall continue until the “crisis management” is revoked.

All the implemented measures throughout 2018, 2019 and 2020 have led, among others, to the successful fulfilment of N+3 rule for 2020 (in relation to the financial commitment for 2017), by certifying and declaring expenditure of EUR 20.35 mn to the EC.

With regard to low number of projects under PA3, the MA has continued in negotiations with programme partners with the aim to re-identify needs of programme area and discussions about possible project proposals in order to distribute the resources in a way that they cover the needs of the region in accordance with Cooperation Programme. In case of need and based on the results of Programme evaluation, the MA might initiate, in agreement with programme partners, the revision of Cooperation Programme.

#### **5. b) Assessment whether progress is sufficient**

Building on significant progress in Programme implementation in 2018, during the reporting year the MA together with programme partners continued to use its best efforts to ensure the smooth and steady implementation of the Programme.

However, it must be stated that the Programme still carries its legacy of the past that resulted in the delayed implementation. On the one hand, the commitment rate of the Programme shows rather satisfactory results – 93.39 % of the Programme allocation; on the other hand, the disbursement rate of 23.48 % remains rather low. The main reasons for the delays within the programme are explained in previous AIR’s. From the information and data mentioned above it is evident that there was significant effort made to ensure progress in programme implementation.



## **6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY**

See annex to this report.

## **7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

Not relevant.

## **8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS**

### **8.1. Major projects**

Not relevant.

### **8.2. Joint action plans**

Not relevant.