

European Territorial Cooperation

Italy – Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA: Audit Authority

CA certifying authority

CBC: Cross-border cooperation

CP: Cooperation Programme

CPR: Common Provision Regulation

CSF: Common Strategic Framework

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

ESF: European Social Fund

ETC: European Territorial Cooperation

EUSAIR: European Union Strategy for Adriatic Ionian Region

EUSALP: European Union Strategy for Alpine Region

EUSDR: European Union Strategy for Danube Region

ICT: Information and Communication technology

IP: Investment Priority

JS: Joint Secretariat

MA: Managing Authority

MC: Monitoring Committee

MS: Member States

PA: Priority Axis

SEA: Strategic Environmental Assessment

SME: Small and Medium enterprise

SO: Specific Objective

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

TA: Technical Assistance

TF: Task Force

TO: Thematic Objective

SECTION 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

STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion

THE ROLE OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

This cooperation programme (CP) describes the context and priorities for cross-border cooperation (CBC) between Italy and Croatia for 2014-2020.

This programme enables regional and local stakeholders from two countries to exchange knowledge and experiences, to develop and implement pilot actions, to test the feasibility of new policies, products and services and to support investments. The programme is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The chapter presents the programme territory and analyses its main features for selecting a list of key development assets and challenges in the Italy - Croatia area that may be addressed through the CBC.

ITALY – CROATIA CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME AREA

The programme area includes the following administrative units at the NUTS III level:

- in Italy - administrative units (province) of Teramo, Pescara, Chieti (Abruzzo), Campobasso (Molise), Brindisi, Lecce, Foggia, Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani (Puglia), Venezia, Padova, Rovigo (Veneto), Pordenone, Udine, Gorizia, Trieste (Friuli Venezia Giulia), Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini (Emilia Romagna), Pesaro e Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Fermo (Marche);
- Croatia - administrative units (županija) Primorsko-goranska, Ličko-senjska, Zadarska, Šibensko-kninska, Splitsko-dalmatinska, Istarska, Dubrovačko-neretvanska (Adriatic Croatia region), Karlovačka (Continental Croatia region).

The whole Programme area spreads over 85.562 km² and, according to the last census (2011), the population is 12.465.861 inhabitants.

In terms of population and surface, the Italian regions are very significant and represent 88% of population and 67% of surface area of the whole Programme territory.

The population density in the Programme area is 145,69 inhabitants per km², but there are big differences between the Programme areas for each country. Population density in the whole Programme area is above the averages of EU28 (112 inhabitant/km²) and Croatia (75,78 inhabitant/km²), but lower than Italian national average (197,30 inhabitants/km²).

The area contains territories of two EU Member States with different levels of socio-economic development. The single market opportunities and policies facilitating the free movement of people, goods, services and capital boosted convergence and competition processes, but these have not yet managed to reduce significant socio-economic disparities within the Programme Area.

Since early 2000s, the emerging cross-border ties established within the framework of previous platforms have resulted in many diverse collaboration networks spreading across the area and involving: regional and local authorities, business organisations, research and academic institutions and non-governmental organisations. The

cooperative networks were strengthened by joint projects under the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013, SEE and MED and provide a solid base for the years ahead.

KEY FACTS OF THE PROGRAMMING AREA

Territorial cohesion

The Italy - Croatia area shows a distinct blue and green pattern, featuring the sea basin, coastal landscapes, green but also urban areas. The location of the Adriatic Sea in the very centre of the territory requires, on one hand, more efforts to accomplish collaboration aims related with the cross-border integration of economic, educational and labour markets. On the other, it is a joint economic and environmental asset, and a natural platform for cooperation building on long-dating trade exchange contacts reflected in some common traits of cultural heritage.

Programme area consists of more than 1.500 municipalities with some, very important urban areas such as Bari (315.993 inhabitants), Venice (261.362 inhabitants), Padova (214.125 inhabitants), Trieste (202.123 inhabitants), Split (178.102 inhabitants), Ravenna (160.243 inhabitants), Foggia (153.143 inhabitants), Ferrara (131.841 inhabitants), Rijeka (128.624 inhabitants), Pescara (123.103 inhabitants), Ancona (102.997 inhabitants) and Udine (100.514 inhabitants). Several of these cities are served by ports representing key hubs in terms of possibility for developing maritime trade.

Both countries have many national parks and protected areas. In Italy the coverage is around 5% while in Croatia it is 1,77% with all the national parks in the Programme area. Protected area surface included in Natura 2000 network in Italy is 21,20%, while in Croatia is much higher with 45.86% significantly higher than EU28 of 24.23%. European laws and regulation on biodiversity conservation and on Natura 2000 network have not a uniform level of application in the two Countries. In particular, Croatia has planned to fulfil the compliance with the Natura 2000 regulation for the 2020.

Area of Adriatic Sea is 138.595 km², of which 31.067 km² makes Croatian coastal seas. Length of the Adriatic Sea is 783 km and an average width of 170 km.

As a key feature **Adriatic Sea**, with its coast and islands is the most valuable, but also one of the most vulnerable natural systems of the programme area. Adriatic Sea is a unique and highly sensitive marine ecosystem which, by its hydrographic, oceanographic, biological, bio-geographical and other features differs from the rest of the Mediterranean Sea even though it is an integral part of it. The Adriatic Sea is characterized by biodiversity, purity, transparency and unique landscapes. Due to its specific characteristics, the Adriatic Sea is considered a specific sub-region within Mediterranean Sea. Coastal areas are also characterized by a high degree of biodiversity, including numerous endemic species, sensitive habitats and ecosystems. Both Adriatic Sea and coastal areas play a significant role in the development of economy, cultural and social life of the Programme area. In this sense, special attention should be given to the Adriatic Sea, in terms of its use and conservation.

The Adriatic Sea extends parallel to the direction of the Dinarides, from the north-west to south-east. It is rich in flora and fauna and represents a great opportunity for the development of tourism and fishing. Croatia is rightly called "the land of a thousand islands". Adriatic Coast has 1.233 islands, islets and reefs, of which 1.185 are in the Croatian Adriatic coast. 718 of them are islands and 66 of them are inhabited.

Most of the Croatian Programme area is covered by Dinaric Alps mountain ranges that stretch from north-west to south-east. In the inland the climate is temperate, while the coast has a Mediterranean climate. The soil is generally very poor, except on the plains with natural grass and fertile soil.

Italy's Programme area is a combination between wide range of hills and Adriatic Sea, valleys, rivers and canals. From Friuli Venezia Giulia on the north-east, to Puglia that is

called the “heel of Italy`s boot”, in the south-east, there is a great diversity. Pre-Alps, Apennines and Adriatic Sea give the country a unique landscape.

There are 29 UNESCO World Heritage protected sites, natural heritage and intangible heritage in the area altogether creating a very attractive destination for tourism. 12 are located on the Italian side, while 17 on the Croatian one.

Economic cohesion

Economy of the programme area is still affected by the economic crisis from 2008, which results in low level of competition in international markets and decrease of GDP growth rate. GDP per capita of the Programme territory is at 67% of the EU28, with Croatian side being at 42% of Italian territory. Both in Italy and Croatia, northern part of cooperation territory is performing better. Data show that that cooperation area as a whole needs strengthening of competitiveness in order to ensure GDP growth and exports development.

Research and Development expenditure in both countries lag behind the EU28 (2.07%) with Italy at 1.27% and with Croatia at 0.75%, with even lower investment in programming area in Croatia and difference in programming area in Italy from most performing to least successful regions. Even though institutional setup for R&D is well organized, the model offered demonstrated some limits, especially referring to the creation of efficient synergies/network between clusters and SMEs, research centres and universities sometimes not able to fully exploit their potentials by creating an appropriate critical mass.

Tourism is one of the most important industries in the whole Adriatic area, including Italy - Croatia Programme territory. It is focused on coastal touristic offer, maritime/nautical tourism, cultural assets (many being UNESCO heritage sites) and attractions around big cities, with a strong rural and agro tourism development in the hinterland during the last 10 years . In Croatia, tourism as a sector contributes to national GDP with a share of 14.4% and in Italy with 10.3%.

Main challenges in the field of tourism are high seasonality, especially outside cities, and lack of integrated destination management. Additionally, investment in integrated destination management and diversification of touristic offer and seasonality can contribute more to the further development of sustainable tourism as a key concept on Adriatic including supplementary development of rural tourism. Better infrastructure for nautical tourism, preserved natural attractions, joint cultural and thematic itineraries and better connectivity on Adriatic Sea are crucial for further attractiveness of the Adriatic Region.

Other traditionally important economic activities, that are strongly linked to tourism, are **fisheries** (i.e. sport fishing), **aquaculture and shipbuilding**.

However, **SMEs sector** is the pillar of the economy of programming area. SMEs¹ in Croatia represent 99,7% of all companies, with predominantly micro² enterprises (90,7%). In 2013, SMEs employed 64,2% of the total labour force. In Italy SMEs make 94.8% of the total number of non financial enterprises and employ 79.84% of the total Italian labour force³. Data available through Croatian Financial Agency and CNA are showing that SME sector had become more important for export, representing 44% (CRO) and 50% (IT) of total export in 2012.

¹SME observatory in Croatia, 2013.

²Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are defined according to their staff headcount and turnover or annual balance-sheet total. A microenterprise is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million.

³http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/performance-review/index_en.htm

Biggest weakness of Croatian SME sector is insufficient competitiveness caused by lack of smart specialisation, innovation, investment in R&D and cooperation with scientific sector but also - horizontally – with peer SMEs and big industries⁴.

In the last five years the density of **broadband Internet** in programme area is increasing rapidly. Internet coverage in both Italy and Croatia is under the EU28 (76%). In 2013 Italy recorded coverage of 68%, while Croatia had 64%. Though trailing behind the EU28, both countries had a bigger growing rate than EU (19%); in the past five years. Italy's coverage has grown by 29%, and Croatia's by 25%. **ICT sector** in Croatia contributes to GDP with 4.2%, employs 29,648 people and has annual revenue of 1,5 billion euro. It is one of the rare growing industries in Croatian economy. In Italy ICT sector revenue amounts to 65,2 billion euro. It contributes to GDP with 4.8%, quite lower than the average EU(28) value of 6.8%. The trend is negative⁵.

ICT sector can have even stronger role through crosscutting in the field of SME innovation and R&D, e-business, improvement in access to services (e-services), and access to information and education in remote/rural areas.

The Programme area has a positive trend in the potential use of **renewable energy sources**. When comparing years, Italy had an increase of 4.20% from 2009 to 2012 and for Croatia the increase was 3.70% with both countries above EU28 level of 2.20%. Croatia and Italy both signed **Kyoto Protocol** and as countries are committed to reduce their greenhouse emissions. Renewable energy sources still do not have an appropriate share in the energy structure.

Croatia and Italy, having both control and jurisdiction on Adriatic marine waters, are responsible to protect, preserve and where practicable restore marine biodiversity and provide diverse and dynamic marine environment which is clean, healthy and productive (as it is envisaged in Directive 2008/56/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 17. June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy - Marine Strategy Framework Directive). In that respect they have to promote the integration of environmental considerations into all the relevant policy areas and deliver the environmental pillar of the future Adriatic maritime policy.

The Programme area is under the **influence of climate change** as much as other parts; however, due to specific elements such as high temperatures and long-lasting severe droughts, this area is more than ever susceptible to open air fires. Fires spread quite easily, hampering the entire region. Consequences range from extensive damage to landscapes, real estate and other country's resources to endangering people's safety and causing casualties, that immediately affect tourism sector.

Regions of the area have to cope with the lack of homogeneous and comparable data for spatial/territorial planning, addressing risk prevention policies, strategies and plans. As a result, a suitable level investment to support cross-border application and testing of innovative technologies for natural risks prevention and technological risks should be ensured.

There is a long lasting tradition of circulation of people, goods, capital, knowledge and technologies in the programming area. The **accessibility** of Italian coastal territories is ensured by network of motorways and Adriatic state roads, together with the railways (with good branch lines) that serve the harbours. In Croatia road network is quite extensive, even if it is mostly of regional and national importance, and the navigation and **maritime transport** capability of the harbours is good. An important corridor for the programming area is the Mediterranean corridor that connects the South of Iberian peninsula, across Mediterranean coast of Spain and France going through Alps in north Italy and then entering Slovenia going towards Hungarian-Ukraine border. Integral part of this corridor is the rail and motorway transport Rijeka - Zagreb - Budapest (V b

⁴source: 2013 SBA Fact Sheet Croatia

⁵Source: http://www.assinform.it/aree_sx/informazioni/comunicati/cs_dati_ict_2014.htm

corridor). The Mediterranean corridor is also extended with the rail and motorway transport Zagreb-Slovenia (X corridor).

As previously mentioned, the high seasonality of tourism, especially outside cities, and the lack of integrated destination management together with the great concentration of touristic flows in few areas are challenges affecting accessibility as well. In this respect, the enhancement of the offer for multimodal opportunities might reduce the private car usage and mitigate the traffic pressure in several sensible areas.

Social cohesion

World recession caused by financial crisis is one of the main reasons of loss of jobs and increase in unemployment rates throughout the EU countries. Even though increase from 2009 to 2013 on EU28 level was only 1.90%, many countries have been seriously affected, including Italy and Croatia. In Italy unemployment rate has increased by 4.40%, while in Croatia by 8.10%. Most affected regions in Italy are, in the Programme area, Molise and Puglia, while Croatian Adriatic region has somewhat higher unemployment rate compared to national level.

Together with unemployment rate, we can see employment rate that is decreasing yearly on each level for the observed period 2009-2013. While EU28 records a decrease of employment by 0.60% and Italy by 1.90%, in Croatia this rate is much more drastic, ranking at 7.80%. Analysing data from 1st quarter of 2014, both Italy and Croatia are lagging behind EU28, with 42.4% of employed active population with methodological note that Croatia has 52.2% and Italy 49.1% of active population.

Employment in business entities according to NACE shows that at EU28 level the highest share of employment is in the field of public administration, defence, education and health, with 14.74%, while in Italy and Croatia most of the employed population is in the sector of commerce, transport and storage, but also in accommodation and food sector. Opportunities for self-employment are traditionally good in Italy, where small and medium size entrepreneurship and especially family business and crafts have long tradition. Trend in Italy is showing a slight decrease, however the rate is still high. As it is clear from the data, Italy is much higher than EU28, while the situation in Croatia is very alarming with a strong declining trend. This is caused by generally low economic performance and lack of competitiveness in different sectors in Croatia in comparison with rest of the EU. Employment in the Programme area is facing several problems. First of all alarming rate of youth unemployment, but also severe loss of jobs in some, traditionally strong sectors such as construction. There is a rising issue in the Programme area with long-term unemployment caused by inadequate education background and skills unsuitable for the labour market needs, insufficient working experience and lack of motivation after long-term absence from the labour market, as well as low professional mobility and few incentives to participate in training and lifelong learning programmes.

Life expectancy at birth in both countries, as well as at EU level is more or less stable, with minimum growth.

Both countries are above EU28 when it comes to risk of poverty. High unemployment and low labour market participation, together with raising costs of living, have increased the share of population living at risk of poverty or social exclusion both in Italy and in Croatia in 2012.

Education at all levels, but especially higher education and professional training are becoming more important in global economy, where all countries that want to move up their economies towards more competitive and sustainable systems need to invest in their future workers.

Both countries, as well as the whole Programme area are well covered with network of educational institutions at all levels; especially Italy, has long tradition of quality

education and accessibility of educational institutions. However, there are some important problems to manage, such as lack of resources for institutions modernisation, insufficient number of educational staff, lack of practical courses and internships as well as poor cooperation with business and other sectors. EU28 in time period 2009-2012 had a trend of increase in number of students, with a rank of 3,25%, Croatia 13,08%, while Italy has recorded a decline of 4.27%.

Both countries have low level of adults attending lifelong learning educational or professional training programmes, even though they are available in both countries at all levels, both public (free of charge though employment services and other publicly financed programmes) and commercial (with different charging fees depending on the type of the program and its complexity. When comparing the two countries Croatian share is much lower than Italian one.

Due to its long lasting tradition and dynamic history, the Programme Area represents a culturally rich and worldwide recognized territory. The Adriatic Sea has traditionally constituted a basin for economic and social exchanges between different cultures and religions for centuries, till modern times. Architects, painters, sculptors have all left their signatures in various settlements on both sides of the sea, and in most of the cases the value of the cultural heritage has been acknowledged by the international community.

Another important element bridging the two shores is represented by national minorities. Italians in Croatia are a recognized part of the population, especially in Istria County, while Croats are present in some villages in Molise where language and traditions are preserved and valorised at local level.

S.W.O.T.

SMART GROWTH

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available institutional setup for R&D • Strong tourism sector • Tradition and experience in shipbuilding • Outstanding tradition and experience in fisheries with positive impact on national exports and employment in local communities • SME sector density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of competitiveness on international markets especially in traditional sectors and decrease of GDP • Programme area GDP at 67% of EU28 with Croatian area at 42% of Italian • GERD below EU28 (2.07%): Italy – 1.27%, Croatia 0.75% • No. of EPO patents below EU28, especially low on Croatian side • Weak cooperation of scientific and real sector, especially SMEs • Seasonality of tourism and lack of appropriate infrastructure in some fields of touristic activity
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU policies which fund cooperation between R&D institution and SMEs • Available innovative sustainable technologies for the fishing sector • Role of ICT in SME innovation, e-business growth, improved access to information and education in remote/rural areas. • Aquaculture as growing sector • Blue economy recognized by the EU policies and strategies as a key sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous economic crisis (also affecting manufacturing) • Difficulties SMEs are facing in accessing financial instruments such as credits • Lack of interest of entrepreneurs for R&D and innovation • Continuous lack of investment of SMEs in innovation in the programme area • Continuous lack of competitiveness of companies in shipbuilding • Competition among stakeholders of the coastal area in key sectors as fishing, tourism • Global competition on traditional manufacturing sectors and on tourism sectors
NEEDS AND CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase the level of competitiveness on international markets of SMEs by fostering sound mechanisms of innovation and creating a critical mass through cooperation • The cooperation between the innovation players in fields of tourism, ship 	

building fishery and aquaculture shall be enhanced

- **There is a need to secure availability of high-skilled human resources in key economic sectors to strengthen development patterns**
 - **There is a need to facilitate involvement of SMEs in international networks for research**
 - **The area shows evident potentials for blue growth**
-

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable conditions for RES from solar and wind energy • NATURA 2000 sites and other protected areas potential for tourism • Rich cultural heritage as a potential for territorial development and growth • Good quality of air and water • Adriatic sea offers good quality of water in relation to Mediterranean context • Programme area/both countries participating in common and globally uniform ballast water management (BWM) approach. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of low carbon development strategies and actions aiming at Kyoto protocol targets • Dependence on energy sources from abroad/import of gas and oil • Limited funding and unused capacities of RES • Existing of various forms of pollution and litter in the Adriatic Sea • Insufficient connection to public sewage systems (especially in Croatia) • Inefficient and fragmented waste management system • Traffic congestions in some parts of the area caused by seasonal tourism flows
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further preservation of biodiversity • Potential for joint capacity in management of coastal and marine resources • Joint risk management and prevention of damage caused by natural disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous pollution of the Adriatic Sea due to increased anthropic pressure • Growing trend of natural disasters in the programme area (fire, drought, erosion, floods)
NEEDS AND CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to raise awareness on benefits of the implementation of energy efficiency approaches and tools in housing • There is a need to decrease road traffic congestion in urban areas especially along the coast, pressured by seasonal tourism • Adaptive capacity shall be improved due to the higher impact of climate change in the whole cooperation area • Adriatic basin calls for cross border actions in the field of risk prevention and management • Coastal and marine resources represent assets that shall be tackled by joint actions • Common characteristics of cultural heritage and shared marine natural resources can support a higher quality tourism • There is potential for more systemic, integrated and efficient maritime connections from/to the eligible territories and between them 	

- **There is potential for additional cooperation between ports ensuring integrated information (ICT) and ticketing (passengers transport)**
-

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradition of mobility of workforce Croatia – Italy in Programme area • Strong network of educational institutions including universities • Good accessibility to education and training • Good experiences and long tradition of cooperation among local and regional governments in programming area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment rates in Programme territory – higher in Croatia • Youth as especially vulnerable unemployed group • Education system does not match labour market needs • Low rates of workforce with higher education • Low level of adults attending LLL • Increased % of population in risk of poverty in Programme area
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good opportunities for and tradition in self-employment, especially in Italy • Improved mobility of workforce in programme area • Specialization of workforce for specific business niches in Blue Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing trend in number of students exiting education process in Italy despite the fact that unemployment rates by education attainment are showing highest employment rates among persons with high/higher education • Continuous growth of unemployed due to economic crisis • Lack of responsiveness of educational sector to change and modernization • Continuous growth of population in risk of poverty
NEEDS AND CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to concentrate efforts for raising employment rate of the cooperation area • There is potential for an increase of the specialization of the workforce in specific sectors of the blue economy in which the area has competitive advantage • There is a need to support “brain circulation” amongst research institutes/academies and companies as a condition for developing cooperation in the field of blue technologies • Specific training to human resources employed in the tourism sector can increase the quality of the services offered 	

Thematic scope of the programme

The choice of Thematic Objectives (TO) and Investment Priorities (IP) as set out in Section 2 has been carried out using the following criteria:

- the **relevance** of the TOs to the territorial needs and most important challenges identified under each of the overarching objectives of the EU2020 Strategy (territorial and statistical evidence), within the area taken into consideration;
- the **context**, namely the regulatory framework offered and the added value of adopting a CB approach for the implementation of actions under the TO, to address issues identified under the objective in the given financial envelope;
- the **past** lessons drawn from the IPA CBC, SEE and MED programmes activities and positive results;
- the opportunity of **differentiating/characterising** the Programme from the other European Territorial Cooperation instruments overlapping the area, taking into account their respective transnational or cross-border features and financial endowments, with a view to maximizing synergies and avoiding duplications.

In the period of 2014-2020, the Italy - Croatia Programme will focus on the following Thematic Objectives (TO) and Investment Priorities (IP):

TO 1 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

- IP 1 (b) – 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

TO 5 - Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

- IP 5 (a) - supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches
- IP 5 (b) - promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems

TO 6 – Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

- IP 6 (c) – conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
- IP 6 (d) – protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure
- IP 6 (f) – promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

TO 7 - Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures

- IP 7 (c) – developing and improving environment-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

Cross-cutting issues:

Additionally, to maintain a strong focus on thematic concentration and limit the number of IPs, complementarities and potential synergies between IPs under different TOs have been widely explored and used:

- **Eco-innovation, social innovation** (to meet needs related to societal changes);
- **ICT** (development of ICT applications and services to support social cohesion and economic competitiveness, governance processes and networking, including e-health);
- **SME** (Knowledge transfer and sharing experiences to foster the internationalization of clusters and SMEs);
- **Low carbon** (support to innovative models fostering energy efficiency and use of renewables to be introduced in development strategies);
- **Education** (exchange of know-how and fostering the growth of human resources competencies and skills).

Horizontal criteria:

In addition to the thematic orientation, the Programme addresses horizontal thematic aspects highlighted in EU regulations: sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women. These horizontal principles are further described in Section 8.

Strategic orientation of the programme

The central location of the sea basin (affecting the transportation patterns and socio-economic processes in the Programme area), the maritime character of historical trade relations, the joint asset of natural areas and cultural heritage, offering a unique competitive advantage, the shared importance of economy branches exploiting the rich natural sea based resources are illustrative fields point at an essential role of the blue and green economy for the sustainable regional growth in the cooperation area.

The potential of cooperative networks in the limited but existing area's knowledge-intensive services and research-intensive products, the availability of business actors potentially interested in investing and promoting clean and energy efficient technologies are exemplary assets shared by the Programme regions that may be better deployed for the prosperity of blue and green economy sectors.

At the same time, the area shows considerable disparities in the socio-economic characteristics, exemplified by urban-rural, and north-south divides in the economic attainment of the SME sector, innovation capacity and labour market trends as well as east-west mobility patterns that need to be addressed by joint actions across the borders.

These issues are at the core of the strategic intervention by the Italy - Croatia Programme, driven by the overall objective: **"To increase the prosperity and the blue**

growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes".

By directing the intervention to the stimulation of blue growth by means of joint cross-border actions between the Programme regions, the Programme will:

- maximise its impact towards tangible results;
- show complementarities to other EU-funded interventions that aim to reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Programme regions;
- meet the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- support the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the Integrated Maritime Policy;
- continue and strengthen collaboration between institutions, organisations and networks facilitated by the SEE, MED and IPA CBC 2007-2013.

"Blue Growth" is part of the Europe 2020 strategy and addresses the economic potential of the oceans, seas and coasts for sustainable growth and jobs, to be developed in harmony with the marine environment and through cooperation between public and private partners, including SMEs. In concordance with the European Commission's Communication on 'Blue Growth - Opportunities for Marine and Maritime Sustainable Growth', the term "blue economy" can be related to the following sectors:

- Blue energy – offshore wind power, tidal and wave power;
- Aquaculture and sustainable fisheries;
- Maritime, coastal and cruise tourism;
- Sea shipping;
- Marine mineral resources (seabed mining);
- Marine biotechnology (e.g. resources in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries);
- Desalination;
- Coastal protection;
- Maritime security & surveillance and environmental monitoring.

The two dimensions are defined as follows:

- "maritime" is defined as human activities which take place in or on the sea area of a programme, interest coastlines and are influenced by the sea area of the programme or use/depend upon the natural resources found within the sea area of a programme. For example: shipping, coastal tourism, shoreline and sea recreation, fishing, etc.
- "marine" relates to the natural features and resources of the sea within a programme area. For example: habitats and ecosystems, biodiversity (wildlife and marine species), estuaries, reefs, the seabed, mineral deposits, etc.

Applied to the sectors most relevant for the Italy - Croatia area, the blue growth context is, consequently, visible in the profile of the chosen thematic objectives and intervention priorities – translated to the Programme priority axes and specific objectives.

The challenge for the Programme is that maritime issues are not the subject of a specific TO but rather should be seen as a cross-cutting issue when considering the 11 TOs. This creates the challenge of interpreting, prioritising and integrating the maritime dimension in the choice of TOs for this programme.

Priority axes and specific objectives of the programme

The Italy - Croatia Programme is composed of four priority axes responding to the identified key assets and challenges. They correlate with the thematic objectives under ERDF and – at the level of specific objectives – with the investment priorities.

PRIORITY AXIS 1: Blue Innovation

- Specific Objective 1.1: Enhance the framework conditions for innovation through cooperation of the system players mainly in the sectors of the blue economy

PRIORITY AXIS 2: Safety and resilience

- Specific Objective 2.1: Enhance the implementation of climate change monitoring or planning of adaptation measures
- Specific Objective 2.2: Safeguard the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster

PRIORITY AXIS 3: Environment and culture heritage

- Specific Objective 3.1: Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable, economic and territorial development
- Specific Objective 3.2: Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity in the Adriatic Basin
- Specific Objective 3.3: Improve the environmental quality conditions of the Adriatic Basin by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches

PRIORITY AXIS 4: Maritime transport

- Specific Objective 4.1: Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the programme area

More detailed elaboration of each priority axis is laid down in section 2.

1.1.1. Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
<p>Thematic Objective 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (...)</p>	<p>Investment priority 1b Promoting business investment in innovation and research and developing links and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education (...)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of TO strongly supports Europe 2020 objective of Smart Growth and it is compatible with EU macro-regional strategies • Both countries lag behind EU28 in R&D expenditure as well as in number of patent applications to EPO. That shows lack of competitiveness, especially for SME's • Need to improve competitiveness of SMEs through enhancing innovation in specific business niches (tourism, creative industries, fisheries and aquaculture) • Due to maritime orientation of the programme, investment in Blue Growth through blue economy, integrated management and innovation is crucial. Several assets by tradition and experience in shipbuilding that need to be exploited for overcoming the structural problems and lack of competitiveness • Need for skills development of human resources in innovative sectors identified in the analysis (sustainable tourism, aquaculture, and shipbuilding, creative industries) to meet SMEs demand and contribute to strengthening of regional competitiveness
<p>Thematic Objective 5 Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management</p>	<p>Investment priority 5a Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of this TO strongly supports Europe 2020 objective of "Sustainable Growth" and is in line with EU macro regional strategies relevant for the area in order to maximize its effects. • Adriatic coastal area has vulnerable ecosystem that is very receptive to negative effects of the climate change. Therefore, joint measures should be initiated and funded to raise awareness in the cross-border region, promote

		<p>protection and implement adaptation measures</p>
<p>Thematic Objective 6 Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</p>	<p>Investment priority 5b Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to improve monitoring measures for prevention of damage caused by natural disasters such as erosion, wild fires, droughts and floods • High concentration of human activities carried out in the Adriatic basin call for stronger efforts in preventing risk
	<p>Investment priority 6c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of this TO strongly supports Europe 2020 objective of “Sustainable Growth” and is in line with EU macro regional strategies relevant for the area in order to maximize its effects • Due to its long lasting traditions and dynamic history, the Programme area represents a culturally rich and worldwide valued territory. There are 29 UNESCO World Heritage protected sites that present great potential for promotion of cultural and natural heritage. • The Programme area is very rich in cultural and environmental resources that require proper conservation. It is at the same time important to protect and further develop those resources in order to preserve its values and promote it for tourism. • The Programme area has a strong potential to develop joint activities to improve visiting and living environment by conserving, protecting and developing natural and cultural resources.
	<p>Investment priority 6d Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since an important part of the Adriatic Sea is beyond national jurisdiction limits, cross-border cooperation is vital in order to ensure an efficient protection of marine biodiversity • Potential of maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management to offer natural co-operation challenges for securing sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems and resources.

	<p>Investment priority 6f</p> <p>Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropogenic polluting activities of the marine environment caused primarily by human activities require coordinated interventions, which must find new, innovative methods due to the increased human activity in the Programme area • Potential of developing and using new innovative methods and technologies with a direct impact to reduce inflows of hazardous substances to the Adriatic basin
<p>Thematic Objective 7</p> <p>Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures</p>	<p>Investment Priority 7c</p> <p>Developing and improving environment-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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of this TO strongly supports Europe 2020 objective of “Sustainable Growth” and is in line with EU macro regional strategies relevant for the area in order to maximize its effects • There is a strong need to reduce the environmental impact of transport activities by increasing multimodality and shift to most appropriate environmental friendly modes of transport • Connectivity between the two sides of the sea is not sufficient and as such cannot contribute to stronger cooperation in the field of economic activities, labour mobility or exploitation of education opportunities in the Programme area. Therefore it is important to improve accessibility of the area by better data sharing and coordination • Need to reinforce the ICT application for making open and easier the access to transport info and implement all the intermodal opportunities for the passengers mobility, while investing on ICT management for all freight transport activities

Table 1: A synthetic overview of the justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall Programme budget amounts to EUR 236.890.847, including European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (EUR 201.357.220) and national contributions (EUR 35.533.627), as described in Section 3.

The financial allocation to the selected TO reflects:

- The coherence with the needs of the Member States;
- The opinions expressed during the consultation rounds;
- The expression of the strategic choices of the stakeholders;
- The estimated financial size of the projects foreseen in each Priority Axis (PA) axis based on the experience of the 2007-2013 period.

The funds allocated to Priority Axes 1, 2, 3 and 4 (corresponding to the selected Thematic Objectives 1, 5, 6 and 7) amount to 94% of the Programme financial resources; the remaining 6% is allocated to Technical Assistance. The Programme respects therefore the thematic concentration requirements (Art. 6 of the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013), assigning at least 80% of the Programme resources on up to 4 thematic objectives.

When estimating financial allocations per TO, an average budget of 1,5 MEUR ERDF per standard project and 6 MEUR for strategic ones, was assumed. The financial allocation per PA is as follows:

- PA 1 (TO 1): the planned budget allocation (Union funds) to PA 1 is EUR 24.162.867 corresponding to 12% of the total. The financial allocation to this Priority is in line with the emphasis placed on innovation, technology transfer and entrepreneurship by the two Member States and the consultations undertaken during the programming process.
- PA 2 (TO 5): the planned budget allocation (Union funds) to PA 2 is EUR 51.346.091 corresponding to 25,5% of the total. The financial allocation to this Priority is in line with the emphasis placed on climate change adaptation and risk management by the two Member States and the consultations undertaken during the programming process.
- PA 3 (TO 6): the planned budget allocation (Union funds) to PA 3 is EUR 70.475.027 corresponding to 35%. This financial allocation reflects the expected size of actions relating to the valorisation of cultural and natural heritage and the needs for increasing awareness, harmonising management approaches, facilitating knowledge transfer and fostering the use of innovative approaches in the field of environmental protection.
- PA 4 (TO 7): the planned budget allocation (Union funds) to PA 4 is EUR 43.291.802 corresponding to 21,5%. The financial allocation to this Priority is in line with the emphasis placed on connectivity, efficient and environmental friendly mobility and transport. It also reflects the relative low demand in this thematic orientation expressed both during the 2007-2013 period but as well the possibility of implementing small-scale infrastructures.

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

Priority axis	ERDF support (EUR)	Proportion of the total Union support to the cooperation programme (by Fund) ⁶			Thematic Objective ⁷	Investment priorities ⁸	Specific Objectives	Result indicators corresponding to the Specific Objective
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)				
1.	24.162.867	12			1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	IP 1.b Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education (...)	Enhance the framework conditions for innovation through cooperation of the system players mainly in the sectors of the blue economy	Increased number of EPO applications on relevant sectors
2.	51.346.091	25,5			5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	IP 5.a Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches	Enhance the implementation of climate change monitoring or planning of adaptation measures	cooperation area disposing of regular monitoring of climate change or planning of adaptation measures
						IP 5.b Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience	Safeguard the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster	increase in disaster response capability

⁶ Presentation of the shares corresponding to ENI and IPA amounts depends on management option chosen.

⁷ Title of the thematic objective, not applicable to technical assistance.

⁸ Title of the investment priority, not applicable to technical assistance.

3.	70.475.027	35%			6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	IP 6.c Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable, economic and territorial development	Tourist overnights in the Unesco sites (Venice not to be considered)
						IP 6.d Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services through Natura2000, and green infrastructures	Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity in the Adriatic Basin	Conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in the Programme area
						IP 6.f Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection (...)	Improve the environmental quality conditions of the Adriatic Basin by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches	Preserve the high quality of coastal bathing waters (according to the dir. 2006/7/CE)
4.	43.291.802	21,5			7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	IP 7.c Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems (...)	Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the programme area	CO2 emission for passenger in the cbc area (from selected locations)
Technical Assistance	12.081.433	6%			na	na	na	na

SECTION 2.PRIORITY AXES

(Reference: points (b) and (c) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

SECTION 2.A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1. Priority Axis 1

ID	PRIORITY AXIS 1
Title	Blue Innovation

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2. Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective

Not applicable

2.A.3. Fund and calculation basis for the Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis (total eligible expenditure)	24.162.867

2.A.4. Investment priority 1.b

(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.b

<p><i>“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”</i></p>
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2.A.5 Specific objective 1.1

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

ID	1.1
Specific Objective	Enhance the framework conditions for innovation through cooperation of the system players mainly in the sectors of the blue economy

Expected results	<p>It is widely acknowledged that innovative capacity and sustainable structures for research and innovation are caused by the interaction of framework factors enabling knowledge to be converted into new products, processes, behaviours and organizational forms, which in turn enhance economic development and growth. The improvement of innovation framework conditions - in terms of institutional cooperation, policy instruments and developing practical cross-linkages between enterprises, R&D institutions, higher education, the public sector and the citizens- is a major challenge for the most part of the area, as illustrated in the analysis chapter. This challenge is even intensified by the impact of the persistent financial and economic crisis, which requires structural and significant changes. The economic crisis has, in fact, reinforced the need to develop new organization processes and knowledge based competitiveness, encouraging clusters among innovation players and the creation of innovative business and social models. In particular, the diffusion of entrepreneurial networks and culture funded on creativity, innovation, flexibility, knowledge, may constitute a real important development driver. This driver should be particularly – but not only - directed towards the identified sectors of the blue economy that have demonstrated a large potential in the Cooperation area.</p> <p>The specific objective 1.1 intends to stimulate the cooperation among actors of the innovation system - especially among business players, research centres and other intermediaries, to improve the framework conditions for stakeholders, to increase access to research results for SME and PA institutions to contribute to both economic and social innovation transfer. The promotion of business investment in R&I and the development of synergies between enterprises, research centres and the higher education sector plays a key role in order to achieve most of the EU2020 targets. In the CBC programming, strong focus is</p>
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	<p>given to the field of research and innovation, as well as promotion of development of joint smart specialisation approaches and partnerships among different actors. Moreover, the added value of the CBC cooperation is to give emphasis to best practices exchange, concerning both technological transfer and innovation methodologies (open innovation, living lab, fab lab, co-working spaces, pre-commercial public procurement, etc.).</p> <p>For the specific objective 1.1, the main change sought is to improve the innovation framework of the eligible area and strengthen the innovation profile of clusters and networks, in particular in their cross-border dimension, especially in the field of blue growth.</p> <p>The main sectors to be supported shall include those identified by the blue economy: blue energy, aquaculture and sustainable fisheries, maritime, coastal and cruise tourism, sea shipping, marine mineral resources (seabed mining), marine biotechnology (e.g. resources in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries), maritime security & surveillance and environmental monitoring.</p>
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Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ⁹ (2023) 100 char. Max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. max
	increased number of EPO applications on relevant sectors	Number		2008-2012		Eurostat - Patent applications to the EPO by priority year by NUTS 3 regions	2020 2024

⁹Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 1.b	<i>“Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector (...)”</i>
<p>According to the specific objective 1.1 within Investment Priority 1(b), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge transfer and capitalization activities, mainly in the field of blue economy B. Activities aimed at innovating processes and products, mainly in the field of blue economy <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint development of supply chains by investing in research and innovation; • Establishment of cross-border clusters; • Joint development of links and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education; • Joint development of human capital, increasing skills regarding novel technologies (e.g. eco-innovation, low-carbon technologies, ICT, key enabling technologies, etc.), innovative products, services or processes particularly for SMEs; • Joint design / testing of innovative processes in aquaculture and sustainable fisheries with special reference to species, management techniques and breeding, fish welfare and disease control, seafood processing; • Joint development and piloting of eco-innovative tools and processes • Awareness rising actions about social innovation opportunities and challenges (i.e. e-health, education, digital divide, start up, labour market change, intellectual property rights); • Development of marine and coastal Tourism 2.0 by mean of innovative services in the area; • Joint development of new approaches / measures for promoting Corporate Social Responsibility in SMEs; • Joint actions aimed at fostering the access to credit systems; • Joint development and piloting of social innovation actions and opportunities. <p>Territory</p> <p>To be determined according to the needs of the key intervention fields. All CBC area is concerned by this investment priority.</p>	

Target groups

- General public;
- Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”;

Indicative types of beneficiaries

- local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, SMEs, universities, associations, technology transfer institutions, research institutions, centers of R&D excellence, NGOs, innovation agencies, business incubators, cluster management bodies, education and training organisations as well as social partners and labor-market institutions

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 1.b	<i>“Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector (...)”</i>
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach, putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 1.b will be mainly implemented by standard projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effect on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of the project proposal to the overall Programme Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - capability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project; 	

- integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6).

Operational assessment criteria:

- The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs;
- The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals;
- Planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders;
- The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money.

All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.

Specific assessment criteria IP 1b

- innovative dimension of projects and their real effect in terms of concrete application and portability of results on targeted socio-economic reality.

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 1.b	<i>“Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector (...)”</i>
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the Programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data 200 char. Max.	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max.
	enterprises participating in cross-border research/innovation projects	Number	5	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	institutions participating in cross-border research/innovation projects	Number	50	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	innovative services, products and tools transferred to enterprises	Number	5	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.7. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis**

Priority axis	Indicator Type (key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the indicator, where appropriate
1	Financial		Financial	EUR	1.989.883	28.426.902		Monitoring
1	Output		Institutions participating in cross-border research/innovation projects	Number	20	50		Monitoring/Project progress reports

2.A.8. CATEGORIES OF INTERVENTION*(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the Priority Axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of ERDF contribution***Table 6: Dimension 1: Intervention field**

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
1	56 Investment in infrastructure, capacities and equipment in SMEs directly linked to research and innovation activities	€ 1.208.143,35
	106 Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change	€ 1.449.772,02
	60 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	€ 1.449.772,02
	61 Research and innovation activities in private research centres including networking	€ 1.449.772,02
	62 Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefiting SMEs	€ 1.691.400,69
	63 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefiting SMEs	€ 1.208.143,35
	64 Research and innovation processes in SMEs (including voucher schemes, process, design, service and social innovation)	€ 3.624.430,05
	65 Research and innovation infrastructure, processes, technology transfer and cooperation in enterprises focusing on the low carbon economy and on resilience to climate change	€ 483.257,34
	66 Advanced support services for SMEs and groups of SMEs (including management, marketing and design services)	€ 1.208.143,35
	67 SME business development, support to entrepreneurship and incubation (including support to spin offs and spin outs)	€ 1.208.143,35
	80 e-Inclusion, e-Accessibility, e-Learning and e-Education services and applications, digital literacy	€ 2.416.286,70
	82 ICT Services and applications for SMEs (including e-Commerce, e-Business and networked business processes), living labs, web entrepreneurs and ICT start-ups)	€ 2.416.286,70
	104 Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises	€ 1.449.772,02
	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	€ 1.449.772,02

	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	€ 1.449.772,02
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Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
1	01 Non-repayable grant	24.162.867

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
1	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	19.330.293,60
1	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population)	4.832.573,40

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
1	07 Not applicable	24.162.867

2.A.9. 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority Axis	1
Not applicable	

2.A.1. PRIORITY AXIS 2

ID	PRIORITY AXIS 2
Title	Safety and resilience

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIORITY AXIS COVERING MORE THAN ONE THEMATIC OBJECTIVE

Not applicable

2.A.3. FUND AND CALCULATION BASIS FOR THE UNION SUPPORT

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis (<i>total eligible expenditure</i>)	51.346.091

2.A.4. INVESTMENT PRIORITY 5.A*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***INVESTMENT PRIORITY 5.a****"Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches"****2.A.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1***(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	2.1
Specific Objective	Enhance the implementation of climate change monitoring or planning of adaptation measures
Expected results	<p>Climate change, as an area for intervention is underpinned by a range of interlinked needs and potentials which are quite challenging. Coastal areas are vulnerable, as they are prone to related risks that are likely to increase, such as flooding or coastal erosion, wetland degradation or saltwater intrusion into freshwater systems. Southern regions are expected to be affected by possible increase in frequency of severe dry periods (often causing fires) and droughts events. Moreover, the effects and the adaptation potentiality of the marine and maritime systems are still poorly know. Finally, the region's heritage is also threatened by climate change. The cross border area therefore needs to maintain and strengthen its adaptive capacity to climate change in a context where there is a risk of an increase in vulnerability, reinforced by the lower allocation of public financing on this issue in the context of lasting economic difficulties.</p> <p>In a broader perspective, adapting to climate change aims at increasing the resilience of the society as a whole, of its sub-systems as well as natural environment. Actions will support an increased preparedness for, and resilience to, climate change and associated phenomena (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding, droughts, and extreme weather) in the cross-border area. A more integrated approach to climate change adaptation will be developed particularly considering the opportunity of a cross-border approach. Mechanisms for the exchange of information and data shall be improved, while coordination of adaptive actions and plans need to be enhanced. Additionally, specific small scale investments and specific actions are possible in the framework of "climate proofing" (infrastructure, energy, buildings). SO 2.1 calls for medium- term response to a long term phenomenon.</p>

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)*(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.*

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹⁰ (2023) <i>100 char. max</i>	Source of Data <i>200 char. max</i>	Frequency of reporting <i>100 char. max</i>
	cooperation area disposing of regular monitoring of climate change or planning of adaptation measures	%	To be calculated by survey	2015		survey	2020 2022

¹⁰Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 5.a	“Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches”
<p>According to the specific objective 2.1 within Investment Priority 5(a), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Actions aimed at improving the knowledge base, data and monitoring systems B. Activities aimed at increasing the adaptation capacity of the area <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adoption of downscaled (Italy-Croatia area) climate data for better assessing local impacts and selecting adaptation strategies; • setting up of common/ integrated/ harmonized monitoring and observing systems, model, spatial data infrastructures to improve the assessment and forecast capabilities, support the planning and design phase, promote the resilience to climate change; • strengthening the capacity of public sector to develop and implement innovative services, incentives and financing schemes for increasing resilience to climate change; • elaboration of strategic planning, action plans and other instruments for climate change adaptation on marine and coastal areas; • joint development of sustainable solutions enhancing adaptation in public buildings. <p>Territory</p> <p>Marine and coastal area.</p> <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public; • Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”; <p>Indicative types of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local, regional and national public authorities and related entities, regional development agencies, regional associations, NGOs, education and training centers as well as universities and research institutes 	

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 5.a	“Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches”
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 5.a will be mainly implemented through strategic projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will be considered also if there are significant effects on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - capability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership, according to the project objectives; - integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6). <p><u>Operational assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs; - The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals; - Planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders; - The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money. <p>All the projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.</p> <p><u>Specific assessment criteria IP 5a</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementarity with pre-existing strategies or instruments previously present in the cooperation area; - Degree of involvement of relevant partners. 	

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS*(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

Investment priority 5.a	“Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches”
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS*Not applicable***2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS***(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)**

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data <i>200 char. Max.</i>	Frequency of reporting <i>100 char. Max.</i>
	public institutions participating in monitoring projects	Number	30	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	inhabitants benefiting of adaptation capacity management coordinated measures	Number	2.000.000	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.4. INVESTMENT PRIORITY 5.B*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***INVESTMENT PRIORITY 5.b*****“Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems”*****2.A.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2***(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	2.2
Specific Objective	Safeguard the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster
Expected results	<p>While being closely interrelated for many aspects, adaptation to climate change on one side and risk prevention & management on the other side should not be considered as one and the same topic: natural disasters can be seen as impacts of a changing climate, but can also have deeper causes. As reported in the territorial analysis, the cooperation area shows significant risk of droughts and wild fires subject to a constantly increase in human pressure and urbanization, but as well as linked to the activities closely connected to the use and exploitation of water resources.</p> <p>While SO 2.1 focuses on climate change adaptation, supporting resilience and responsiveness, SO 2.2 puts broader emphasis on specific risks and the development of disaster management systems, highlighting the need for furthering the capacity of recovery of the area while minimising damages. SO 2.2 calls for immediate responses to sudden events.</p> <p>There are untapped potentials in adopting CBC approach to stimulate the development of common tools and schemes for the management of the emergencies, especially in the context of the Adriatic basin. Additionally joint approaches could be adopted for the development of the disaster management system, through strengthening administrative and technical capacities, raising awareness, educating, equipping and preparing population and rescue teams and strive towards sustainable development.</p>

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹¹ (2023) 100 char. max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max
	increase in disaster response capability	%	To be calculated by survey			survey	2020 2022

¹¹Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 5.b	“Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems”
<p>According to the specific objective 2.2 within Investment Priority 5(b), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Actions aimed at improving monitoring of risks B. Activities aimed at increasing the management capacity of the risk <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of better coordinated collective emergency planning and preparedness for flooding (water management, flood risk techniques, etc.) and other risks (i.e. fire, oil spill, etc.); • joint development and implementation of awareness raising actions in the society (i.e. schools, citizen) and governance instruments; • setting up of common framework/models/tools and pilot actions to promote the reduction of environmental risks and more coordinated/ harmonized management of the emergencies; • development or improvement of existing early warning and decision-making support systems • addressing oil spill problems with coordinated contingency plans at macro-regional scale <p>Territory</p> <p>To be determined according to the needs of the key intervention fields. All CBC area is concerned by this investment priority.</p> <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public; • Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”. <p>Indicative types of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local, regional and national public authorities and related entities, regional development agencies, regional associations, NGOs, education and training centers as well as universities and research institutes. 	

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 5.b	“Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems”
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions, demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach, putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 5.b will be mainly implemented through strategic projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effect on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - capability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project; - integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6). <p><u>Operational assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs; - The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals; - planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders; - The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money. <p>All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.</p>	

Specific assessment criteria IP 5b

- Complementarity with pre-existing strategies or instruments previously present in the cooperation area.

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 5.b	“Promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems”
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the Programme.	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators(by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
				200 char. Max.	100 char. Max.
	inhabitants benefiting of risk management coordinated measures	Number	2.000.000	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	public institutions participating in risk monitoring projects	Number	30	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	joint initiatives for increasing awareness	Number	2	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.7. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator Type (key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the indicator, where appropriate
2	Financial		Financial	EUR	4.228.502	60.407.166	Monitoring	
2	Output		Public institutions participating in monitoring projects	Number	7	30	Monitoring/ Project progress reports	
2	Output		Public institutions participating in risk monitoring projects	Number	7	30	Monitoring/ Project progress reports	

2.A.8. CATEGORIES OF INTERVENTION

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the Priority Axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of ERDF contribution.

Table 6: Dimension 1: Intervention field

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
2	87 Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures	€ 25.673.045,50
	88 Risk prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks linked to human activities (e.g. technological accidents), including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures	€ 25.673.045,50

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
2	01 Non-repayable grant	51.346.091

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
2	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	35.942.263,70
2	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population)	10.269.218,20
2	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	5.134.609,10

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
2	07 Not applicable	51.346.091

2.A.9. 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority Axis	2
Not applicable	

2.A.1. PRIORITY AXIS 3

ID	PRIORITY AXIS 3
Title	Environment and cultural heritage

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIORITY AXIS COVERING MORE THAN ONE THEMATIC OBJECTIVE

Not applicable

2.A.3. FUND AND CALCULATION BASIS FOR THE UNION SUPPORT

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis (<i>total eligible expenditure</i>)	70.475.027

2.A.4. INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.C*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.c*****"Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage"*****2.A.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3.1***(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	3.1
Specific Objective	Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable, economic and territorial development
Expected results	<p>According to UNESCO definition, cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Tangible heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artefacts, etc., which are considered worthy of preservation for the future. These include objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture. Intangible heritage includes traditions, language, history.</p> <p>Due to its long lasting traditions and dynamic history, the Programme area represents a culturally rich and worldwide valued territory. The Adriatic Sea has traditionally constituted a basin for economic and social exchanges between different cultures and religions for centuries till nowadays. Architects, painters, sculptors have all left their signatures in various settlements on both sides of the sea; thus cultural assets sometimes present common characteristics in terms of construction techniques and materials used. Additionally, the area represents a diverse setting of landscapes and natural elements making the area a globally attractive place with quality of life for inhabitants and visitors.</p> <p>The right balance between conservation/protection and progress is one of the main challenges. Both elements are integral part of the cultural and natural resources of the area, and an asset in the context of green and economic growth; therefore the main change sought consists of a greater diversification and valorization of the numerous cultural and natural sites built on a more sustainable concept. The envisaged result is to merge, through sustainable tourism, environmental protection and green growth while preserving the cultural heritage and valorising local traditions.</p> <p>This specific objective invests both the need to preserve the integrity of natural and cultural resources whose surviving is continuously threatened by economic and social activities (in particular tourism) and to promote their sustainable use to increase economic development, job opportunities and wellbeing of living population. Networking of existing protected areas and cultural sites is also essential to target the common objective of improved preservation</p>

	<p>and sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>With regard to the valorization policies, a systemic approach at a crossborder level is more effective, involving all the private and public actors in the adoption of action strategies for cultural and landscape identity of the area. Long term and sustainable impacts are considered likely to be reached, on condition that foreseen actions are part of integrated economic strategies and after having carefully evaluated measures and initiatives already funded in this sector in the past. Similarly, one-off/unique or isolated projects in the areas of tourism facilities should be avoided.</p> <p>Cooperation will also stimulate innovative initiatives (ICT, creative industries, smart tools, services for target group carrying special needs, etc.) that are able to generate added value in the sustainable management of natural and cultural resources of the entire territory.</p>
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Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹² (2023) 100 char. max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max
	Tourist overnights in the Unesco sites (Venice not to be considered)	Number		2013		National Statistical agencies	2020 2022

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority**2.A.6.1A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED**

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.c	“Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage”
<p>According to the specific objective 3.1 within Investment Priority 6(c), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <p>A. Actions aimed at increasing the value of natural and cultural heritage</p> <p>B. Actions aimed at fostering economic development by sustainable tourism or other activities based upon natural and cultural heritage</p> <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of cluster of products typical of the area; development of marketing/ commercialization programmes for common Adriatic tourism products, integrating territorial services and piloting matchmaking actions (common branding included); support the valorisation of minor natural – cultural sites by enhancing the linkage with 	

¹²Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

cruise and nautical / boat tourism;

- development / enhancement of tourism itineraries link to common thematic destinations;
- support to cooperation actions for enhancing human resources in the field of tourism, natural and cultural heritage awareness and valorisation;
- development of cooperation strategies for management of preservation and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage;
- support for the knowledge and usability of the cultural and natural heritage destinations by all types of visitors, improving accessibility, information, sustainability awareness, smart use of ICT;
- analysis, digitalization, archiving and data sharing of common cultural heritage (i.e. virtual museum);
- support to the creation of new jobs through the exploitation of old crafts and tradition (e.g. ship sector);
- Enhancing the cultural heritage through research activities and restoration of quality sites for territorial development .

Territory

All CBC area is concerned. A special attention shall be given to sites/ areas where cultural/ natural heritage is strongly affected by climate change, adverse extreme natural events, presence of mass tourism, environmental degradation.

Target groups

- General public;
- Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”;

Indicative types of beneficiaries

- local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, enterprises (in particular SMEs within the cultural and creative industry as well as the environmental and tourism sector), associations, regional innovation agencies, NGOs, education and training organisations as well as universities and research institutes

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.c	“Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage”
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach, putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p>	

IP 6.c will be mainly implemented through standard projects.

The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.

In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check, in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effects on natural habitat sites.

During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:

Strategic assessment criteria:

- relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed;
- clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs;
- added value of cross-border cooperation;
- capability to address territorial needs and challenges;
- relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project;
- integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6).

Operational assessment criteria:

- The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs;
- The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals;
- planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders;
- The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money.

All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.

Specific assessment criteria IP 6c

- leverage of the capacity in natural and cultural heritage valorisation
- degree of involvement of relevant partners from the various sectors concerned (i.e. environment, culture, tourism- related organization)

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.c	“Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage”
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators(by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data 200 char. Max.	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max.
	targeted sites	Number	50	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	joint initiatives	Number	5	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	integrated tourism products/services created	Number	5	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.4. Investment priority 6.d*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.d*****"Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure"*****2.A.5 Specific objective 3.2***(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	3.2
Specific Objective	Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity in the Adriatic Basin
Expected results	<p>Ecosystems and biodiversity of the Adriatic sea represents a key dimension of the quality of life, territorial attractiveness of the water and food supply and the fight against overexploitation of resources. Natural marine and coastal resources in these regions are highly valuable and constitute an important driver for economic development.</p> <p>They are however confronted to a strong pressure and conflicts of use due to the urbanization process, agricultural and industrial activities, transport, etc. It is important to underline the increasing pressure due also to littoralization processes, increasing uses of the marine space and resources.</p> <p>Protection measures must be interconnected and inclined to take into account these changes. Protected areas have been implemented, however ecosystems and biodiversity evolve and protection measures do not answer to all needs observed at territorial level. In the cooperation area, one can especially observe a strong pressure on water quality (eutrophication, harbour pollutions, marine litters), with direct effects on the biodiversity. Invasive species represent also a specific risk as a consequence of climate change and man-made activities.</p> <p>Integrated environmental management requires a comprehensive and holistic approach (including ecosystem-based, ICM and MSP) to natural resources, planning and management involving authorities at different levels (local, regional and national) and can offer an appropriate response if tackled at CB level.</p> <p>The project topics corresponding to IP 6d shall pursue the main objective to improve management and protection measures in order to decrease threats to valuable protected areas and river/marine ecosystems. Interventions should respect and integrate two key aspects for the development of territory: the dynamic protection and risk management (protection, conservation and connectivity of "ecosystems") and the sustainable use and risk prevention (integration of ecosystem services). In particular, actions should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preserved areas needing protection measures for a better conservation; - integrated water resource management and promotion of

	<p>ecosystem-based approaches.</p> <p>Interventions can contribute implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy and reaching the 2020 biodiversity target. Moreover they should be in coherence the Marine Strategy and the Common Fisheries Policy.</p> <p>For the specific objective 3.2, the main change sought is a strengthening of the management of ecosystems and the cooperation between public actors/ managers of the protected areas in order to increase environmental benefits and to provide economic and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Given that conservation of natural resources is not possible without an adequate knowledge of the natural systems, an increase in the systematic monitoring will be pursued by specific objective 3.2.</p> <p>The CBC Programme will support more intensive and effective cooperation among various local stakeholders and managers of protected sites. This includes the protection of ecosystem services and the reduction of conflicts of use, with a specific focus on river basins, coastal, marine and wetland areas. Cooperation should be improved at cross border level with more efficient share of knowledge and better synergies aiming to improve awareness and protection of fragile areas and species.</p> <p>Projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF/EARFD regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local plans.</p>
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Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹³ (2023) 100 char. max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. max
	Conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in programme area	Number	Croatia 779 Italy 	2014	Croatia 790 Italy 	Croatia – State Institute for Nature Protection; Standard Data Form for Natura 2000 network in Croatia (www.iszp.hr) Italy -	2019 2023

¹³Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.d	“Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure”
<p>According to the specific objective 3.2 within Investment Priority 6(d), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Actions aimed at protecting biodiversity and ecosystems B. Supporting the restoring of biodiversity <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of models for species monitoring and sustainable fisheries models testing for their protection; • analysis of feasibility for setting up CB protected marine areas; • development of innovative models and systems for increase the marine environment knowledge also through establishment of common platform for marine research, survey habitat-biodiversity mapping, networking to gather and process data related to the sustainable development; • development of tools for integrated management of the sea, coastal and river environment and of cross-border natural resources (i.e. coordinated Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)); • actions aimed at reducing and preventing the environmental risk of alien species introduction due to the ballast water discharge; • joint piloting of restoration actions for specific endangered species in the Adriatic basin. <p>Territory</p> <p>Adriatic basin, meaning the marine and coastal area and all rivers converging to the sea.</p> <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public; • Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”; <p>Indicative types of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, associations, regional innovation agencies, NGOs, education and training organizations as well as universities and research institutes 	

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS*(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

Investment priority 6.d	<i>“Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure”</i>
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach, putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 6.d will be implemented by both strategic and standard projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3,</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effects on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - capability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project; - integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6). <p><u>Operational assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs; - The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals; - planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders; - The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money. <p>All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.</p>	

Specific assessment criteria IP 6.d

- involvement or portability in the whole or at least in a broad part of cooperation area;
- lasting outcomes

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.d	“Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure”
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the Programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators(by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data 200 char. Max.	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max.
	Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status (in hectares)	Hectares		Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	public institutions participating as project partners and target groups	Number	25	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022

2.A.4. Investment priority 6.f*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)***INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6.f*****"Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution"*****2.A.5 Specific objective 3.3***(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	3.3
Specific Objective	Improve the environmental quality conditions of the Adriatic Basin by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches
Expected results	<p>Quality of the sea water and marine resources are strongly harmed by a long lasting pressure due to human activities (urbanisation process, agricultural and industrial activities, inefficient solid and water waste treatment, management, port activities, maritime transportation, etc.) that in the cooperation area can be especially observed on harbour pollutions and different marine and coastal litter. These challenges for reducing water pollution and negative impacts of increasing human activities (e.g. aquaculture) can be better tackled through the use of innovative technologies (green) and planning/management approaches that could improve the monitoring and the development of joint management schemes.</p> <p>Knowledge and information exchanges on the use of new technologies for the collection, treatment and recycling of several type of waste should be supported as the improvement of conditions on one side of the border brings immediate benefits to the other side. Additionally, the introduction of new technologies in this sector could be appreciated in view of creating job opportunities and supporting youth employment and disadvantaged people inclusion. New approaches on ecosystem service concepts and requirements of the key water related EU acquis could be developed to improve planning and management of environmental problems of the marine system.</p> <p>For the specific objective 3.3, the main change sought is an improvement of the quality of the water of the sea by using innovative technologies in waste management and treatment, as well as new integrated approaches in facing several problems, including the emerging issue of marine litter.</p> <p>The CBC Programme will support more intensive and effective cooperation among various local stakeholders and managers responsible for sites/ activities potentially generating pollution.</p> <p>Projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF/EARFD regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local plans.</p>

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)*(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.*

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹⁴ (2023) 100 char. max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. max
	Preserve the high quality of coastal bathing waters (according to the dir. 2006/7/CE)	Number	2,77	2014	2,77	European Environment Agency (Data on Bathing Water Directive)	2020 2022

¹⁴Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.f	<i>“Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution”</i>
<p>According to the specific objective 3.3 within Investment Priority 6(f), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <p>A. Developing, demonstrating and implementing small-scale innovative environmental friendly technology actions and approaches;</p> <p>B. Innovative actions aimed at improving the knowledge on the environmental quality</p> <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing innovative common spatial information systems on ecosystem components and human uses and activities; • actions aimed at using green technologies for reducing and preventing all possible kinds of pollution deriving from transport and port activities • support cooperation among different sectors for the development of new possibilities of recycling marine litter and development of a CB strategy to assess, prevent and reduce marine litter pollution in the area • promoting joint innovative solutions for the protection and efficient use of water resources • pilot actions for the implementation of technologies aimed at contrasting marine debris (radar, sensor platform, managing of multispectral data, solutions to prevent marine debris) • transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience on innovative (green) technologies solutions to improve efforts of different actors in protecting the water, air and soil, contingency planning and promoting resources efficiency <p>Territory</p> <p>Adriatic basin, meaning the marine and coastal area and all rivers converging to the sea.</p> <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public; • Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”; <p>Indicative types of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, associations, regional innovation agencies, NGOs, education and training organizations as well as universities and research institutes 	

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS*(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

Investment priority 6.f	<i>“Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution”</i>
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 6.f will be implemented mainly through strategic projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check, in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effect on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - ability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project; - integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6). <p><u>Operational assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs; - The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals; - planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders; - The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money. <p>All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.</p>	

Specific assessment criteria IP 6.f

- involvement or portability in the whole or at least in a broad part of cooperation area;
- lasting outcomes

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 6.f	“Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution”
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data 200 char. Max.	Frequency of reporting 100 char. Max.
	public institutions participating as project partners and target groups	Number	10	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	innovative technical solutions implemented	Number	2	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	Targeted sources of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins	Number	2	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.7. Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator Type (key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the indicator, where appropriate
3	Financial		Financial	EUR	5.803.826	82.911.796	Monitoring	
3	Output		Public institutions participating as project partners (and target groups)	Number	6	25	Monitoring/ Project progress reports	
3	Output		Public institutions participating as project partners (and target groups)	Number	4	10	Monitoring/ Project progress reports	

2.A.8. Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the Priority Axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of ERDF contribution.

Table 6: Dimension 1: Intervention field

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
3	20 Provision of water for human consumption (extraction, treatment, storage and distribution infrastructure)	€ 1.409.500,54
	21 Water management and drinking water conservation (including river basin management, water supply, specific climate change adaptation measures, district and consumer metering, charging systems and leakreduction)	€ 4.228.501,62
	22 Waste water treatment	€ 1.409.500,54
	75 Development and promotion of commercial tourism services in or for SMEs	€ 1.409.500,54
	76 Development and promotion of cultural and creative assets in SMEs	€ 4.228.501,62
	77 Development and promotion of cultural and creative services in or for SMEs	€ 1.409.500,54
	84 Integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC)	€ 3.523.751,35
	85 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	€ 5.638.002,16
	86 Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites	€ 7.047.502,70
	90 Cycle tracks and footpaths	€ 2.114.250,81
	91 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	€ 9.866.503,78
	92 Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets	€ 9.866.503,78
	94 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	€ 8.457.003,24
	95 Development and promotion of public cultural and heritage services	€ 7.047.502,70
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	€ 1.409.500,54	

	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	€ 1.409.500,54
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Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
3	01 Non-repayable grant	70.475.027

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
3	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	35.237.513,50
3	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population)	28.190.010,80
3	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	7.047.502,70

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
3	07 Not applicable	70.475.027

2.A.9. 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority Axis	3
Not applicable	

2.A.1. Priority Axis 4

ID	PRIORITY AXIS 4
Title	Maritime Transport

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2. Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective

Not applicable

2.A.3. Fund and calculation basis for the Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis (total eligible expenditure)	43.291.802

2.A.4. Investment priority 7.c*(Reference: points (b)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 7.c
<i>"Developing and improving environment-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"</i>

2.A.5 Specific objective 4.1*(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)*

ID	4.1
Specific Objective	Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area
Expected results	<p>The area is characterised by the dominance of road transport on land bound routes and by a large number of smaller and bigger ports at the coast line. The connections to the hinterland are sometimes limited, there are many bottlenecks in multimodal connections and the governance is poor too. This is evident by the maritime traffic congestion at port areas and in general in coastal areas. At the same time, the number of visitors and travellers is increasing, demanding the implementation of new transport services and therefore opening opportunities for transport boosting in different transport modes. The lack of efficient multimodal networks (road, rail air, water transport) as well as low connectivity and mobility of peripheral areas can be potentially addressed by improving transport organization, services, infrastructures and management.</p> <p>Waterway transport plays a key role in this respect, especially since it has a relatively low environmental impact, thus the creation of an efficient multimodal transport system in the region may become a driving force for its sustainable development. The relatively low offer of routes between the two shores of the Adriatic is affecting the accessibility of the overall area.</p> <p>The development of new traffic should be directed towards the use of vessels using compatible energy sources (such as methane), the adoption of ICT systems to perform embarking and disembarking of passengers in vessel traffic management and implementation of e-ticket (electronic ticketing) systems and electronic traffic management to ensure a more efficient development of traffic in the area.</p> <p>Beside the need for optimisation of individual modes of transport (i.e. making them more environmentally-friendly, safe and energy efficient), there is need for surveillance and coordination capacity and substantial investments, in order to meet all the challenges for a sustainable, environmental friendly and low carbon transport system.</p>

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators (by specific objective)*(Reference: point (b)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**One (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective.*

ID	Result Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹⁵ (2023) 100 char. max	Source of Data 200 char. max	Frequency of reporting 100 char. max
	CO2 emission for passenger in the cbc area (from selected locations)	%				Survey to statistical agencies on CO2 emission from maritime transport and on numbers of passengers, in selected location	2020 2022

¹⁵Target values can be qualitative or quantitative

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO BE SUPPORTED

Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 7.c	<i>“Developing and improving environment-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”</i>
<p>According to the specific objective 4.1 within Investment Priority 7(c), the following types of actions will be implemented. Following actions are not an exhaustive list and may be integrated with others aiming at contributing to the achievement of selected objectives and results.</p> <p>Types of Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Support coordination/ harmonization/ monitoring of data and systems for enhancing multimodality B. Piloting tools/ solutions for improving transport system <p>Examples of Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of short sea shipping and maritime transport services through piloting CB routes (passengers, ferry connection between ports and their connections to hinterland) • Improving coordination between regional airports of the area for exploiting synergies and complementarities and enhance multimodality • Harmonization of administrative procedures and improvement of port quality management system for freight and passengers transport, ensuring connections with internal nodes and the logistic system • Green upgrading of the logistic system linked with maritime transport sector • Improving multimodal (rail, road, sea) transport systems through innovative solutions (ITS) including the promotion of pilot rail services in connection with ports • Promote mobility concepts for harmonizing the development of passenger services (i.e e-mobility, soft mobility, etc.) • Support the creation of a common vessel traffic centre for monitoring the vessel traffic within the cooperation area aimed at safeguarding environment <p>Territory</p> <p>Marine, coastal and inland connections to the coast.</p> <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public; • Those groups listed below under the caption “Indicative types of beneficiaries”; <p>Indicative types of beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local, regional and national public authorities, regional development agencies, enterprises, transport operators including operators of multimodal logistics hubs, infrastructure providers, transport associations, regional innovation agencies, NGOs, education and training organisations as well as universities and research institutes 	

2.A.6.2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF OPERATIONS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<p>Investment priority 7.c</p>	<p><i>“Developing and improving environment-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”</i></p>
<p>The programme will support operations having a clear focus on the implementation of joint CB actions demonstrating the added value of the territorial cooperation. Operations should follow a result-oriented approach putting emphasis on the development of concrete, measurable and visible outputs and results.</p> <p>The selection of operations will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the Monitoring Committee - with the support of the Joint Secretariat - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>IP 7.c will be mainly implemented through strategic projects.</p> <p>The operations will be selected through a standardized assessment procedure, divided into two phases: an eligibility check and the quality assessment. Additional details can be found in Section 5.3.</p> <p>In the first phase operations will be submitted to the eligibility check, in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call. The eligibility criteria will concern the formal check of the submitted project applications (respect of the deadline, presentation of a complete and correct application form, compliance with the eligibility rules, etc.). In this phase it will also be considered if there are significant effect on natural habitat sites.</p> <p>During the second phase, eligible projects will be evaluated on the basis of the following assessment criteria:</p> <p><u>Strategic assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relevance, coherence and contribution of project proposal to the Programme overall Strategy and to the Investment Priority and Specific Objective addressed; - clarity of objectives and measurability of outputs; - added value of cross-border cooperation; - capability to address territorial needs and challenges; - relevance and coherence of partnership according to the objectives of the project; - integration, synergies or complementarities with other EU funded, national, regional programmes (cf. section 6). <p><u>Operational assessment criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Work Plan is realistic, consistent and coherent in order to achieve the intended outputs; - The managing structure is consistent with the project size, duration and goals; - planned communication activities are adequate and strong enough to meet target groups and relevant stakeholders; - The project budget is coherent and proportionate and demonstrate value for money. <p>All projects shall ensure coherence and synergy with ERDF regional and national programmes and/or other relevant regional/local financial instruments.</p>	

Specific assessment criteria IP 7c

- involvement or portability in the whole or at least in a broad part of cooperation area;
- environmental sustainability

2.A.6.3. THE PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Investment priority 7.c	<i>“Developing and improving environment-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”</i>
Planned use of financial instruments	
The opportunity of the elaboration and implementation of financial instruments will be debated during the implementation of the programme	

2.A.6.4. PLANNED USE OF MAJOR PROJECTS

Not applicable

2.A.6.5. OUTPUT INDICATORS

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators(by investment priority)

ID	Output Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data <i>200 char. Max.</i>	Frequency of reporting <i>100 char. Max.</i>
	Protocols and agreements signed	Number	5	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022
	public institutions involved in projects	Number	15	Programme e-Monitoring System	2018 2020 2022
	strategies and action plans developed and/or implemented for multimodal environmentally-friendly freight transport	Number	3	Programme e-Monitoring System	2020 2022

2.A.7. Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator Type (key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the indicator, where appropriate
4	Financial		Financial	EUR	3.565.207	50.931.532	Monitoring	
4	Output		Public institutions involved in projects	Number	3	15	Monitoring/ Project progress reports	

2.A.8. Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the Priority Axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of ERDF contribution.

Table 6: Dimension 1: Intervention field

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
4	42 Inland waterways and ports (regional and local)	€ 4.329.180,20
	36 Multimodal transport	€ 12.987.540,60
	38 Other airports	€ 4.329.180,20
	39 Seaports (TEN-T)	€ 2.164.590,10
	40 Other seaports	€ 6.493.770,30
	43 Clean urban transport infrastructure and promotion (including equipment and rolling stock)	€ 6.493.770,30
	44 Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring, control and information systems)	€ 6.493.770,30

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
4	01 Non-repayable grant	43.291.802

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
4	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	34.633.441,60
4	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population)	6.493.770,30
4	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	2.164.590,10

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority Axis	Code	€ amount
4	07 Not applicable	43.291.802

2.A.9. 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 for to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Priority Axis	4
Not applicable	

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

PRIORITY AXIS	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
<p>The technical assistance aims at supporting the implementation of the programme, the involvement of relevant partners, as well as to increase capacity of institutions and beneficiaries in the Programme area for the cross-border actions.</p> <p>According to article 17 of ETC regulation, the limit for technical assistance is determined in a maximum of 6% of the total ERDF amount allocated to the programme. The co-financing rate will be 15%.</p> <p>Priority axis 5 technical assistance seeks in particular to achieve two specific objectives, namely: a) to assure efficiency and effectiveness in the management and implementation of the Cooperation Programme; b) to assure the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the Programme implementation</p>	

2.B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(Reference: point (c) of Article 8(2) of the ETC Regulation)

2.B.1. Priority Axis 5

ID	PRIORITY AXIS 5
Title	Technical Assistance

2.B.2. Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis <i>(total eligible expenditure)</i>	12.081.433

2.B.3. Specific objectives and expected results

(Reference: points (c)(i) and (ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

ID	5.1
Specific objective	To assure efficiency and effectiveness in the management and implementation of the cooperation programme

Expected results	<p>A sound management of the CBC programme is the pre-condition for its effective implementation. The result expected within this SO is thus directly linked to the need of ensuring an adequate management and control environment of the Programme, as described in Section 5.3, guaranteeing that all programme implementation steps (including the launch of calls, contracting, monitoring of operations and programme achievements, reimbursement of expenditure, etc.) are timely and properly executed.</p>
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ID	5.2
Specific objective	To assure the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the Programme implementation

Expected results	<p>Besides a sound Programme management, the capacity of applicants and beneficiaries to participate in the Programme, as well as the direct involvement of relevant partners, in accordance with the multi-level governance approach, as defined in Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (i.e. competent national, regional and local bodies representing public institutions at all relevant level, socio-economic bodies and the civil society), are key aspects of its successful implementation.</p> <p>Smart running of calls for proposal and providing guidance documents for potential applicants are substantial elements for Programme's effectiveness.</p> <p>In the implementation of several past overlapping Programmes, strategic calls proved to be successful in engaging core stakeholders. Strategic projects set up a more complex procedure for identifying relevant Programme topics that have been narrowed down with the support of the Programme national and regional authorities and stakeholders, and had stricter eligibility rules in terms of objectives/results and beneficiaries.</p> <p>In the framework of this SO, the Programme will address the need to build capacity of applicants and beneficiaries to participate in operations and to reach effective results.</p> <p>Accordingly, two main results are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraged capacity of applicants and beneficiaries to participate in the Programme; ○ Strengthened involvement of relevant partners in Programme implementation.
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2.B.4.Result indicators

Not applicable as the Union support to technical assistance in the cooperation programme does not exceed MEUR 15.

2.B.5.Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objective

(Reference: point (c)(iii) of Article 8(2) of the ETC Regulation)

2.B.5.1. Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

(Reference: point (c)(iii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

Priority Axis 5	<i>Technical Assistance</i>
<p>Types and examples of actions and expected contribution to the SOs:</p> <p>The following list of possible actions is only an indicative list and can be completed with other relevant actions contributing to the SOs goals.</p> <p>SO 5.1: Actions to increase in efficiency and effectiveness the management and implementation of the Programme.</p> <p>In line with Article 59 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, actions within SO 5.1 target the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and communication, networking, control and audit tasks of the programme. Moreover, actions referring to this SO also address the reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries.</p> <p>Indicative actions supported under SO 5.1 are listed below and refer to principles and tasks described in Sections 5.3 and 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Setting up and managing of a JS supporting the Managing Authority/Certifying Authority (MA/CA) and assisting the Monitoring Committee (MC) in the implementation and day-to-day management of the Programme; ○ Preparing and implementing calls for proposals, including the development of guidance documents, setting out the conditions for the support of operations; ○ Setting-up and implementing procedures for the quality assessment, monitoring and control of operations implemented under the Programme, also making use of external experts where necessary, and contributing to the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries; ○ Collecting data concerning the progress of the Programme in achieving its objectives, as well as financial data and data relating to indicators and milestones, and reporting to the MC and the European Commission; ○ Drafting and implementing the Programme communication strategy, including the setting up and implementation of information and communication measures and tools in line with Article 115 of the Regulation (EU) 1303/2013; ○ Drafting and implementing the Programme evaluation plan and follow-up of findings of independent programme evaluations; ○ Setting-up, running and maintenance of a computerised system to record and store data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, in compliance with the applicable electronic data exchange requirements and contributing to the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries; ○ Setting-up a network of national first level controllers, coordinated by the MA/JS, with the purpose of exchanging information and best practices at transnational level; ○ Setting up and execution of audits on the Programme management and control system and on operations; ○ Training for Programme bodies and participation to international conferences. <p>SO 5.2: Actions to improve the support to applicants and beneficiaries and to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the Programme.</p> <p>In line with Article 59 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 , actions within the SO 5.2 target the reinforcement of capacity of applicants and beneficiaries to apply for and to use the funds as well as the involvement of relevant partners, including the exchange of good practices</p>	

among partners.

Indicative actions supported within SO 5.2 are listed below and refer to principles and tasks described in Sections 5:

- Drafting of information documents for applicants and beneficiaries to guide them in the preparation of applications and the implementation, reporting, control and communication of approved operations;
- Organising consultation, information, training and exchange events, to strengthen the capacity of applicants to develop applications directly contributing to the Programme SOs and expected results;
- Organising implementation workshops for the beneficiaries to help avoiding irregularities and ineligible costs;
- Organising monitoring visits to running projects performed by the JS, aimed at carrying out, whenever needed, quality assessment of outputs/results, with the possibility to ask for improvements;
- Developing information and exchange tools (e.g. analytical documents, bilateral meetings, targeted events, etc.) and organisation of CB and national events to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the implementation of the Programme (also including authorities involved in the development or implementation of macro-regional strategies, joint legal bodies operating in the area and umbrella organisations at EU/transnational level);
- Developing and maintenance of a structured integrated database of the Programme data management, accessible to all the relevant implementing bodies of the Programme;
- Managing the on-going evaluation of the Programme, in order to draw the lessons learned from the current programming period;

Technical assistance actions shall be implemented by all authorities involved in the management of the Programme, listed in Section 5.3.

2.B.5.2. Output indicators expected to contribute to results

(Reference: point (c)(iv) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 11: Output indicators (by priority axis)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)	Source of data
	Calls for proposals successfully launched and closed	No.	--	Managing authority
	Operations financed following calls for proposals	No.	75	Programme e-Monitoring System
	Programme communication strategy developed and implemented	No.	1	Programme Annual Report
	Independent on-going programme evaluation	No.	1	Managing authority

	implemented			
	Programme e-Monitoring System established	No.	1	Managing authority
	Workshop and events held	No.	8	Programme Annual Report

2.B.6. Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (c)(v) of Article 8(2) of the ETC Regulation)

Table 12-14: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1: Intervention field

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
5	121: Preparation, implementation monitoring and inspection	10.269.218,05
5	122: Evaluation and studies	604.071,65
5	123: Information and communication	1.208.143,30

Table 13: Dimension 2: Form of finance

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
5	01: Non-repayable grant	12.081.433

Table 14: Dimension 2: Territory type

Priority Axis	Code	EUR amount
5	07: Not applicable	12.081.433,00

SECTION 3. THE FINANCING PLAN

(Reference: point (d) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

3.1. FINANCIAL APPROPRIATION FROM ERDF

(Reference: point (d)(i) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 15

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF		24.570.537,00	20.825.538,00	37.839.878,00	38.596.677,00	39.368.610,00	40.155.980,00	201.357.220,00
IPA amounts <i>(where applicable)</i>								
ENI amounts <i>(where applicable)</i>								
Total		24.570.537,00	20.825.538,00	37.839.878,00	38.596.677,00	39.368.610,00	40.155.980,00	201.357.220,00

3.2.A. TOTAL FINANCIAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE ERDF AND NATIONAL CO-FUNDING

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 16: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Basis for the calculation of the Union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b) (2)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)	For information	
				(b) = (c) + (d)	National Public funding (c)	National private funding (1) (d)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
Priority axis 1	ERDF		24.162.867,00	4.264.035,00	3.289.035,00	975.000,00	28.426.902,00	85,00		
Priority axis 2	ERDF		51.346.091,00	9.061.075,00	8.386.075,00	675.000,00	60.407.166,00	85,00		
Priority axis 3	ERDF		70.475.027,00	12.436.769,00	11.506.769,00	930.000,00	82.911.796,00	85,00		
Priority axis 4	ERDF		43.291.802,00	7.639.730,00	7.099.730,00	540.000,00	50.931.532,00	85,00		
Priority axis 5	ERDF		12.081.433,00	2.132.018,00	2.132.018,00		14.213.451,00	85,00		
Total	ERDF		201.357.220,00	35.533.627,00	32.413.627,00	3.120.000,00	236.890.847,00	85,00		

Total	Total all Funds		201.357.220,00	35.533.627,00	32.413.627,00	3.120.000,00	236.890.847,00	85,00		
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(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

3.2.B. BREAKDOWN BY PRIORITY AXIS AND THEMATIC OBJECTIVE

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 17

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1	Thematic objective 1 1b	24.162.867,00	4.264.035,00	28.426.902,00
Priority axis 2	Thematic objective 5 5a 5b	51.346.091,00	9.061.075,00	60.407.166,00
Priority axis 3	Thematic objective 6 6c-6d-6f	70.475.027,00	12.436.769,00	82.911.796,00
Priority axis 4	Thematic objective 7 7c	43.291.802,00	7.639.730,00	50.931.532,00
Priority axis 5	N/A	12.081.433,00	2.132.018,00	14.213.451,00
TOTAL		201.357.220,00	35.533.627,00	236.890.847,00

Table 18: The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (to be revised based on final allocation per PA)

(Reference: Article 27(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)¹⁶

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
Priority axis 1		
Priority axis 2		
Priority axis 3		
Priority axis 4		
Total		

¹⁶ This table is generated automatically based on tables on categories of intervention included under each of the priority axes.

SECTION 4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Reference: Article 8(3) of Regulation (EU) n. 1299/2013)

The territorial analysis has identified the following main territorial challenges that need to be addressed by actions across the borders:

- considerable socio-economic disparities in the programming area which affect the SME sector, the innovation capacity and the labour market;
- high influence of climate change which threatens safety and resilience capacity of the programming area;
- vulnerability of the Adriatic Sea ecosystem (with its coasts and islands), of the protected areas and of the cultural and natural heritage connected to the Adriatic Sea.

With regard to these challenges, an integrated approach to territorial development having the Blue Growth as frame-work topic will allow the programming area to meet the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 Strategy, to lead the Programme towards tangible results enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion.

However, there are multiple dimensions which reinforce the integrated approach to territorial development. which has several interconnections with the neighboring areas and with the challenges directly connected to those areas.

Thematic Objective n.1, Priority Axis n.1 *Blue Innovation* focuses on innovation in the Adriatic basin territories as main answer to the need of recovering the competitiveness of the economic sectors. Encouraging and supporting cross-border clusters among innovation players, entrepreneurial networks and social innovation linked to the existing sectors of the Blue Economy is needed to enhance its economic value-generating features. This integrated approach is also strengthened by the involvement of a large number of different players which multiply the opportunity for an incisive innovation transfer.

Thematic Objective n.5, Priority Axis n.2 *Safety and resilience* aims at making the programming area more resilient and more secure with respect to climate change. The vulnerability of the coastal areas, the low adaptation capacity of the marine and maritime systems, the threaten by climate change towards the natural heritage are the main challenges tackled by this priority axis. An integrated approach to these challenges will strengthen the adaptive capacity to climate change of the programming area through the establishment of better coordinated cross-border emergency plans, the improvement of the monitoring capacity and the adoption of joint strategies.

Thematic Objective n.6, Priority Axis n.3 *Environment and cultural heritage* intends to valorize natural and cultural heritage of the programming area. Natural and cultural potential will be mobilized by fostering synergies and intense cooperation between different sectors and players and engaging them in promoting sustainable territorial development, preserving biodiversity in the Adriatic Basin and using innovative technologies for the improvement of its quality.

Thematic Objective n.7, Priority Axis n.4 *Maritime Transport* aims at supporting multimodality as key element for making marine and coastal transport services and nodes more secure and more environmentally sustainable. On one hand this objective will be pursued improving the knowledge base for a better monitoring of the traffic-related issues. On the other hand joint strategies for the improvement of a tighter coordination among the players will be encouraged.

4.1. WHERE APPROPRIATE THE APPROACH TO THE USE OF COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENTS AND THE PRINCIPLES FOR IDENTIFYING THE AREAS WHERE IT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

Not applicable

4.2. WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT -ARTICLE 7 (2) (C) (III) ETC REGULATION

Not applicable

4.3. WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE APPROACH TO THE USE OF INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL INVESTMENT (ITI) (AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 99 OF THE COMMON PROVISIONS REGULATION) OTHER THAN URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR INDICATIVE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FROM EACH PRIORITY AXIS.

Not applicable

4.4. CONTRIBUTION OF PLANNED INTERVENTIONS TOWARDS MACRO-REGIONAL AND SEA BASIN STRATEGIES

Where Member States and regions participate in macro regional and sea basin strategies, the contribution of planned interventions towards such 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 the respective strategies.

The overall eligible area of the Programme is included in the EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) approved by the European Council on 23 October 2014 on the basis of the Commission communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (COM(2014)0357) and the accompanying Action Plan and supportive analytical document.

For this geographical reason the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme 2014-2020 can clearly play a significant role in promoting synergies with EUSAIR and in increasing the territorial cohesion. It is worth to remind that two other macro-regional strategies affect the programming area even though they don't cover the whole cooperation area:

- the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), which involves the whole Croatia;
- the EU Strategy for Alpine Region (EUSALP), which involves some Italian regions.

The Programme – with its focus on Blue Growth, the maritime dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy – is engaged in promoting EU international competitiveness by means of innovation, fighting unemployment whilst preserving natural heritage, biodiversity, protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, supporting multimodality.

There are two established and active EGTCs partly included in the Cooperation area, which may in the future be enlarged to Croatian territories: “Euroregion Senza Confini” made by Regione del Veneto (Italy), Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy) and Land Kärnten (Austria) and “EGTC GO” formed by three Municipalities (Gorizia, in Italy, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba in Slovenia).

Indeed, the main contribution that Italy-Croatia CBC Programme 2014-2020 can provide towards macro-regional strategies is related to the EUSAIR, where the selected TOs and IPs of the Programme in fact maximize the thematic links with the Strategy.

Pillar 1 “Blue Growth”, which is about driving innovative maritime and marine growth in the Adriatic-Ionian Region by promoting sustainable economic growth and jobs, as well as business opportunities in the Blue Economy sectors, is directly affected by Priority Axis n. 1 “Blue Innovation”.

Pillar 2 “Connecting the Region”, which is about connectivity within the Adriatic and Ionian Region and with the rest of Europe in terms of transport and energy networks is addressed by Priority Axis n. 4 “Maritime Transports”.

Pillar 3 “Environmental Quality” which is about preservation of the marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems is mainly, but not exclusively addressed by Priority Axis n. 3 “Environment and cultural heritage”. Beside this, also Priority Axis n. 2 “Safety and resilience” can provide a significant contribution to the realization of several priority actions proposed and detailed in the EUSAIR Action Plan indeed.

Pillar 4 “Sustainable Tourism”, which is about developing sustainable and responsible tourism potential of the Adriatic-Ionian Region, through innovative and quality tourism products and services is supported by Priority Axis n. 3 “Environment and cultural heritage” SO 3.1 which fosters economic development by tourism or other activities based upon natural and cultural heritage.

The above mentioned common elements allow for coordination of operations working within the same thematic field, further supporting the cooperation between EUSAIR and Italy-Croatian CBC stakeholders or in the framework of other transnational and cross border cooperation levels.

SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

(Reference: Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

5.1. RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AND BODIES

(Reference: Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Table 21: Programme authorities

(Reference: point (a)(i) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	VENETO REGION Sezione AdG Italia-Croazia Section MA of Italy-Croatia CBC Dorsoduro 3494/A, 30123 Venice, Italy italia.croazia@regione.veneto.it	Head of section
Certifying authority	– VENETO REGION Area “Bilancio, Affari Generali, Demanio Patrimonio e Sedi” “Budget, General Affairs, Regional public property and Venues” Area. S. Croce 1187, 30100 Venice, Italy area.bilancioaffarigeneralidemanio@regione.veneto.it	Head of area
Audit authority	Agenzia veneta per i pagamenti in agricoltura (AVEPA) Regional paying agency for agricultural sector Internal control unit Via Niccolò Tommaseo n. 67, 35131 Padova – Italy controllo.interno@avepa.it	Head of unit

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

(Reference: point (b) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

<input type="checkbox"/>	the managing authority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the certifying authority

Table 22: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

(Reference: points (a)(ii) and (iii) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Italy: institution of Programme Roster of controllers, coordinated by unique public body	Italy: the designated responsible body will be indicated in the Description of the management and

	<u>Croatia:</u> Agency for regional development of the Republic of Croatia, directorate for financial management and accounting, service for FLC	control system <u>Croatia:</u> Director
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	The Audit Authority appointed, assisted by a group of auditors that shall be referent for audits carried out in its territory <u>Italy:</u> an external audit company will be contracted to carry out audits on sample of operations <u>Croatia:</u> Agency for the audit of EU programmes implementation system	<u>Italy:</u> the designated responsible body will be indicated in the management and control system description to be adopted after the approval of the CP <u>Croatia:</u> Director of the Agency

5.2. PROCEDURE FOR SETTING UP THE JOINT SECRETARIAT

(Reference: point (a)(iv) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

In compliance with art. 23 of ETC Regulation, the Managing Authority, after consultation and in accordance with the Member States, shall set up a Joint Secretariat.

The Joint Secretariat is in charge of assisting the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee in carrying out their respective functions. Additionally, it is also in charge of providing information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities and of assisting beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

The Managing Authority ensures the overall coordination of the process and that the hiring procedures respect the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as their wide dissemination.

The Veneto Region premises, located in Venice, shall be the main seat of the Joint Secretariat and of its Head; two branch offices shall be hosted in Croatia (one in Zadar and one in Dubrovnik) in order to ensure a geographically balanced implementation of the Programme.

The branch offices, as an integral part of JS, will work in close cooperation with the JS members in Venice along the entire Programme period and will have joint management of the activities under the head of Joint Secretariat.

The Joint Secretariat staff is hired in accordance with Italian and Croatian rules.

The JS will be employed:

- Through open, transparent and internationally competitive procedure based on the Job Profile or Terms of Reference agreed and approved by both countries;
- Both countries shall be members of the evaluation committee.

5.3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS

(Reference: point (a)(v) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

The management and control arrangements of the Italy Croatia Programme are described here below (see also Annex 2). More detailed information will be provided in the Description of the Management and Control System that will be elaborated in order to support the designation of the managing and certifying authorities in accordance with art. 124 of CPR. They will be approved by the Monitoring Committee. The programme language is English; all manuals, checklists and other relevant documentation will be provided in English.

Monitoring Committee (MC)

According to art. 47 of CPR, the MC will be set up within three months of the date of notification to the Member States of the Commission decision adopting the cooperation programme.

The MC shall draw up and approve its rules of procedure, which will contain a detailed description of the committee tasks, composition and voting right.

Its composition shall be agreed by the Member States participating in the Programme and shall include their relevant representatives. The MC shall be chaired by a Member State according to a rotation principle described in the Rules of procedure, whereas the Managing Authority shall act as co-chair to ensure continuity.

The MC shall meet at least once a year. Decisions may also be taken through written procedure.

Each Member State shall be equally represented and complying with the partnership principle in managing, monitoring and evaluating the operations in all stages of the Programme implementation.

The MC shall include up to ten representatives at the appropriate governance level:

- up to 2 representative from national level – Italy;
- up to 2 representative from national level – Croatia;
- up to 3 representatives from regional or local level – Italy;
- up to 3 representatives from regional and local level – Croatia.

The MC includes also representatives of:

- European Commission, in advisory capacity
- Managing Authority, in advisory capacity
- Joint secretariat, in advisory capacity and with role of secretarial support to the committee
- Audit Authority as an independent observer.

Certifying Authority shall participate by invitation of the MC Presidency, where necessary.

Representatives of the economic and social partners and bilateral non-governmental organisations may participate in an advisory capacity according to the code of Conduct of Partnership.

In principle, decisions of the MC shall be taken by consensus, whereby each Member State shall have one vote.

The list of members of the MC shall be published on the Programme web site; other arrangements on the transparency of MC decisions will be indicated in the Rules of Procedure.

According to art 49 of CPR, the MC is in charge of, according to art 49 of CPR, reviewing the implementation of the Programme and the progress made towards achieving its objectives, as well as of examining all issues that affect its performance. It shall be consulted and give an opinion on any amendment of the Programme proposed by the Managing Authority. Moreover, it may make

observations with regard to the implementation and evaluation of the Programme, including actions related to the reduction of the administrative burden. In addition to the tasks reported in art. 110 of CPR, the MC shall ensure the respect of horizontal principles (art. 7 CPR), the examination of all issues affecting the Programme performance (art. 21 and 49 CPR); the approval of the evaluation plan and its amendments (art. 56 CPR), the approval of appropriate project selection procedures and criteria (art 12 of ETC Regulation), the approval of annual and final implementation reports (art. 50 of CPR), the approval of the communication strategy (art. 116 CPR).

Decisions of the MC will be free from bias and must not be influenced by any partial personal or organisational interests of any of its individual members.

National Committees

Each Member State may organise its national committee with a role of consultative bodies. They will involve national, regional and local authorities as well as the relevant authorities and institutions competent in specific fields of intervention, non-governmental organisations and any other socio-economic and institutional partner considered relevant by the concerned Member State. National Committees will ensure consistency of interventions with the most relevant policies and programmes of the involved area.

Responsibilities of the Member States

The Member States retain the following main responsibilities:

- a) nominate their representatives of the MC in order to contribute to the general coordination and monitoring of the Programme in their territory and bear financial responsibilities in line with pr. 5.4;
- b) are responsible for the verification of expenditure of beneficiaries located in their territory at the appropriate governance level;
- c) participate in audit activities and are responsible for audits carried out in their territory.

Both Member States agree to apply the partnership (art. 5 CPR) and to cooperate for the sound management, control and implementation of the Programme.

The Member States may lay down in writing rules governing their relations with the managing and audit authorities, the relations between such authorities, and the relations of such authorities with the European Commission.

They will also ensure that the implementing authorities will be provided with all necessary and legally allowed information to carry out their responsibilities.

Managing Authority (MA)

The designated Managing Authority will be assisted by a Joint Secretariat and shall be responsible for managing and implementing the Programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. It carries out the functions described in art. 125 of CPR and art. 23 of ETC Regulation.

The MA acts for the benefit and the smooth Programme implementation in cooperation with the Member States. Additionally, it acts in full coherence with the Italian institutional, legal and financial provisions.

The MA is in charge of ensuring the necessary communication flow and data provision both to the MC and to the European Commission, in particular with regard to the progress of the Programme, indicators and data.

In addition, the MA shall, among other:

- Support the work of the MC and ensure the provision of all the necessary information to carry out its tasks;

- Establish a system to record and store in a computerized form data on each operation necessary for monitoring evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in operations;
- Draw up and, after the MC approval, apply and ensure the appropriate implementation of the assessment process and criteria, with the support of JS, also ensuring procedures to rule eventual complaints raised by applicants or beneficiaries;
- Set in place efficient and effective anti-fraud measures taking into account the risk identified while elaborating the description of the management and control system;
- Verify that each beneficiary has the necessary administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the defined conditions before project approval;
- Monitor the absence of conflict of interest during the approval of operations in the MC;
- Ensure that all the approved operations can be attributed to a category of intervention;
- Provide each beneficiary with the necessary documentation setting out the conditions for support for each operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered during the project implementation, the financing plan and the time-limit for its execution;
- Ensure that the expenditure of each beneficiary is verified according to art. 23 of ETC Regulation;
- Ensure that verifications and on-the-spot verifications are carried out by the authorised and responsible bodies;
- Ensure that all documents and audit trails are performed and held in accordance to the art. 72.g of CPR;
- Transmit financial data as in art 112 of CPR;
- Ensure the availability to the public of relevant information (e.g.: list of MC members, approved operations, documents for the submission of project proposals etc.).

Certifying Authority (CA)

According to art. 24 of ETC Regulation the CA shall carry out the functions envisaged in art. 126 of CPR.

In particular, the CA is responsible for drawing up and submitting to the European Commission payment applications and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the MA before being sent to the Commission. The procedure for making payments to beneficiaries will be illustrated in the Description of the Management and Control System.

The CA is also responsible for drawing up the annual accounts, certifying the completeness, accuracy and reliability of the annual accounts, and that expenditures entered in the accounts comply with applicable EU, Programme and National rules and have been incurred.

More details on tasks of CA will be provided in the Description of the Management and Control System.

Audit Authority (AA)

The AA carries out its functions in accordance with art. 123, 124 127 and 128 of CPR and art. 21 and 25 of the ETC Regulation.

The audit authority is independent from the other programme bodies.

The AA:

- assesses the compliance of the Programme designated authorities with the criteria relating to the internal control environment, risk management, control activities and monitoring;
- ensures that audits are carried out on the proper functioning of management and control system of the Cooperation Programme and on an appropriate sample of operations on the basis of the declared expenditure;
- draws up an audit opinion on the annual accounts for the preceding accounting year and an annual control report setting out findings of the audits carried out during the preceding accounting year;
- ensures that where audits are carried out by a body other than itself, the body carrying out the audits has the necessary functional independence;
- ensures that audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards;
- prepares, within eight months of adoption of the Programme, an audit strategy of performance and audits. The audit strategy shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on projects and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years;
- updates the audit strategy annually, as from 2016 until and including 2024.

The AA shall act, during the implementation of its tasks, in full accordance with Italian provisions.

Group of Auditors

The AA is assisted by a group of auditors in accordance with art. 25 of ETC Regulation. The representatives of group of auditors will be appointed by the concerned Member State. Representative of auditors from Croatia will be nominated by the Agency for the Audit of EU Programmes Implementation System, while representative of auditors from Italy will be nominated by the AA directly. The group of auditors members shall be independent from any the management and control system of the Programme and namely from the MC and the controllers ex art. 23.4 of ETC Regulation and from any funded operation.

The group of auditors shall be set up within three months of the decision approving the Italy-Croatia Programme at the latest. It shall draw up its own rules of procedure and will be chaired by the AA. The group of auditors shall, additionally, ensure that the bodies in charge of carrying out the audits have the necessary functional independence.

Each Member State shall be responsible for the audits carried out on its territory.

Joint Secretariat

In accordance with art. 23 of ETC Regulation, the JS is in charge of assisting the MA and the MC in carrying out their functions.

Additionally, it provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under Italy-Croatia Crossborder Cooperation Programme and assists the beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

In the framework of what above, the JS shall assist the MA in the following tasks:

- secretary services and administrative activities;
- day-to-day management and implementation of the Programme;
- drafting and implementing the communication strategy in accordance with art. 116 of CPR and the compliance with the communication requirements;
- preparing all the documents for submission of the project proposals (i.e. application form, guide for filling in the application form, Programme manual, guideline for the accounting

expenses, contract framework between MA and Lead Applicants, and between Lead partner and Project partners, etc.);

- receiving the project proposals and coordinating the assessment process in accordance with the criteria approved by the MC; if necessary, the assessment process is implemented with the support of external experts;
- presenting the results of the assessment process to the MC in charge of the approval for funding;
- updating information on monitoring system, at Programme and project level;
- drawing up reports on the implementation of the Programme.

JS support to MC will consist of the following activities:

- secretary services, organization of the meetings, preparing agenda and keeping the minutes;
- preliminary analysis of project proposals on the basis of the standards indicated by MC;
- drawing up documents to support the MC in the evaluation of the proposals, also relating with designated experts, and preparing the draft documents for the approval of the projects.

JS shall assist Programme beneficiaries in the following activities:

- help desk office, as first contact point for information about the Programme to potential beneficiaries and then to beneficiaries during the implementation of the projects;
- preliminary evaluation of the project proposals to be submitted at calls, in order to verify their formal suitability and that all the due documents are included;
- monitoring of the development of the project activities and expenses.

Organisation of the assessment and selection of operations

Types of operations

The calls for proposals addressed to the funding of standard and strategic operations will be launched according to the Programme needs and its interim and final performance. Different modalities (e.g.: one- two steps call, targeted calls, etc.) for submission of the project proposals shall be established according to the specificity of the call.

Standard projects will be implemented in a bottom up approach under all Priority Axes through the launch of open calls.

Strategic projects will, instead:

- be based on the principle of wide-area partnerships, i.e. each project will include more beneficiaries and it will cover a larger number of eligible territories than expected for standard projects, in order to guarantee the actual involvement of a sizable share of the Programme area population;
- count on a relevant financial amounts that will be higher in comparison to financial allocation foreseen for standard projects;
- require specific and increased institutional and technical competences in order to ensure deeper impact and benefits for the whole cooperation area.

Given their strategic nature and expected impact and contribution to the overall programming system, strategic projects will be identified and selected through an institutional top-down approach.

All operations will be result-oriented and characterized by a place-based approach.

The MA will ensure timely and transparent information to all beneficiaries with regard to the types of operations characteristics and conditions for submission.

Submission of project proposals

The MA, supported by the JS, will draft the calls for proposal and the application package. All the relevant documentation will be approved by the MC and afterwards made publicly available on the Programme web site and through other National channels.

Standard procedures for submission, supporting technical documentation and guidance will be provided for project proposals and management. The calls for proposals will specify the type of expected projects and any other detail needed. Applications shall be submitted electronically to the MA/JS by the lead beneficiary.

Assessment and selection of project proposals for funding

The selection of operations projects will be carried out in application of Article 12 of the EU Regulation No. 1299/2013 by the MC - with the support of the JS - on the basis of the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations examined and approved by the MC itself (Article 110 of the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).

In the evaluation process, both the JS and the MC may be supported by external experts.

The operations will be selected following a standardised assessment procedure.

The MC will define specific assessment and selection procedure for strategic projects.

Operations will be submitted to an eligibility check in order to verify their compliance with the essential requirements of the call and will be assessed on the basis of selection criteria.

The Italy-Croatia Programme mainly intends to support project proposals whose potential beneficiaries are located in the programme area. Some Croatian and Italian institutions that are considered as relevant for their contribution to the area but geographically located outside the Programme area (e.g.: Ministries and Regional Governments including their agencies, universities with branches located in programme area) will nevertheless be considered as equal to the eligible beneficiaries located within it.

As an exception and in duly justified cases, the Programme may finance the implementation of part of an operation located outside the Programme area in accordance with art. 20 of ETC Regulation, on condition that the specific requirements reported in that article are satisfied.

Eligible characteristics of potential beneficiaries are reported in Section 2 of the present document for each Specific Objective.

Eligibility requirements

The project proposals are subject to the fulfilment of formal requirements that will be specified in the calls for proposals and in the related application packages.

A set of administrative compliance and eligibility criteria will be defined to ensure compliance of all project applications with formal requirements. This part of the assessment will especially focus on the following points:

- Submission in due time;
- Completeness of the submitted project application package;
- Sufficient co-funding sources;
- No evidence of funding by other resources (double financing) at this stage of assessment;
- Requirements for the partnership and geographical eligibility.

Any project proposal likely to have a significant effect on natural habitat sites (therefore "soft" intangible measures are exempted), shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives and shall be financed only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

Selection criteria

After having checked whether the project proposal complies with the eligible requirements, eligible candidatures are assessed in accordance with the selection criteria previously defined and approved by the MC.

Selection assessment aims to determine the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of the Programme objectives. A strong focus is given to the result orientation of a project as well as to the feasibility of the proposed project.

The compliance with horizontal criteria will be also assessed.

Overall, the guiding principles for project evaluation shall be:

- relevance and coherence of the project proposal, vis-à-vis the Programme cross-border specificities and its specific added value;
- the contribution to the Programme priority achievements;
- synergies and complementarity with other EU programmes;
- concrete and measurable outputs;
- durability of results.

Main selection criteria are provided in section 2 for each specific objective.

Detailed assessment criteria will be laid down and made available to potential applicants for each call.

Single calls may contemplate minimum quality requirements, in addition to eligibility criteria, that projects have to meet in order to be financed.

The MA, in cooperation with the JS, shall verify State Aid compliance, the absence of double funding and fraudulent approaches.

Decision process

Results of the eligibility checks are submitted to the MC for endorsement.

Results of the assessment process are submitted to the MC, whose decision making process will be detailed in its Rules of Procedure.

The MA shall immediately inform all the lead partners about the results of the assessment; the communication shall also contain information in case the lead partner intends to initiate a complaint procedure.

For each financed project will be prepared a subsidy contract, that shall be signed by the lead partner – on behalf of its partnership – and by the MA. The template of the subsidy contract will be previously submitted to the MC for approval.

The lead beneficiary shall, additionally, sign a partnership agreement with its partners; this document shall mirror duties and obligations of the lead partner towards the MA.

The MA may request, as a pre-condition of the signature of the subsidy contract, any further guarantee from the lead partner attesting its financial capacity to fulfil the necessary implementing conditions.

In accordance with art. 115 of CPR the MA shall make publicly available the list of operations in a spreadsheet data format on the Programme web site.

Monitoring of operations

The Italy-Croatia Programme shall regularly monitor the funded operations in order to check their progress towards their promised objectives and their financial performance in compliance with the

approved project proposals. The realization of the activities shall be monitored through on the spot checks.

Monitoring will take place on a regular basis and will be done through an electronic data system, which will be able to record, collect and store all the data. The progress report shall be delivered by the lead partner on behalf of the partnership to the MA /JS.

Monitoring of operations will be carried out in line with Italian and Croatian requirements envisaged at national level.

Verification of expenditure and financial management and control

In accordance with art. 125.4,125.5 of CPR, art. 23 of ETC Regulation, the MA shall rely on a system ensuring that verification of expenditure and documentation connected and audits required are held in accordance with the requirements of art. 72.g of CPR. In this respect for each Member State participating to the Programme will be set in place a control system able to ensure the delivery of the necessary financial verification of co-financed products and services, the correspondent delivery of outputs and the adoption of proportionate anti-fraud measures.

The controllers may be organized in a centralized or a decentralized system, according to the decision of their country; based on this decision their identification varies.

In each Member State participating in the Programme shall be designated controllers responsible for the verification of expenditure of the project partners located on their territory; the control systems set in place by each Member State shall ensure that the expenditure of a beneficiary can be verified within a period of three months from the submission of the documents by the beneficiary concerned (art. 23.4 of ETC Regulation).

Controllers may be selected from a roster established for the purposes of the program; in this case, the MA will satisfy itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by a designated controller.

The MA will collect information from the Member States on their control system for the drafting of the Description of the Management and Control System.

The Member States shall ensure timely updated information to the MA on any changes in their control system. The MA shall contribute to ensure a smooth functioning of the control system through the organization of dedicated training sessions and coordination meetings. In any case, the MA will draft common manuals on control procedures in order to ensure equal and impartial controls towards beneficiaries of both territories.

Moreover, in order to ensure its regular functioning, the MA may:

- carry out, with the assistance of the joint secretariat, targeted controls, aimed at ensuring the existence of the operation, the plausibility checks of expenditure and on-the-spot checks;
- perform a quality review, even through on-the-spot checks, on the control systems.

Reimbursement of expenditure from the managing authority to the lead partners

According to art. 13.2c) of ETC Regulation, the lead beneficiary shall ensure that expenditure declared by all beneficiaries involved in its project partnership has been incurred in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all beneficiaries and in accordance with the subsidy contract.

As a general principle, the implementation of the operations must be pre-financed by the beneficiaries.

The MA will ensure, in compliance with the Italian rules, that a pre-financing to the beneficiaries will be paid out up to 10% depending on the availability of the ERDF funds (through initial pre-

financing, annual pre-financing or interim payment) and on any other further circumstances that may threaten the programme sound financial management.

Where appropriate, the MA may request that a financial guarantee is in force before providing the pre-financing.

Expenditure of all partners have to be validated by the authorised controllers.

The lead beneficiary collects all the certificates of the project partners issued by their controllers and include them in a project progress report which contains the comprehensive achievements of the project and the eligible and validated expenditure for the realization of its goals.

After having performed the necessary checks aimed at ensuring the accuracy and correctness of the payment claim, the MA validates and transmit it to the CA which is charge of proceeding with the reimbursement of eligible expenditure (art. 21.2 of ETC Regulation and art. 132 of CPR). The CA shall deduct from the payments eventual detected irregular amounts.

The CA orders the payment of the ERDF to the Lead Partner (both Italian and Croatian) which will be responsible of transferring contribution to the other partners. The CA will also pay the national share of co-funding, where due, to the Lead Partner belonging to the Italian eligible area. The payment of the Croatian national co-funding share to both the Croatian Lead Partner and Project Partners will be under the responsibility of the Croatian Republic.

The CA guarantees to the Croatian payment Authority timely information on the payment of ERDF funds, in order to release the payment of the corresponding Croatian share of funds to its Lead partners or project partners.

All payments and statements of ERDF expenditure shall be done in EUR (art 80 of CPR).

Resolution of complaints

The MA adopts standardized procedures for the complaints management along the entire Programme implementation to offer better services both to applicants and beneficiaries.

Complaints could be:

- Addressed to reconsider the result of the selection process, including the administrative complaint;
- Complaints not included in the administrative procedures on complaints.

As far as the former option is concerned, all the existing procedures defined by the current law are compulsorily implemented, whereas in the latter specific procedures shall be identified and shared to identify a quick solution.

The following actions shall be foreseen:

- Setting in place of dedicated ways for the submission of complaints, to be preferably submitted in written form, i.e. through on line forum and or dedicated email address; in case of complaints received via help desk, they will be recorded;
- Provision of adequate information of the beneficiaries on the standard services offered and on how they can submit a complaint (including how and to whom to address to);
- Definition of the complaints management, identification for each phase of roles and responsibilities and time for response within the MA;
- Setting in place of a complaints database, including the identified solutions and the clarified complaints;
- Regular analysis on complaints, aimed at identifying weaknesses in the Programme management and adopting corrective measures.

Computerised exchange of data

As specified in art. 74 of CPR all data exchanges with the European Commission shall be carried out using an electronic data exchange system. Transmission of financial data refers to art. 112 of CPR.

As far as the obligation set forth in art. 122.3 of CPR and further specified in the Commission Implementing Regulation 1011/2014 are concerned, also exchanges of information between beneficiaries and the MA, CA and AA shall be carried out by means of electronic data exchange system. The exchange of documents and data shall include reporting on progress, payment claims and exchange of information related to management verifications and audits.

In addition to the characteristics set forth in art. 9 of the aforementioned Implementing Regulation, the electronic Monitoring System to be adopted by the Programme shall comply with:

- Data integrity and confidentiality;
- Authentication of the sender within the meaning of Directive 1999/93/EC4;
- Storage in compliance with retention rules defined in Article 140 of the CPR;
- Secure transfer of data;
- Availability during and outside standard office hours (except for technical maintenance activities);
- Accessibility by the MSs and the beneficiaries either directly or via an interface for automatic synchronisation and recording of data with national, regional and local computer management systems;
- Protection of privacy of personal data for individuals and commercial confidentiality for legal entities with respect to the information processed (according to Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Directive 1995/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data).

The computer system used shall meet accepted security and reliability standards. Accepted procedures that ensure reliability of the accounting, monitoring and financial reporting information in computerised form will be implemented.

Computerised exchange of data will be ensured as well with the Italian and Croatian national monitoring systems.

Contribution of the Member States to the financing of the technical assistance

The technical assistance budget of the programme is jointly financed by the Member States, which are entitled to transfer their national co-financing share for technical assistance to the CA in proportion of the ERDF funds in the Programme (Italy 83%, Croatia 17%).

The MA shall regularly inform the MC on the payment situation.

Information and communication

The MA elaborates, with the support of the JS, a communication strategy not later than 6 months after the adoption of the Programme. It shall be proportionate to the financial size of the programme. The communication strategy shall include the elements set out in Annex XII of CPR and shall be approved by the MC, including its amendments.

The strategy will be valid for the whole programming period, complemented by annual work plans.

The aim of the communication strategy is dual:

- to inform potential applicants about founding opportunities under the cooperation Programme;
- to communicate progress and achievements of the Programme to the general public.

The Programme and all projects communication activities shall comply with a coordinated branding introduced on a voluntary basis by ETC programmes for the 2014-2020 period.

The Member States shall support the MA in ensuring its effective application of the information and publicity requirements by taking appropriate steps to disseminate information and provide publicity within their territory.

Similarly, also the approved operations can contribute to the Programme promotion through the spreading of their achievements and involvement of the target groups.

Programme evaluation

The Programme has been subject to an ex-ante evaluation of independent evaluators with the aim to improve Programme quality and to optimise the allocation of budget resources. The recommendations of this evaluation have been taken into account during the drafting of this Programme.

In accordance with art. 56 of CPR, the MA draws up an evaluation plan which will be approved by the MC in line with provisions as laid down in art. 110.2 c) of CPR.

In accordance with art. 56 of CPR, evaluations will be carried out to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Programme, considering also the cross-cutting issues and the horizontal principles. During the programming period, evaluation will assess how support from the funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority and also the territorial coverage of the Programme area. All evaluations, recommendations and follow-up actions will be examined and approved by the MC.

In compliance with art. 57 of CPR, the ex-post evaluation lies in the responsibility of the European Commission together with the Member States.

5.4 APPORTIONMENT OF LIABILITIES AMONG PARTICIPATING MEMBER STATES IN CASE OF FINANCIAL CORRECTIONS IMPOSED BY THE MANAGING AUTHORITY OR THE COMMISSION

(Reference: point (a)(vi) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid according to art. 122.2 of CPR, the MA shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead partner. In accordance with art. 27 of ETC Regulation, the project partners shall repay the lead partner any amounts unduly paid.

Since Member States have the overall liability for the ERDF support granted to lead partners or project partners located on their territories, they shall ensure that – prior to certifying expenditure – any financial corrections required will be secured and they shall seek to recover any amounts lost as a result of an irregularity or negligence caused by a beneficiary located in their territory.

The MA is responsible for reimbursing the amounts recovered to the general budget of the European Commission, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down below. The MA will reimburse the funds to the Commission, once the amounts are recovered from the lead partner, project partner and Member State.

If the MA bears any legal expenses for recovery recourse proceedings – initiated after consultation and in mutual agreement with the respective Member State, even if the proceedings are unsuccessful - it will be reimbursed by the Member State hosting the lead partner or the project partner responsible for the said procedure.

In particular:

- For project-related expenditure, final liability is borne by the Member State where the affected lead or project partner is located. When amounts unduly paid to a beneficiary cannot be recovered and this is a result of fault or negligence on the part of a Member State, the Member State shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the budget of the Commission.

In compliance with art. 122 of CPR, each Member State is responsible for reporting irregularity committed by beneficiaries located on their territory to the European Commission and at the same time to the MA. If the Member State does not comply with its duties arising from these provisions, the MA is entitled to suspend payments to all project partners located on the territory of the affected country.

- In case of systemic irregularity or financial correction (the latter decided by the European Commission), the Member States will bear the financial consequences proportionally to the irregularity detected on their territory. Should the systemic irregularity or financial correction not be able to be linked to a specific Member State, they will be responsible proportionally to their ERDF contribution paid to the respective national project partners involved.
- In case the irregularity is incurred by the MA in the technical assistance budget, the MA shall bear the liability related to the administrative irregularity.

If the MA/CA, JS or Member State becomes aware of irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the liable Member State or the MA and the CA, in order to ensure the transmission of information to the AA/group of auditors, where relevant.

The Member State may decide not to recover from a beneficiary an amount, not including interest, if the amount does not exceed EUR 250 in contribution from the Funds.

In parallel to/after reimbursement of the irrecoverable amount by the Member State to the MA, the Member State holds the right to secure repayment from the project partner located on its territory, if necessary through legal actions.

For this purpose the MA and the lead partner shall assign their rights arising from the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement to the Member State concerned.

More in general, the Italy-Croatia Programme requires, when spending ERDF funds by means of public contract/concessions, the public bodies and public equivalent bodies of the Member States will have to respect EU public procurement rules and in particular (i) Directive 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (ii) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation; (iii) Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC and (iv) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

5.5 USE OF THE EURO

(Reference: Article 28 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

In accordance with art. 28 of ETC Regulation, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro by the beneficiaries, using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission in the month during which expenditure was submitted for verification to the controller.

The conversion shall be verified by the controllers in Croatia.

5.6 INVOLVEMENT OF PARTNERS

(Reference: point (c) of Article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Summary of the process of the preparation of the Cooperation Programme

Following the DG REGIO letter Ref. ARES (2012) 1516801 dated December 18th 2012, which presented a first proposal of ETC 2014-2020 geographical areas, and included the proposal of a new cross border Programme between Italian and Croatian territories, on March 8th 2013 in Rome took place the first kick-off meeting for the establishment of a Task force in charge of the preparation of the Programme to be submitted in due time to the European Commission. During the meeting, the participating Italian and Croatian Authorities agreed on the institution of the Task Force and on the indicative work plan, including the relative template.

In order to start the Task Force working activities and the outsourcing to external experts concerning programming (Drafting, Ex Ante and Environmental Assessment, Meetings, Stakeholders consultation, etc.), Italian and Croatian Authorities defined a proposal of provisional budget with an indicative costs allocation € 180.000 (VAT excluded).

For this purpose Italian and Croatian Authorities asked to IPA-CBC Adriatic Programme Joint Monitoring Committee to approve the request to use IPA-CBC Adriatic Programme Technical Assistance resources to finance 2014-2020 Italy – Croatia ETC Crossborder Programme definition for an amount of € 180.000 (VAT excluded).

During the Task Force meeting held in Zagreb on 30th April 2013, TF members approved the Rules of Procedure and were informed about Veneto Region candidacy for Managing Authority (regarding on this, at the end of November 2013 has been signed the Joint preliminary agreement on management of the IT-HR CBC Programme). Under the rules of procedure, the Task Force consist of following members:

- up to 3 representatives from national level – Italy;
- up to 3 representatives from national level – Croatia;
- up to 2 representatives from regional level – Italy;
- up to 2 representatives from regional level – Croatia;
- one representative of the European Commission, as member in an advisory capacity;
- one representative the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and one representative the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affair, as observers;
- Future Managing Authority, upon agreement by this Task Force, as observer.

On April 2014 external experts concerning programming have been contracted (SOGES/RAZBOR for CP drafting and Stakeholders consultation and T33 for Ex Ante and Environmental Evaluation).

The experts presented to the Task Force methodology and time plan during the meeting held in Venice on 22/5/2014.

After a long process and several draft versions, the Cooperation Programme final draft has been approved in the framework of a written procedure on 30 July 2015.

A total number of eight Task Force meetings took place during all the preparation process.

Description of the involvement of the partners

Stakeholders consultation on strategic choices

The aim of the process was to validate Task Force strategic choices (thematic concentration) for the Italy Croatia CBC Programme and to collect additional inputs and suggestions as well as ideas on potential cross-border issues to be supported.

Partners have been involved through an on-line consultation. SOGES arranged the online platform to support the Stakeholders on line consultation.

The SH on-line consultation took place between 25/08/2014 and 12/09/2014 on the Cooperation Programme - Section 1 and 2 - including the TOs (five) and the IPs (nine) preselected by the TF.

The survey grid aimed at:

- know the stakeholders preferences about the TOs and the IPs preselected by the TF;
- first collection of the actions suggested by the stakeholders;
- know the stakeholders opinion about particular statements (marine dimension, strategic project and targeted calls, etc.).

The invitation was sent to 2119 stakeholders (part indicated by TF members and by national and regional authority involved in the Programme; part based on the inputs received from the on line registration platform).

Survey results have been presented to the Task Force on 16-17th October 2014 in Dubrovnik (Croatia).

The survey recorded 262 answers (around 80% from Italy and around 20% from Croatia, regularly shared between different stakeholders typologies).

Environmental Authorities consultation

As agreed in the meeting held in Bologna on 23/7/2014 the Task Force decided to involve the Regional Environmental competent Bodies in order to arranging the scoping report, which has to be submitted to public consultation.

Between 8th and 23th September 2014, the consultation of the Environmental Authorities of the Partner States concerning the impact of the Programme on the environment (scoping phase) has also been achieved (final document n. 232 on 16/12/2014 by Veneto regional SEA Commission).

Stakeholders events

In the framework of the programming process, the Task Force organized also two Stakeholders events in Italy (Trieste – 17th June 2015) and Croatia (Split – 19th June 2015) aimed at collecting suggestions mainly about the actions lists for the fine-tuning of the Programme strategy and about indicators.

Both events have been organized in one plenary session and four parallel focus groups on the Programme Priority Axes.

Based on the updated mailing list used for the online consultation 2292 stakeholders received the invitation with the link to download the agenda, the Cooperation Programme draft and other useful documents. More than two hundred stakeholders attended in total the two events.

The participants represented a balanced mix of Stakeholders categories.

In addition to the events, stakeholders have been allowed to make observation and suggestion through the platform until 24th June.

The stakeholders both on the events and on the platform were active and contributed with opinions and ideas to all the Programme components. Regarding the events, all of the presentations both of the plenary sessions and of the working groups as well as the Focus Group Reports were published on the platform. Likewise the observation posted by the stakeholders were published on the platform too.

All these inputs have been considered and, where appropriate, translated in concrete revision of the draft version of the Cooperation Programme and mainly focused on the actions lists.

Selection of partners

On behalf of the Task Force, Veneto Region collected the Stakeholders mailing list. To do it, Veneto Region asked to the Croatian National Authorities and to the Italian National and Regional Authorities, to indicate the list of relevant stakeholder under its jurisdiction. On the base of the received lists, by mid-August 2014 Veneto Region sent to SOGES a list of 1303 Stakeholders (1088 Italians and 215 Croatians).

List of partners involved in the consultation process

According to the European code of conduct on partnership Regulation (EU) n. 240/2014, the Stakeholder list include all of the relevant partners (both Italians and Croatians). In particular are included: competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities; economic and social partners; bodies representing civil society.

A more detailed list of partners is reported in section n. 9.3.

Action taken to facilitate the participation of partners

Relevant stakeholders have been involved in two key phases of the Programme elaboration to receive their feedback on the adopted strategic choices (identification of the thematic objectives and investment priorities) and to collect additional inputs and suggestions as well as ideas on potential cross-border actions to be supported.

The following tools have been implemented to spread information and involve the relevant stakeholders in the process:

- a) Communications by e-mail on the progress of the Programme elaboration;
- b) On line platform to share information and documents on the Programme contents;
- c) Stakeholders consultation (survey on line and two meetings).

Communications are regularly electronically submitted to more than two thousand readers.

The on line platform for consultation has been hosted by SOGES (the consultancy company supporting the Programme in drafting the Cooperation Programme).

Main added value of the partnership in the preparation of the Cooperation Programme

The involvement of partners helped in drafting the Cooperation Programme through the provision of inputs, to rank issues to be taken into account in the strategy of the Programme on priorities and coherent Specific Objectives at territorial level.

Partners also contributed to better identify types of actions and actions that should be supported within each investment priority. This was necessary to propose operational and need-based types of actions able to generate concrete and measurable results.

Main results of the consultation with partners

The ranking of thematic objectives is overall in line with the pre-selection of the Task Force, TO1 (research), TO6 (environment) being considered more than highly relevant for Italy-Croatia area, followed by TO4 (low carbon) and TO7 (transports) which are ranked third and fourth. TO5 (climate change) is positioned as fifth objective but it is nevertheless considered more than relevant by the respondents. It should be noted that the spread between the top and the bottom of the list is around 25%.

As for investment priorities preferences, the results per category - on average - are overall consistent with the choices made about TOs.

Based on the consultation results, and aiming at a general consistency of the Cooperation Programme, the Task Force agreed to focus the Programme strategy on only 4 TOs (TOs 1, 5, 6 and 7) and to consider inside these TOs some cross-cutting issues (eco-innovation, social-innovation, ICT, SME, low carbon and education).

Description of the involvement of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme and involvement in the MC

The involvement of relevant partners in the implementation of the Italy-Croatia programme will be foreseen for the following reasons:

1. To enhance ownership of the Programme among the partners, in order to make use of the knowledge and expertise of these partners and to increase transparency in decision-making processes;
2. To improve the coordination with other European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds as well as with relevant funding instruments under the umbrella of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) and macro-regional strategies.

The participation of relevant partners in the Programme and in the MC - according to Articles 5(2) and 47 of CPR - will be organised through National coordination committees preparing and supporting the MC members in the execution of MC tasks, including the preparation of calls for proposals and Programme progress reports as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the Programme.

As indicated in section n. 5.3, "Representatives of the economic and social partners and bilateral non-governmental organizations

SECTION 6. COORDINATION

(Reference: point (a) of Article 8(5) of the ETC Regulation)

In compliance with Article 10 and Annex I of the Regulation (UE) No 1303/2013, coordination and use of synergies with other European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds as well as with other relevant Union policies, strategies and instruments, including those in the framework of the Union's External Action Member States, have to be pursued. This section gives an overview on the principles followed for implementing the Italy-Croatia Programme in a complementary and coordinated way, with the relevant instruments and funds in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

For the elaboration of the Italy-Croatia Programme, the choice of TOs, IPs and SOs took into account the priorities highlighted in the Partnership Agreements of the EU Partner States.

As for the Croatian side, the Government of the Republic of Croatia established the Coordination Committee for the preparation of programming documents for the financial period of EU 2014-2020 and designated the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds as the body responsible for the overall coordination in preparation of strategic documents and operational programmes for the use of ESI funds 2014-2020.

Following the completion of the programming exercise, the Coordination Committee (supported by the work of Technical Working Groups, TWG) will be used as a permanent coordination mechanism in the form of National Coordinating Committee (hereinafter NCC), ensuring overall coordination and monitoring of implementation of ESI funds (mainstream operational programmes and cooperation programmes under the IPA and ERDF) and other Union and relevant national funding instruments. TWGs, established in line with European Code of Conduct for Partnership are intended to be used as support to the work of the NCC in increasing the impact and effectiveness of the funds.

NCC supported by the TWGs and technical secretariat provided by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds will progressively substitute (where necessary by undertaking/merging part of the resources of) other currently existing coordination and monitoring platforms.

Single unit to perform the function of NA for 11 cooperation programmes and coordinate the participation of the Republic of Croatia in 13 territorial cooperation programmes is placed within the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds.

Close internal coordination mechanisms between the programmes are ensured through day-to-day work within Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and ARD as well as regular, weekly meetings, of heads of sectors. Coordination between other stakeholders involved in the implementation of different programmes is currently ensured through the work of National Committee for Coordination of Croatian Participation in Transnational and Interregional Programmes as well as Macro regional Strategies of the EU (NC), which has been established as one of the platforms for coordination and monitoring of implementation in the 2014 – 2020 period. For the purpose of further streamlining of coordination and monitoring activities, NC is intended to be progressively merged with the NCC. NCC shall have a crucial role with regards the macro-regional strategies Croatia participates in. As the overall coordinator of all instruments and funds NCC shall have advisory role for the financing of the projects, which contributes to the achievement of the macro-regional strategies goals. As for the cross-border cooperation programmes, all the relevant stakeholders are or will be involved in the monitoring committees directly.

About the national governance for cohesion policy, Italy will ensure coordination with reference to the following regulatory framework:

- Art. 10 of Law Decree no. 101/2013 ratified with amendments by Law no. 125/2013, in Official Journal 30/10/2013, no. 255), in order to strengthen the action of planning, coordination,

monitoring and support of the cohesion policy, which established the Agency for territorial cohesion;

- Decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers of 15th December 2014, published January 20th, 2015 in the Official Journal, with which the Government has redefined the tasks of the Department for political cohesion and transferred part of its human and financial resources to the Presidency of the Council of the Ministers and to the Agency for territorial cohesion.

At the national level, the Italian Partnership Agreement, adopted on 29th October 2014 by the European Commission confirms the Strategic coordination group for the ETC (established by decree of the Head of Department DPS no. 33 of 27th April 2010, amended by Decree no. 9 of 12th April 2011) and the establishment of national committees accompanying Italy's participation in the territorial cooperation programs, one for each of the inter-regional and transnational programs in which Italy participates and one for the Italy-Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Program, because of the wide cooperation area and the number of eligible Italian regions.

6.1 Coordination with the other ESI Funds (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD, EMFF), particularly in relation to programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal.

There are possible synergies among Italy-Croatia Cooperation Programme and other ERDF supported programmes as well as operations funded by EMFF, intersections could take place with programmes funded by ESF, EAFRD, and Cohesion fund.

6.1a Synergies and complementarities

Possible synergies with ERDF relate to the areas of innovation and internationalization; risk prevention (i.e. safety and resilience); environment and cultural heritage; and maritime transport. Synergies with EMFF relate especially to blue economy. Moreover, in order to focus on issues such as Programme implementation, common management procedures, project implementation and also in order to create synergies and avoid double financing, Italy-Croatia Programme will seek exchanges with the managing authorities of other geographically overlapping ETC programmes, e.g. Italy-Slovenia, Croatia- Slovenia, Italy-Austria, Hungary-Croatia, etc.

6.1b Coordination mechanisms

- When submitting project proposals the applicants will have to take responsibility that the proposed project is not financed by other ESI-funded programmes and will have to describe if and how the project is linked with other community, national and regional programmes and policies.
- During the process of project evaluation additionally, synergies and possible overlapping of the submitted project proposals with other projects and programmes will be checked. The Programme bodies will communicate and spread the results and outputs of projects funded by the cooperation Programme as will be set out in the communication strategy. The Programme bodies will have frequent contacts with representatives of other ETC programmes in the cooperation area and with the INTERACT programme to ensure an active exchange of information and experience about diverse projects and initiatives. The macro-regionals strategies, which will be set up for the Programme area, will also help to better coordinate the Programme with other ESI-funded programmes.
- The Programme Partners will take respective measures to coordinate activities under the Cooperation Programme with other ESI-funded programmes covering their territory.

6.2 Coordination with other Union instruments (Horizon 2020, LIFE , the Connecting Europe Facility, COSME, Erasmus for All, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Programme for Social Change and Innovation etc.)

6.2a Synergies and complementarities

The Cooperation Programme – especially in its Priority Axis 1 - shares possible synergies with other Union Instruments such as **Horizon 2020**, **COSME**, and the **Connecting Europe Facility**. The focus is on innovation, especially in the field of blue economy. In fact, there is a great potential to exploit results from Horizon 2020 through “downstream actions”; moreover, “upstream actions” towards COSME are possible, in the sense that the CP could contribute to prepare the SMEs to access to better conditions for business creation and growth. At the same time this will also contribute to the effective implementation of the national and/or regional strategic policy frameworks for research and innovation in the context of smart specialisation strategies.

Priority Axis 2 and 3 can be expected to complement actions and exploit results from **LIFE** and Horizon 2020 in the fields of environment protection, climate change, risk prevention, and resource efficiency.

Regarding Priority Axis 4, Italy-Croatia Programme aims at addressing issues such as maritime transport, , and multimodality: specific complementarities will be verified with the Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa, through which the EU provides support to the EU Member States border management and maritime border surveillance systems in the Programme region.

Possibilities of interaction with other instruments are occasional and rather marginal, given the different programming goals.

6.2b Coordination mechanisms

Paragraph 6.1b applies.

6.3 Coordination with CEF, ENI, IPA and EDF

6.3a Synergies and complementarities

Capitalization and communication activities as well as the implementation of strategic projects may foresee specific involvement or consultation of other programmes like Balkan Med, MED, and ADRION.

The Italy-Croatia Programme will seek coordination with ENI CBC MED whenever relevant for (part of) the eligible area.

6.3b Coordination mechanisms

Paragraph 6.1b applies.

Moreover, MAs and JSs of IPA and ENI CBC programmes will be addressed by the Italy-Croatia Programme in order to exchange information on applications and approved operations as well as to activate synergies between complementary operations implemented at the EU external borders.

6.4 Coordination with relevant national funding instruments that contribute to the same or similar objectives as the cooperation programme or complement its interventions

6.4a Synergies and complementarities

The Member States will take respective measures to coordinate activities under the Programme with national and regional funding instruments in place in their territory.

6.4b Coordination mechanisms

Paragraph 6.1b applies.

In order to ensure coherence and complementarity with national and regional policies in the projects evaluation phase, appropriate selection criteria assessing compliance with the provisions of national and regional planning documents will be activated.

SECTION 7 REDUCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

(Reference: point (b) of Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

Assessment of the administrative burden

Even if there is no previous direct implementation of the programme to refer to, the former experiences and evaluations of the other ETC Programmes operating in the area of the 2007-2013 programming period reveal that there is room for improvement both regarding the reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and management efficiency.

In general, simplification is a request clearly expressed by the stakeholders during the drafting of the Cooperation Programme.

Simplification would be an improvement not only for the beneficiaries but also for the bodies in charge of the Programme implementation: simpler and quicker procedures shall contribute to the efficient Programme management.

The main charges for beneficiaries related to the administrative burden refer to:

- a) Searching for information on programme/procedures/calls for proposals;
- b) Size and complexity of information to be submitted at different steps of project implementation;
- c) Accounting management.

Searching for information on programme/procedures/calls for proposals

In some cases programmes web site are not well structured, making the searching of the necessary documentation difficult; moreover, the latest releases or updated information are missing, contributing to make the project implementation uncertain. Lack of summarized information able to allow potential applicants decide whether applying or not could have a discouraging effect.

Size and complexity of information to be submitted at different steps of project implementation

Often, due to a bad management of information, beneficiaries are requested to provide the same data in more than one document/form. In some cases, the requested information are not necessary as already available. A sound data management would allow to require data only once and to use better those already available and present in the certified data bases.

Accounting management

Lack of clarity or understanding of the eligibility of expenditure and accounting rules cause problems during controls, whose finalization require longer time.

The strategy for the administrative burden reduction will focus on:

- Simplification of charges due to data requests and exchange of information;
- Better definition of rules and procedures;
- Reduced time for the implementation of administrative tasks.

In order to facilitate access to information on projects submission/project implementation the Programme website shall be regularly updated and organized in a way to guarantee the outmost transparency.

In the description of the management and control system the need of reducing administrative burden shall be taken in due account. In accordance with art. 122.3 of CPR "*Member states shall ensure that no later than 31 December 2015, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and a managing authority, a certifying authority, an audit authority and intermediate bodies can be carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems*", the project monitoring shall be supported by an informative system able to acquire, store and exchange all the necessary data and documents. The system shall:

Use data already available and present in the certified data bases.

- Allow a complete workflow management, from the application submission to the project closure.

Special care will be paid to:

- simplifying the application and reporting procedures (simplification of documentation and needed data, on line services for application submission);
- simplifying the administrative procedures linked to the submission of the project proposals and their implementation through certified data bases, including the progressive use of electronic submission only (no paper documents will be required);
- fastening the decision making procedures related to the project approval, the first level control checks, and the payment procedures through a better set of rules;
- elaboration of clear rules on eligibility of costs will be provided in order to facilitate an harmonized approach in the entire Programme area;
- extended use of the simplified costs options: the simplified cost options made available by CPR for ESI funds are planned to be used (e.g.: flat rate for staff costs, unit cost, lump sum etc.

Targeted support will be provided to the first level controllers through provision of training, coordination meetings and harmonized documents.

Whenever possible and useful, the harmonized implementation tools (HIT) developed by INTERACT shall be used.

Further actions that could be implemented are:

- a) elaboration of a multiannual planning of calls for proposals;
- b) efficient communication on the information related to the calls for proposals management through the setting in place of adequate communication flows able to reach as many potential beneficiaries as possible;
- c) transparent approach and participation of the interested applicants.

All the implemented activities shall be subject to further monitoring to measure their efficiency and effectiveness.

SECTION 8. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

(Reference : Article 8(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

- ***Sustainable development***

Sustainable development principles are of key importance for the Programme area, also due to the location of the Adriatic Basin in the centre of the territory. As explained in Section 1, Adriatic sea with its coast and islands is the most valuable, but also a most vulnerable natural system of the Programme area. It requires, on one hand, more efforts to ensure the compatibility between the development of economic, social, institutional activities and environmental protection. On the other, it is a joint economic and environmental asset, and a natural platform for cooperation building and long-dating trade exchange contacts reflected in some common traits of cultural heritage.

The sustainable development, as an horizontal principles in the Cooperation Programme, will be taken into due consideration during its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Since the Programme aims at improving the blue economy, the climate change adaptation, the protection and restoring of the biodiversity, the safeguard of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster, the preservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage, sustainable development is a cross-cutting issue which permeates all the SO. The challenges for reducing pollution and reducing the impacts of human activities can be better tackled by mean of use of green and innovative technologies, supported in particular by Ip 6f, where in particular actions aimed at developing small-scale innovative and environmental friendly technology and innovative actions aimed at improving the knowledge on the environmental quality are foreseen. Within Investment Priority 1b joint development and piloting of eco-innovative tools and processes will be encouraged; the specific objective 4.1 aims at improving the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services by promoting the multimodality in the programme area.

Applicants will have to demonstrate the contribution of the proposed operations to sustainable development, in line with the scope of each Priority Axis .When submitting proposals, they will be asked to describe how the foreseen project activities and impacts will ensure the sustainability principle, that can't be reduced to a specific intervention but has to be considered an horizontal principle for the whole set of projects, adopting a comprehensive approach.

Applications will be evaluated taking into consideration this horizontal principle; operations that may have a significant negative environmental or climate impact will not be admitted. On the other hand, the Programme will support actions aimed at mitigating any negative effect on environment. In the implementation of the project activities the use of green public procurement will be encouraged, and also the raising awareness of partners, beneficiaries and target groups on sustainability issues will be fostered.

The principles of sustainable development will be considered in terms of programme management arrangements: the Programme bodies will adopt a sustainable approach for the implementation of axis 5, i.e. putting in place procedures for the dematerialization of documents and communications.

- ***Equal opportunities and non-discrimination.***

The Cooperation strategy aims at ensuring the principle of equal opportunities, as stated in Art. 7 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, also fighting against the causes of discrimination expressed under Art. 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ("combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation").

In the definition and implementation of the whole Programme strategy, socio-economic disparities, ethnic/religious/linguistic minorities and specific needs of particular target groups where taken into account.

As underlined in section 1 and in the SEA and ex-ante evaluation, economy of the Programme area is still affected by the economic crisis from 2008 which results in low level of competition in international markets and decrease of GDP growth rate. This crisis has increased poverty and social exclusion. The economic crisis has reinforced the need to develop new organization

processes and knowledge based competitiveness, encouraging clusters among innovation players and the creation of innovative business and social models. This is the focus of Priority Axis 1, where awareness rising actions about social innovation opportunities and challenges (i.e. e-health and education) will be encouraged.

Social innovation (to meet needs related to societal changes) and ITC (aimed at developing applications and services to support social cohesion and e-health), are cross-cutting issues; in general, the strategic orientation of the Programme aims also at reinforcing social cohesion.

Necessary measures to prevent any discrimination based on disability will be adopted. Accessibility will be improved through actions connected with the usability of the cultural and natural heritage destinations (SO 3.1), and actions aimed at enhancing services for passengers (IP 7c). Projects will provide full accessibility of outputs and results to all citizens including disabled.

Another important element is represented by national minorities. Italians in Croatia are a recognized part of the population especially in Istria County while Croats are present in some villages in Molise where language and traditions are preserved and valorized at local level. Priority Axis 3 (SO 3.1) foreseen actions aimed at increasing the value of this cultural and traditional heritage.

Applicants will have to describe how the principles of equal opportunity and no-discrimination are granted in the project, and the operations funded will have to guarantee that activities will be in line with these principles.

- ***Equality between men and women***

Art. 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and art. 7 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 underlines the importance of this principle. The introduction of the gender perspective in the whole Programme strategy and its implementation means first of all that Programme management bodies will ensure attention on integrating equal participation of women and men in organization and procedures. Appropriate steps will be taken to prevent any discrimination based on sex; attention will be placed on basic gender-sensitive monitoring.

Applicants will also be required to ensure the respect of this principle, describing how equality between men and women will be ensured in the project implementation.

SECTION 9. SEPARATE ELEMENTS

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

(Reference: point (e) of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Not applicable

9.2. Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 24: The performance framework of the cooperation programme (automatically completed in the system)

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

According to the European code of conduct on partnership Regulation (EU) n. 240/2014, the Stakeholder list include all of the relevant partners (both Italians and Croatians). In particular following typologies of partners are included:

- A) Competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities
 - National authorities
 - Regional authorities NUTS II level
 - Public authorities NUTS III level
 - Local authorities
 - Universities and Research Centres
 - Public authorities responsible for the application of horizontal principles
- B) Economic and social partners
 - Trade unions
 - Entrepreneurs associations
 - Chambers of commerce
- C) Bodies representing civil society
 - Non-governmental organizations
 - Environmental associations
 - Local action groups
 - Groups considered to be at risk of discrimination and social exclusion