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## 1. JOINT PROGRAMME STRATEGY: MAIN DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND POLICY RESPONSES

### 1.1. PROGRAMME AREA

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[max 2.000]

The Programme area extends over a total surface of 19,841 km<sup>2</sup> and has a total population of approximately 3 million inhabitants. It covers 5 Italian NUTS 3 regions (Venice, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia and Trieste) and 5 Slovenian NUTS 3 regions (Primorsko-notranjska, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Obalno-kraška and Goriška). Overall, on NUTS 2 level on the Italian side, the regions involved are those of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, while for the Slovenian side Slovene Western and Eastern Cohesion regions. The five Italian NUTS 3 regions are one in NUTS 2 region Veneto and four in NUTS 2 region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the five NUTS 3 regions on the Slovenian side are one in NUTS 2 cohesion region Vzhodna Slovenija and four in NUTS 2 cohesion region Zahodna Slovenija.

The land border between Italy and Slovenia is 232 km long and very diversified in terms of morphology, crossing mountains, plains and coastal zones. The Programme area encompasses Alpine mountainous landscapes and foothills, hills and plains, river basin areas, seashore lagoon landscapes, Karst landscapes and more than 320 Km of coast on the Adriatic Sea which represents a resource both from an environmental and an economic point of view.

The Programme area comprises urban areas as Trieste, Udine, Gorizia, Ljubljana, Pordenone, Venice, conurbation Koper-Izola-Piran, Nova Gorica, Kranj and Postojna. It also includes several urban centers located in relatively short distances from each other. There is close proximity between the cities of Trieste and Koper on the coast, in the southern part of the cross-border area and the functional urban area in Goriška (Nova Gorica, Gorizia, and Šempeter-Vrtojba), where the EGTC GO is operating since 2011.

1.2. JOINT PROGRAMME STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF MAIN JOINT CHALLENGES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES AS WELL AS INEQUALITIES, JOINT INVESTMENT NEEDS AND COMPLEMENTARITY AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMMES AND INSTRUMENTS, LESSONS-LEARNT FROM PAST EXPERIENCE AND MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIN STRATEGIES WHERE THE PROGRAMME AREA AS A WHOLE OR PARTIALLY IS COVERED BY ONE OR MORE STRATEGIES.

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[max 50.000]

#### *Overview of the socio-economic features*

The Programme area is extremely diversified in terms of morphology and orography of the territory and in terms of population density. It is characterized by the presence of predominantly densely populated areas on the Italian side and more rural areas on the Slovenian side. The border areas show ongoing negative population change trends, especially on the Italian side, where the population is everywhere decreasing, and ageing is a growing issue (Eurostat 2020). Moreover, disparities are increasing between urban centers and smaller municipalities.

Concerning the economic situation, the area is not far from EU standards, the Italian side being slightly above the EU average of GDP per capita and the Slovenian side being slightly below. Both the Italian and Slovenian economies, which have been growing favorably across all sectors in the recent years, are currently influenced by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considering Eurostat data referred to the past four years, in the Programme area the GDP per capita is the highest in the Trieste and Osrednjeslovenska NUTS3 regions whereas it is the lowest in Primorsko-notranjska NUTS3 region. All data for the period between 2016 and 2019 show an increase of GDP per capita for all NUTS3 regions.

### *Research and Innovation*

According to the annual Innovation Union Scoreboard that compares the results obtained in the field of research and innovation by the EU Member States, in year 2020, both Italy and Slovenia are in the group of the “moderate innovators”, only Friuli Venezia Giulia Region is ranked as “strong innovator”.

A key aspect in the development of R&D policies is linked to the introduction of the regional Smart Specialization Strategies. These have been developed in order to set priorities that build on the regional competitive advantages. The three specialization strategies of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto Region and Slovenia for the 2021-2027 programming period share common priorities that can be highlighted in order to build cross-border development paths. The shared priorities cover: agri-food, creative industries/ tourism, smart manufacturing, health and sustainable living. Transition to the circular economy is considered a common need and represents a potential for new business opportunities.

On the other hand, the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) identifies Italy at the bottom of the list as regards connectivity and use of online services. With respect to R&D expenditure in the ICT sector (2015 data) Slovenia ranks above the EU average while Italy ranks below. The ICT sector share of GDP is lower than the EU average for both countries.

As for the application of “digital solutions in the private sector” Italy is in the medium-low range in comparison to the EU average but the value for “penetration” is among the lowest within the EU. The values for these two indicators are in mid-range for Slovenia. The preliminary analysis showed that digitalization is a cross-cutting need, the use of online services and digital skills needs to be improved.

Digitalization is a horizontal topic and it is considered important by authorities and stakeholders in the cross-border area. The digital connectivity and utilization of ICT is a significant factor for the socio-economic development of the area. The availability of high-capacity broadband internet connection is crucial. In addition, digitalization is proven to boost productivity and serve as a basis for new high-tech services.

All of this considered, several joint challenges have been identified. First, the majority of enterprises in the Programme area are relatively small and with low innovation capacity and therefore less competitive: there is a low level of expenditure in R&D and specifically in industrial

research which is necessary for technological transfer. This highlights the need to tackle reduced competitiveness for not digitalized SMEs, looking at digitalization as a potential for business support and clusters' promotion on one side, and on the other side there is the demand for administrative and bureaucratic simplification and digitalization, especially in rural and remote areas. In the same perspective, the investments in R&D are below the economic development level in the area and there is scarce collaborative approach in innovation processes, all leading to a SMEs' limited ability to employ available research and innovation products. Moreover, opportunities may derive from the integration of S3 strategies.

Therefore, desired change covers four main directions for the needed actions to support more investments in R&D and the involvement of SMEs: promoting technological upgrade and improving technological transfer to SMEs, increasing and giving continuity to investments in R&D and applied research, strengthening cooperation between R&D centers and enterprises, promoting the creation of cross border clusters and promoting capitalisation of R&D results achieved at regional level in a new integrated framework taking advantage of S3 shared priorities. Furthermore, changes may be delivered by promoting enterprise cross-border networking, clustering and technology transfer also through digital advisory services to SMEs.

### *Energy, Climate change and Sustainable Development*

The Programme area is facing common challenges in the field of climate change, pursuing global sustainable development objectives. The variety of climatic zones within the area confirms the need to find specific effective countermeasures. Main focal points are: emissions reduction, renewable energy production, energy efficiency. Climate change is affecting the Programme area in terms of increasing average temperature, vulnerability to floods and natural disasters, showing the need for further interventions in the fields of energy, transport, water management, sustainable soil consumption, better forest management and natural risks prevention in a long-term perspective.

The latest data on GHGs emissions provided by European Environment Agency and Eurostat (published October 2020, situation in 2018) confirm that both Italy (-17.9%) and Slovenia (-7.2%) are reducing emissions compared to 2005 level, but still not reaching the -20% target set for 2020 by the EU Climate and Energy Package.

The increase in the share of renewables is essential to reach the EU climate and energy goals. The EU target is to reach 20% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 and at least 32% by 2030: Italy has reached its national 2020 target (17%), although its result (18.2%) is below the EU average of 20%. Slovenia has not reached its national 2020 target (25%) yet, albeit with a national share above the EU average 20% (21.7%).

At the local level, 75 out of the 259 municipalities of the Italian side territorially involved in the Programme are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (29%), with an absolute preeminence in the NUTS 3 area of Udine (25 municipalities) and Pordenone (24 municipalities), and a relative one in the NUTS 3 area of Trieste (50%) and Pordenone again (49%), Venezia and Meolo in the metropolitan area of Venice. Many Slovenian municipalities are also



signatories, with the majority of them located in Gorenjska region, but there are also others, among which Idrija, Ajdovščina, Pivka and the three urban municipalities of Koper, Nova Gorica and Ljubljana.

In 2015, all United Nations Member States approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The document entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Both countries had a high score in year 2020, Slovenia ranks 12th with a score of 79,8 and Italy ranks 30th with a score of 77,07 out of 162. Both countries urgently need to take up climate change action. Following the UN agreements on climate change and EU strategies, all EU countries have to prepare and adopt a 10-year integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP). Both Italy and Slovenia have submitted the final versions of their NECP. Main elements of these climate plans envisage the reduction of fossil energy sources in traffic, industry, households and agriculture (e.g., thermic renovation of buildings, strengthening environmentally friendly production processes, increasing the attractiveness and thus the share of public transport systems, sustainable forestry), the promotion of renewable energy (solar, geothermal, wind, biomass) and the protection of biodiversity. It is also crucial for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction plans to contain measures for increasing the awareness of the population about these issues and R&D activities.

For what concerns waste and water management, data of year 2019 show that the population in Cohesion region Zahodna Slovenija generates 482kg of municipal waste/person. 71.9% of the amount is separately collected. 1.8% of the produced waste is hazardous waste from production and service activities.

ISPRA data for 2019 report that in Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions, solid waste was produced for a total of 365.80 kg per person and 334.41 kg per person, respectively. The Veneto region is the first in Italy for the percentage of separate collection of urban waste, with 73.6%, while the Friuli region is fourth with 65.5%.

The circular economy has potential in supporting bottom-up approaches in designing and implementing material flow in loops that are terminating at the local or regional level (i.e., waste of one industry is material for another, leading to reduced pressure on natural resources).

The Slovene Government has declared circular economy and green development as Slovenia's strategic objectives and adopted the Framework Programme for the Transition to a Green Economy in 2016. Furthermore, a Roadmap towards Circular Economy in Slovenia was prepared in 2018. In Slovenia, Strategic Research and Innovation Partnership on Circular economy connects the business sector, educational and research institutions, NGOs, and other partners into new value chains. Such partnerships focus on sustainable energy, biomass, and alternative raw materials, secondary raw materials, functional materials, processes and technologies, and circular business models. Several attempts were also made to introduce circular practices into tourism.

EU Directives on Circular economy have been transposed in the Italian legal system through Legislative Decree no. 116/2020, mainly focused on waste reduction and recycling. Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Law No. 34/2017, that enforces the regional waste management system emphasizing reuse, restore and recycling besides the reduction in waste production, introduces a

regional forum on circular economy composed by experts and stakeholders, and enhances the practice of Green Public Procurement. Veneto Region adopted its Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development that supports, among five strategic priorities, the promotion of circular economy (Del. CR No. 80/2020), while FVG Region SSD is still to be finalized.

The cross-border governance of waste circular management is still difficult because of differences in national regulations and high infrastructure costs. Specific needs of cross-border relevance, other than those related to climate change impact as addressed in the dedicated paragraphs above may exist in relation to waste generated by tourism, which could be particularly harmful to regional ecosystems. Common approaches for raising awareness and capacity building on circular economy may be considered in some protected natural areas and urban functional areas close to the border (as Trieste with its surroundings and Gorizia/Nova Gorica/Šempeter-Vrtojba).

The circular economy initiatives are becoming more applied, both on the level of companies and on the level of public local actors such as municipalities. However, there is still a gap at the regional and cross-border level and the circular economy targets are still not achieved and need to be further promoted.

With respect to water management and related environmental issues, the Venice area has been characterized by special relationships with water, both internal and marine, throughout its history. The territory is interested by the final stretch of many important Italian rivers flowing in the Adriatic Sea: Tagliamento, Livenza, Piave, Sile, Brenta-Bacchiglione, and Adige. Most of the water courses are dammed, in some cases with the riverbed higher than the countryside level, typical of reclaimed lands. Those natural conditions, conjoint with a strong overbuilding, are the reasons for progressively more frequent flooding events, due to the difficulty in absorbing rainwaters. According to ARPA's data, the water quality of hydrographic basins of those rivers is good.

The European Parliament and the Council have adopted Maritime Spatial Planning Directive to create a common framework for maritime spatial planning in Europe, reduce conflicts between sectors, encourage investments and increase cross-border cooperation between EU countries to develop shipping lanes, energy infrastructures and protect the environment also through the development of coherent networks of protected areas. It is also important to refer to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council concerning Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2002/413/EC) and related proposal of new EU Directive.

The above-mentioned facts and data allow to identify several joint challenges. First, there is a need to address climate change impacts on both sides of the border, such as global warming, vulnerability to floods and natural disasters and managing climate change impacts because they might compromise the usability of the landscapes and natural resources. Therefore, there is a strong need for further interventions to mitigate the impact of climate change, particularly in the fields of energy, transport, water management, soil consumption, forest management and natural risks prevention bearing in mind that transport and buildings have a high energy consumption and cause air pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For what concerns waste and water management the

joint challenges are different governance on the two sides of the border and negative impact of the waste generated by tourism.

The related desired changes are manifold: reducing CO2 emissions by improving energy efficiency as well as by developing more sustainable mobility in line with European Green Deal objectives, improving the integration in policy making, supporting the development and use of green technologies, capitalizing on the achieved best practices and promoting the introduction and diffusion of ICT. Finally, supporting actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change depending on the territorial context-tailor-made responses for all types of landscapes and natural resources covering the whole Programme area such as river and marine water quality management, soil consumption and coastal erosion, forest and coastal areas management, and natural risks prevention. Concerning waste and water management the desired changes comprise promoting integrated infrastructure for waste management and innovative technologies to improve resource efficiency in the water sector and developing common approaches for raising awareness and capacity building on the circular economy also capitalizing on best waste management and recycling practices.

#### *Labour Market, Human Capital & Linguistic Minorities and Health Care*

In both Italy and Slovenia, the pandemic and the consequent lockdowns of many sectors of economic activities had a considerable impact on the labour market. The sharp decline in economic activity has involved numerous sectors, and it has discouraged participation in the labour market, causing a contraction in the rate of activity, affecting previous years' good trends.

The level of employment of active population in Zahodna Slovenija in 2019, according to SURS data, was 89%, whereas the average unemployment rate was 4%.

Data from Friuli Venezia Giulia regional statistical surveys for 2019 report an overall employment rate of the active population at 66.3%, and a total unemployment rate at 6.7%, Veneto region employment rate at 66.6%, unemployment rate at 6.4% and the Metropolitan City of Venice ranks in the regional average.

As concerns the female population, the employment rate (EUROSTAT data) is significantly lower in all the 3 regions for the reference year: 70,4% in Zahodna Slovenija, 58,6% in FVG and 58,8% in Veneto. Regarding the youth employment rate (15-24 years), it is lower than the EU average everywhere in the programme area.

For what concerns education and in particular basic education, Slovenia ranks higher than the EU average and the Italian regions fall slightly behind. The offer of university studies is widespread in the area, thanks to institutions with a long tradition and ones recently established. The Universities of Ljubljana (38.762 students), Primorska (5.338 students) and Nova Gorica (800 students) offer a wide range of studies and also in Trieste (15.179 students), Udine (14.942 students) and Venice (20.795 students) there are universities with a wide range of programmes, covering all sectors from life sciences to engineering, social sciences, etc. A quite extended offer for higher education and training exists along the border. Nevertheless, the transition from

education to work may be challenging and for a certain number of young people there is a risk of being neither in employment nor in education or training. In this regard, the problem is more persistent in Italy where the percentage of NEETs within the total population between 15 and 24 years is 19,8% in 2021 (Eurostat) which is higher than the EU average and 3 times as much as the Slovenian rate (6,6%).

Focusing on linguistic minorities issues, the Italian community has the right to education in its own language and to the design and development of this education. In Italy, there are public schools with Slovenian language in Trieste, Gorizia and Udine, as well as the comprehensive public institute with Slovenian-Italian bilingual teaching in San Pietro al Natisone.

The Programme area is characterised by a presence of cultural and linguistic identities, including the Italian minority living in the Obalno-kraška region of Slovenia and the Slovenian minority living along the state border. The Slovene minority is protected by the Italian law 482/1999 and specifically by law 38/2001 as well as by the regional law 26/2007. The Italian national minority enjoys the privilege of being directly protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and is entitled to special right to education teaching and training in Italian language.

On both sides of the land border, both the Italian and the Slovenian languages are used. Bilingualism is non-homogeneous outside the areas with the presence of the two linguistic minorities and it is spread differently depending on the cross-border geographic area and on the age groups of the population. Whereas language is often seen as a barrier, in the border part of the Programme area, the ability to speak both languages is a strong asset to increase employability and mobility of cross-border workers and to boost competitiveness of labor markets. Cross-border areas, where bilingual population already exists, have a greater potential to capitalize on.

With reference to the healthcare sector in the Programme area, which has been heavily affected by the pandemic, it should be mentioned that, it has been in an overall process of evolution and change for years. Structural indicators reflect a change in the mainstream of services, with a shift from hospital care towards the local-based one, confirming the downsizing of the supply of hospital services. According to Eurostat and to National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia data, both Italy and Slovenia are facing a decreasing number of hospital beds per capita. In Italy that number fell from 3.9 beds per 1.000 inhabitants in 2007 to 3.2 in 2018, against a EU average which decreased from 5.7 to 5. In Slovenia, considering a wider interval from 1980 to 2018, the decrease of hospital beds per capita ranges from 6.9 beds per 1.000 inhabitants to 4.4.

Concerning the labour market situation, the joint challenges refer to the need of tackling the impact of the pandemic, as well as structural weaknesses, such as overcoming the legal and administrative obstacles, the language barrier and preventing the risk of poverty and social exclusion focusing on disadvantaged groups of population (e.g., persons with disabilities, migrants, elderly, youth and people from the most isolated and remote areas). Concerning education, linguistic minority rights and bilingualism, joint challenges mainly refer to public education offer, innovation and integration. The bilingual educational offer is still not supported

enough in the area, where the presence of linguistic minorities is an important asset. Societal (ageing of population) and technological changes need to be effectively addressed. There is still a weak link between high level education and labor market and an increasing number of NEETs. Finally, the pandemic further highlighted the challenges in the healthcare sector: local disparities in access to health services, the shortage of health workers at primary level especially in rural and peripheral areas, healthcare services and policies still nationally and regionally oriented are the main elements of relevance.

Consistently, the desired changes focus on providing more territorial services pursuing accessibility and a cross-border approach. In relation to the labour market, desired changes focus on implementing integrated development strategies to promote economic recovery opportunities through ICT and circular economy (green and blue growth), on creating favourable conditions to tackle specific barriers to cross-border employability, addressing ageing population needs, growth through investments in training and on supporting SMEs' competitiveness. Finally, focusing on education, the desired changes are manifold, ranging from the need to invest in bilingualism to a broader use of ICT as well as the enhancement of coordination between enterprises and the tertiary education systems to meet labor market needs.

### *Connectivity and Transports*

Concerning cross-border transport infrastructures, the area is characterized by the presence of two branches of the Baltic-Adriatic TEN-t corridor.

In the case of Slovenia, well-developed infrastructure has facilitated economic growth of the country by promoting mobility and logistics of goods and services. The transport network is well developed with an international airport next to the capital city; the rest of the country is well connected by road and rail networks, even if gaps still remain among urban and rural areas and in a cross-border perspective since there are areas where connections are not sufficiently developed yet. In the Programme area this is particularly the case for the upper part of the Soča valley where a better link via railway to the other regions would help to support the needs of the local population and the growing demand from tourism. Anyway, the motorway density in Slovenia is above the recommended average of EU-28, the country is easily connected to the rest of Europe by car or lorry. There are over 700km of well-maintained motorways and 1000 km of trunk roads.

On the Italian side of the Programme area the territory is served by a developed and modern network of connecting infrastructures, even if cross-border connections are still lagging behind. Highways (Veneto Region has a road length of 9,612 Km, Friuli Venezia Giulia of 3,929 Km), ports (the Venetian area and Trieste) and airports (the international airport of Venice and Trieste) constitute a fairly branched transport network for people and goods, although there is space to develop interchange and intermodal infrastructures.

The port system of the Venice area is composed of the ports of Venice, Marghera and Chioggia. The data related to the third quarter confirm the decline in 2020 traffic for the lagoon ports: the

port of Venice lost about 2 million tons compared to the first 9 months of 2019 (-11%), the port of Chioggia lost about 313 thousand tons in the same period, which is equivalent to a -33%.

The Port of Trieste has an internal railway network integrated with the national and international network. Comparing the data of the Trieste Port Authority on freight traffic in the periods of January-September 2019 and 2020, it went from a total volume of tons of 46,194,710 to 40,422,731, with an overall decrease of 12.49%.

The port of Koper is specialized in transport of containers. In 2020 the freight traffic amounts to 19,523,133 tons, 14,3% less than in 2019 (22,792,647 tons) and has the highest share in Adriatic Sea.

The rapid growth of air passenger transport has been one of the most significant developments in transport services in the past years, both in the EU and the rest of the world but also the main transport modality that was abandoned with the COVID sanitary crisis.

Looking at the whole Programme area, even if the partner Member States have a great potential for a competitive development of transport and logistics, an underlying weakness remains due to a lack of integration among the two national and regional systems. This is on the one hand depending on the orography of the territory, where in the Northern part, integration is difficult because of the presence of high mountains, on the other hand, considering also the movement of goods and persons through maritime connections, because transport policies remain linked to national strategies, which increase competition between dedicated infrastructures, rather than cooperation and interaction.

Public transport service is very good in major urban areas but there is a lack of public transport in peri-urban and rural areas. This was partly the reason for the development of commuters' associations and bike mobility services but there is still room for improvement with development of e-mobility and micro-public on-demand transport services that would fill the gap.

Cross-border commuting is present everywhere along the border (local border crossings allow for faster passage, in total daily 3000 people are concerned (1/3 from Italy to Slovenia and 2/3 vice-versa) mostly related to private transportation due to lack of public transport and non-harmonized time-schedules. Introduction of flexible "on-demand" public means of transport could help overcome this difficulty.

Joint challenges in this field regard the lack of integration among the two national and regional systems, such as the implementation of cross-border mobility infrastructures and solutions. Moreover, connections with sparsely populated/peripheral/rural areas are also lagging behind and bottlenecks in urban mobility due to traffic and congestion still have to be overcome.

Accordingly, desired changes focus on investing in connections with rural and coastal/hinterland areas, with flexible solutions tailored to specific territories, and on enhancing cross-border governance to improve interoperability and multimodality. However, desired changes also look to innovative mobility systems for a better accessibility of public services (also to support tourism). Capitalisation of good practices from the previous programming periods, but also from other ETC programmes, elaborating solutions for cross-border mobility and advising to continue

with pilot projects to test new concepts, and citizens acceptance of new solutions may also be an asset.

### *Natural & Cultural heritage and Tourism*

The Programme area is characterized by a relevant richness in biodiversity - in both animal and plant species and habitat types, and different landscapes, ranging from the Alps to the sea: Alpine and Alpine foothills landscapes, hilly and high and low plain landscapes, river basins, lagoon and coastal landscapes, the unique Karst landscapes. The Dolomiti have been awarded in 2009 with the inscription in the UNESCO World Heritage List. There is plenty of natural resources, but also the necessity of tackling actions against their fragility due to hydrogeological and seismic risks, as well as the risk of subsidence and coastal erosion. The Programme area can list a remarkable number of natural parks and protected areas: National and Regional Parks, Marine protected areas, Lagoons, Nature (Municipal, State and Regional) Reserves, according to the national and IUCN classification system. The Triglav National Park and the Julian Prealps form a UNESCO area of "The Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve" and a cross-border ecoregion. The area of Classical Karst is considered of international importance for the karst phenomena and its cultural heritage. To benefit from the area, the Programme has recently approved a project to create a Karst Geopark, the second geopark to be established in the region after Geopark Idrija inscribed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage in 2013. Friuli Venezia Giulia can list two natural parks, fifteen reserves, more than thirty biotopes and sixty-three sites Natura 2000, covering 19% of the regional territory. Similarly, in the Metropolitan City of Venice, we can count a regional park and 32 sites Natura 2000 (24% of the total provincial area). "Venice and its Lagoon" site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1987, in recognition of its unique historical, archaeological, urban and artistic heritage and exceptional cultural traditions, integrated into an extraordinary natural landscape. Furthermore, the Škocjan Caves Regional Park, which takes part in the UNESCO World Heritage List as well as Ramsar Convention List of wetlands of international importance, are among the largest underground passages in the world, and also other Ramsar sites such as the Sečovlje Salina Nature Park, the northern most salt pans in the Mediterranean.

Slovenia is indicating a relatively high proportion of NATURA 2000 sites at the national level (37% of the entire country), the Programme area reaches even a higher percentage (41%). There are also over 300 protected areas of various protection regimes, over 1.500 natural value sites, and 8.415 caves – all protected as natural heritage. Soča Valley, Lake Bled and Bohinj Lake are also worthy to be mentioned as natural heritage on the Slovene side.

Furthermore, the Programme area is characterized by different cultural and linguistic identities: Latin, Slavic and German roots, as well as their linguistic legacies, are shared among the population in the area. Due to its geographic location, the area has always represented a crossroads of cultures and peoples and currently features specific laws protecting cultural and linguistic communities, both in Italy and Slovenia.

Cultural heritage is an asset of the Programme area, strictly connected with its natural heritage. A number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites are located both in the Slovenian and the Italian regions

of the area. Intangible heritage is also an element of attraction and great importance for the culture of the area: a set of traditions, artisan knowledge, gastronomy, traditional techniques that represent the identity of the territorial communities can be found.

Tourism is one of the economic leading sectors of the Programme area. It is also one of the sectors that have been more affected by the pandemic. It is, therefore, difficult to draw a real and updated picture of this field: figures and trends are not currently reliable in a long-term perspective. Surely, the Programme area has very strong tourist assets, either cultural, natural or seasonality-oriented, both for winter and summer.

The demand is increasingly oriented toward an integrated offer – cultural, natural, leisure, fine food, experiences - that should be backed by adequate promotion and by a wide range of services. Investments in the transport and hospitality infrastructures sector, with an environmental sustainability orientation are necessary.

Similarly, a more intense cross-border tourism within the Programme area could be stimulated, raising awareness about the local natural and cultural heritage, promoting inclusive offers and facilitated fruition formulas for the local communities, precisely by structuring dynamics of deeper cooperation in the sector. Also, in order to attract greater tourist flows, an integrated cross-border offer within the Programme area should be built. An offer that, based on the preserved natural and cultural assets, improving the overall capacity to deliver ecosystem services, should be extended to a wider territory, in an attempt to achieve the European Green Deal objectives of promoting sustainable tourism, increasing the number of visit days in addition to the number of visitors, but also with a view to seasonal adjustment of tourist flows to prolong the season. In this regard, the capitalisation of known “brands”, such as WALKofPeace awarded as the best Interreg project of the year 2020, offers a good starting point.

An important opportunity will be offered by the activities of the Nova Gorica – Gorizia European Capital of Culture. The success of this nomination can and must open up the space for other cross-border enhancement and promotion strategies, such as the initiative of nomination of Collio/Brda as UNESCO World heritage. WW1 heritage and Walk of Peace on Slovenian territory is already on UNESCO Tentative list, Memorial Church Javorca has the European Heritage label. One of the main results of the GeoKarst project is the preparation of the candidature for inclusion the Geopark Kras Carso in the UNESCO Global Geopark Network.

The joint challenges are represented by a rich and diversified natural and cultural heritage as well as the intangible one, the presence of UNESCO protected sites and the presence of the two linguistic minorities and other cultural identities. Cultural industry is also to be considered an economic asset of the area. The tourism sector has been strongly affected by the pandemic. The growing tourism trends (pre-pandemic) were showing a focus on mainly urban destinations, however with a demand increasingly oriented toward an integrated offer. It is therefore important to consider natural and historical areas preservation and take into account new initiatives like GO! 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia and others as the basis for enhancing the tourism sector.



Related to those, the desired changes can be resumed as follows: introducing digitisation might improve accessibility to the natural and cultural heritage for a wider public including disadvantaged groups of population, moreover enhancing Green Infrastructures Networks and fostering shared approaches would contribute to better management and promotion of protected areas. There is the need to promote linguistic minorities and cultural heritage at large through support to creative industries and sustainable and accessible tourism. Focusing on tourism, desired changes aim at increasing tourism flows to the peri-urban and rural areas, envisaging the relevance of an integrated approach with transport, culture, education, innovation, social inclusion, sustainable development towards sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it is important to promote and finance initiatives to support sustainable tourism and cultural assets to overcome the impact of the pandemic. After the pandemic experience tourism has to become more ethic-oriented and directed to smaller/ less popular destinations where also host communities can benefit from it. Negative pressure on the environment should be avoided. The impact of the pandemic and the focus on sustainability brought to a change of attitude, shaping a new generation of consumers seeking for low-carbon/plastic free holidays opportunities. This offers new scope for cross-border cooperation in the sector, aimed at creating joint tourism offer and at supporting local networks for smart and sustainable tourism.

### *Governance*

In matters of territorial governance and cooperation, it is worth mentioning that Italy and Slovenia have different administrative structures. In Italy there are 4 administrative levels – national, regional, inter-municipal and municipal. In Italy the inter-municipal level was previously coordinated on the level of Provinces which were partially abolished and sometimes replaced by Regional Decentralization Bodies (EDR) and Metropolitan Areas. On the basis of the allocation of powers provided for by the Italian Constitution (Article 117), the subject of "Promoting regional economic development; regional organization of services to enterprises" is attributed to the competence of the Regions. In Slovenia there are only two levels in administration, central national level and municipal local level. The trend of establishing new municipalities was stronger in the 90' and early 2000 but after that period no more municipalities were created in Slovenia (they are 212 since 2011). Some of these municipalities have a status of city administration (Nova Gorica, Koper, Ljubljana and Kranj). In addition to those, the competency of regional development is the responsibility of regional development agencies. Capacity to develop a close dialogue with territorial stakeholders in the light of policy shaping and implementation solutions on the ground depends on proximity. In Slovenia, national-level institutions are in charge of developing and implementing strategies, laws, and regulations. The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 represents the state's core development framework as set out in the Vision of Slovenia. Sectoral and other implementing documents (strategies and programmes) follow this framework. Regional Development Plans on NUTS 3 level are based on economic efficiency, social justice, and environmental responsibility.

As far as territorial governance is concerned, the Integrated Territorial Investment took on particular importance in the Programme area in the 2014 – 20 programming period. The EC highlights in the Border orientation paper that the EGTC GO strategically directs the development of areas and is a valuable tool that can serve as an example for the establishment of other cross-border bodies.

The three municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba being a homogeneous urban area, intensified the cooperation in the last 15 years, with several common European cross-border cooperation projects. The area could be defined as a common cross-border urban area, drawing on the lessons learnt from the common projects, an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) has been established in 2011. The EGTC, considered one of the most advanced forms of cross-border territorial cooperation, shares goals related to common management and modernization in health, environment and infrastructural sector, urban transport, logistics, energy and economic development initiatives. These were initial topics to be tackled, out of which two specific projects were further developed as Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI projects), the two pilot actions "Health" and "Isonzo/Soča".

The EGTC GO was assigned the role of Intermediate body with the responsibility to implement the ITI in the territory of the three municipalities. The synergic projects in the 2014-20 Programme were those approved by the Association of Border Regions and Interreg Europe, focusing on walking and urban transport. Further potential for joint themes, as put forward by ESPON in 2018, are all key urban development factors, such as: transport, urbanization, environment and housing.

The cooperation experience in the 2014-20 period leaves a legacy on which to build a future territorial development path. Even starting with the numerous agreements (e.g., on harmonization of territorial data, social and sanitary services for elderly, medical diagnostics, management of sanitary emergencies, port security to strengthen cooperation, energy efficiency in port areas and environmental sustainability, cross-border mobility opportunities and public transport availability on cross-border level), which in various capacities and with different objectives were signed during the period. Agreements that involved different actors at different level, in a partnership logic that must be valued and capitalized in a future perspective. Attention should be paid to the active involvement of relevant stakeholders (civil society and NGOs). B-solution projects i.e., XBORDER-WORK, CB-PUMP and Cross-border e-procurement should be capitalized and the results taken up at policy level.

Another EGTC present on the territory, but covering the area of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto and Carinthia is the "Euregio Senza Confini", involved in one project of IT-SI 2014-20 as project partner and in one as associate partner.

Other examples of institutionalized cooperation comprise the North Adriatic Port Association, the Julian Alps ecoregion or the Permanent EURES office, named EURADIA covering the border area of Friuli Venezia-Julia, Primorsko-Notranjsko, Goriško and Obalno-kraško.

Focusing on joint challenges in territorial governance and cooperation, it is worth pointing out that in the area there is strong experience of local and regional actors in territorial cooperation

approaches (EGTC-GO connecting the municipalities in the border area can be seen as a good practice, as demonstrates also the European Capital of Culture award). Civil society is still not sufficiently involved in governance and cooperation, and there is a need for projects of limited financial volume at local level. The desired changes are based on capitalizing on good results achieved and fostering administrative simplification in the whole cycle of policy-making, but also on focusing on the needs of the population and on enlarging participation and involvement to other actors (NGOs, third sector, environmental, cultural and social associations, actors able to promote and develop public-private partnerships).

### *Lessons-learnt from past experience*

On the basis of the outcomes of the Analysis of 2014-20 project applications, of the results of the first stakeholders' consultation carried out in 2020 and of the interviews to the Programme's institutional representatives carried out in early 2021, the following lessons learnt have been identified.

#### *Topics for Cooperation*

Many projects encompassing ICT, digitalization, creative industries, and entrepreneurship have been supported in the two previous programming periods but there is still space for an upgrade that will consider the priorities set by the EC for innovation and linking them with the opportunities given by the Green Deal orientations. There is the need to foster the transition to a circular and green economy and the creation of regional value chains supporting clusters and industrial/research districts.

Based on the feedback collected in the interviews, in the previous two programming periods, there were significant efforts to develop mobility solutions, both in terms of better links in infrastructure as in intermodality of transport. There is still a need to better harmonize the schedules of public transport on a cross-border level. The cooperation potentials are still present in soft mobility: there are still possibilities to develop on-demand micro-mobility on a cross-border level and other green solutions focusing mainly on the railway links and increasing the network of biking routes in the Karst, in the coastal area (INTERBIKE II, MOBITOUR projects) and all over the territories.

Efforts should continue with projects that will consider also the effect and necessary mitigation measures for climate change and projects that focus on sustainable development, taking into account the Green Deal priorities. Based on the outcomes of the interviews, projects that are related to flood management and river management are still needed too.

With an eye on the resources of the territory, some cross-border areas have homogeneous geographic features (e.g., mountains, plains and low hills, the Karst, the coast) with the presence of national, regional, and municipal as well as UNESCO protected areas and parks and important cultural sites in the programme areas. Sustainable development and protection of natural and cultural resources is an important topic. Cultural and natural heritage have been the basis for the projects in the two previous programming periods. The Classical Karst or Platou Karst represent a

functional area which will be managed through the joint cross-border management plan for the Geopark Kras Carso. One of the main results of GeoKarst project will be the preparation of the candidature for inclusion the Geopark Kras Carso in the UNESCO Global Geopark Network.

Tourism is a sector that has been highly impacted by the COVID crisis. There were several projects focusing on the topic in the previous programming periods but, given the post-pandemic situation, there is the need to have more projects in the 2021-27 Programme. The participants to the interviews mentioned these could valorize the historic and cultural heritage of the area and start-up reconstruction and restoration efforts, as such those could be a good spark for tourism in peripheral and rural areas. The need to invest in green infrastructure as a basis for local development was also put forward.

Due to the presence of linguistic minorities and thanks to the richness of the cultural heritage, the projects in this sector have been numerous in the past (JEZIK/LINGUA, EDUKA, EDUKA2, others). The IP should continue supporting those projects, in order to ensure an upgrade in the use of digitalization of collections, of material and immaterial heritage. This would ensure a wider availability and free access also in times when cultural activities are stopped and would also contribute to a richer tourist offer. Initiatives fostering bilingualism and better knowledge of the two languages are also welcome, as a mean to increase employability and better mutual exchange and access to public services.

The results of the interviews brought to the attention maritime cooperation. There were some relevant projects and initiatives in the previous programming periods encompassing blue growth and innovation and cooperation between Port Authorities (SENET, CLEAN BERTH, DURASOFT, GREEN HULL, TRETAMARA projects); in this field, further interaction with EUSAIR and Adrion Programme projects (e.g., Shipmentt, Impreco, and Supair) could be beneficial.

With the focus on the needs of the population in the border area and to ensure a better quality of life, in the new programming period, the accessibility of public services across the border could remain one of the topics for new projects. To upgrade the efforts of the projects in the previous two programming periods, the focus should be put on linguistic accessibility, and digitalization of all related procedures.

### *Involvement of Partners*

Stemming from the Analysis 1 performed in 2020, in the 2014-20 programming period, the most represented beneficiaries were research and innovation centres, universities, companies, and local authorities.

The previous experience has shown that attention should be paid to the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the Programme.

In line with the results of the interviews, it came to the attention that cross-border cooperation rules are more suitable for organizations that have the financial, organizational and management capacities to participate, have experience, and can cope with the rules and requirements of the Programme. As confirmed by the results of the stakeholder consultation and the interviews, an

effort should be made to attract municipalities, ministries, and NGOs in the project partnerships. The involvement of NGOs would be particularly valuable in raising awareness of measures for a climate-neutral society in 2030.

The results of the questionnaires and interviews have demonstrated that there is a common interest to foster capacity-building actions and cooperation of actors with projects of limited financial volume in “people-to-people” projects for some topics that would build trust and work on common solutions for the border areas (especially in less developed rural and peripheral areas) and in other programme areas.

An additional point that came out strongly in the interviews is that the participation of those actors who are able, with respect to their nature and type of activity, to promote and develop public-private partnerships is needed.

Concerning the peculiar aspect of the ITI projects, the work done has increased formal and informal cooperation in the cross-border area within its thematic working groups and especially in the area of healthcare. The EGTC GO successfully managed the calls for the construction of the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the area of the three municipalities of Gorizia/Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba. The effort should be continued and capitalized with the projects foreseen by the plan of the approved candidacy for the 2025 European Capital of Culture, even if not all the original municipalities cofounder of EGTC GO, i.e., the municipality of Šempeter-Vrtojba, will be directly involved.

#### *Focus on Territories*

Stemming from the Analysis performed in 2020, in the 2014-20 programming period, the beneficiaries from both countries were equally represented with 51% coming from Italy (18,7% from Veneto and 32% from Friuli Venezia Giulia region) and 49% coming from Slovenia.

Looking at the density of project activities, the cooperation is focusing more on urban areas, where also many institutions have their headquarters, whereas rural areas have been less covered.

In particular, the Gorizia/Nova Gorica/Šempeter-Vrtojba functional urban area managed by the EGTC GO shows a solid cooperation.

The implementation of territorial development strategies linked to GO 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia and support of existing brands (results of many projects implemented over decades) and sub regional destinations aiming at developing cross-border areas will be crucial.

Other more homogeneous areas along the very diversified border with proximity allowing to improve cross-border interactions and interdependencies are, for example, the Soča Valley and the areas related to Udine and Tarvisio, the area of the Classical Karst and the coastal area. The Classical Karst or Platou Karst is defined as a functional area referring to the Territorial Package, developed in the context of Interact’s work on Bringing Territoriality into Interreg.

In the interviews the need to promote integrated strategies to reduce marginalization of small centers and support to polycentric development was emphasized.

Therefore, there is a need to better engage in cross-border cooperation actions in order to reduce the differences in the development of sub regions in the border area stemming from lack of infrastructure or other disadvantageous factors and to take advantage of cross-border protected natural areas, such as UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme's area in northern part, developing a cross-border Karst geopark and actions related to the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the north Adriatic Sea functional area, where common environmental challenges are emerging, as well as common local development issues.

### *Programme Procedures*

Lessons from the past show a need for simplification, both in the introduction of the JEMS monitoring system to replace the 2014-20 monitoring system and cost reporting simplification together with the uptake of INTERACT tools.

### *Programme Mission*

"Enhanced cross-border cooperation for improving the quality of life of the population, preserving and promoting cultural and natural heritage and enhancing the climate neutrality of the Programme area through sustainable, innovative and inclusive growth".

### *Complementarity and synergies with other programmes and MRS*

The cross-border area is included in both the EUSAIR and EUSALP macro-regional strategies. The 2021-27 IP will need to coordinate with the existing priorities under EUSALP and EUSAIR macro-regional strategies to create synergies with regular projects and their flagship projects.

Several potential uptake and synergies can be envisaged with the EUSALP strategy, ranging from the focus on remote and rural areas, to water-soil and river management, and from the focus on youth and elderly to the quality of life of the citizens. Other topics with potential for cross-border synergies could be energy transition, sustainable mobility, digital innovation, natural risk governance. The 2014-20 Programme offered good examples of projects implemented on these topics that could be further capitalized, such as CROSSCARE, SECAP, INTERBIKE II and PRIMIS.

On the other side, in line with the examples presented in the second thematic report on projects related to the European Green Deal objectives, many projects could be taken as example. Concerning sustainable mobility, SaMBa and MELINDA Alpine Space projects are representative, because of their focus on the passengers' behavior by examining how people can be motivated to switch to sustainable means of transport. Moreover, two Alpine Space projects already contributed directly also to the topic of circular economy: GREENCYCLE and CYRCULAR 4.0. In the field of clean energy solutions, also two Alpine Space programme/EUSALP projects have been put forward: AlpGrid and BB-clean.

Potential uptake and synergies emerge also with the EUSAIR strategy. First, the focus on the sea and maritime areas as well as on connections between sea and hinterland areas in terms of sustainable mobility, involving sea transport governance, in a Blue Growth perspective. Furthermore, environmental quality and tourism and the protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas, land karst, and grassland fields are also areas of consistency. Within the EUSAIR

Flagship Booklets some Italy-Slovenia projects of the 2014-20 Programme were identified as coherent with the strategic projects of EUSAIR pillars, and namely BIOAPP and GREENHULL for Pillar 1, CLEAN BERTH for Pillar 2, TETRAMARA for Pillar 3 (EUSAIR Flagship Booklets) by the Italian Cohesion Agency.

Moreover, there were already examples of Italy-Slovenia projects highlighted as good projects for the Adrion Programme (e.g., CrossMoby, InterBike and Lighting Solutions) and cooperation with Adrion could intensify. EUSAIR also recognizes initiatives linked to the Youth Manifesto, Young POPRI – the concept developed by Primorski tehnološki park. Two Alpine Space projects also focusing on youth, GaYA and YOUrALPS could also be taken into consideration.

The Programme will apply coordination mechanisms (such as, in principle, simultaneous or coordinated calls, financing projects on common issues, continuous cooperation and exchanges of information between MAs of different Programmes and relevant stakeholders, common project databases) to ensure complementarities and synergies with national and regional programmes. In particular, the geographical characteristics of the area will be taken into account focusing on climate and environment-related aspects in a maritime cooperation context. In addition, during the selection and implementation phase measures to avoid overlaps with projects financed at national and regional level will be duly applied. Namely, the set of evaluation criteria will be integrated allowing the SC to appreciate the genuine cross-border value of each application.

### *Horizontal Principles*

The Interreg IT-SI 2021-27 Programme will be committed to ensuring the respect of the horizontal principles, according to Article 9 1)2)3)4) of the CPR, including gender equality, non-discrimination, accessibility and sustainable development throughout preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of projects. The horizontal principles will be taken into account and promoted through:

- identification of specific selection criteria
- dedicated monitoring plan
- possible thematic evaluations

Sustainable development will be promoted taking into account the UN SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle. Accordingly, the selection of operations will take into account the use of Green Public Procurement, nature-based solutions, lifecycle costing criteria, standards going beyond regulatory requirements, avoiding negative environmental impacts, climate proofing and 'energy efficiency first principle', etc.

The compliance with the "do no significant harm" principle will be ensured during the programme implementation.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Actions to be financed within the Programme were determined taken into account UN Sustainable Development Goals. The programme, will contribute to reaching some of these goals based on its priorities, namely:

- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

#### Public procurement

During the implementation of the Programme the Managing Authority will promote the strategic use of public procurement to support Policy Objectives (including professionalization efforts to address capacity gaps). Beneficiaries should be encouraged to use more quality-related and lifecycle cost criteria. When feasible, environmental (e.g. green public procurement criteria) and social considerations as well as innovation incentives should be incorporated into public procurement procedures.

#### E-cohesion

The Interreg IT-SI 2021-27 Programme will ensure that all the exchanges of information between beneficiaries and programme authorities will be carried out through electronic data exchange systems as stated in the Article 69(8) of the CPR.

#### New European Bauhaus

New European Bauhaus initiative (Communication 573(2021 of the EC) is based on 3 key values including sustainability, aesthetics and inclusivity. It will be supported by the Programme during the implementation of actions within the PO2 and PO4, especially concerning circular economy, green tourist mobility, attention to the minorities, and rediscovery of history and architectural heritage.



1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SELECTION OF POLICY OBJECTIVES AND THE INTERREG-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES, CORRESPONDING PRIORITIES, SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND THE FORMS OF SUPPORT, ADDRESSING, WHERE APPROPRIATE, MISSING LINKS IN CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE.

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TABLE 1

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg-specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection [max 2.000 per objective]
PO1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	SO 1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	1	Developing new solutions facilitating the transition to a smarter economy is crucial for the improvement of competitiveness and innovation of the Programme area. In this regard, a key aspect is linked to the development of R&D policies based on the coordination of the existing Smart Specialization Strategies in order to set priorities that build on the competitive advantages of all the regions involved in the Programme. This could help enhancing knowledge and technology transfer and strengthening the innovation capacities of local actors. Moreover, the selection of SO 1 will give an opportunity to improve the implementation of a collaborative approach among all the quadruple helix actors. Such a focus is important for the Programme area since the majority of enterprises are relatively small and, as a result, have a limited access to research processes.

			<p>Implementing coordinated cross-border measures and enhancing cooperation in the Programme area will allow to achieve the desired changes identified below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening cooperation between R&amp;I centres and enterprises promoting the creation of cross border clusters</li> <li>• Promoting capitalisation of R&amp;I results achieved at regional level in a new integrated framework</li> <li>• Developing technological solutions to favour business diversification and to respond to the demand for new services deriving from the emergency generated by the pandemic</li> <li>• Promoting technological upgrade and improving technological transfer to SMEs</li> </ul> <p>The form of support is grant.</p> <p>Project durability related to business support will be duly taken into consideration by minimising risks through coaching and technical support to SMEs, reduction of administrative burden and use of SCOs and all possible simplification measures.</p>
<p>PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk</p>	<p>SO 4 - Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Climate change represents a common challenge for the Programme area, where the presence of several climatic zones, makes it even more vulnerable to global warming, floods and natural disasters. Given that, it is crucial to find efficient cross-border measures to approach the issue in a long-term perspective.</p> <p>The selection of SO 4 will give an opportunity to implement and promote joint measures aiming at climate change adaptation and natural risks prevention given the fact that those concern both sides of the border.</p>

<p>prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility</p>			<p>Implementing coordinated cross-border measures and enhancing cooperation in the Programme area will allow to achieve the desired change of adapting to the climate changes depending on the territorial context-tailor-made responses for all types of landscapes and natural resources covering the whole Programme area such as river and marine water quality management, soil consumption and coastal erosion, forest and coastal areas management, and natural risks prevention.</p> <p>The IP will support climate change objectives with 31% of the total ERDF contribution. The form of support is grant.</p>
<p>PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility</p>	<p>SO 6 - Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>One of the most challenging objectives as to sustainable development is related to minimizing waste and reducing pressure on natural resources. Accordingly, interventions in the field are becoming more widely implemented by local public and private actors, although there is a need to encourage them on the cross-border level to achieve better results in the Programme area.</p> <p>The selection of SO 6 will allow the Programme to contribute to global goal of reaching a more resource efficient economic model. Moreover, specifically for the Programme area, supporting this specific objective could contribute to achieving a better management of water and waste in the two sides of the border.</p> <p>Implementing coordinated cross-border measures and enhancing cooperation in the Programme area will allow to achieve the desired changes identified below:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing common approaches for raising awareness and capacity building on circular economy, also capitalizing on best practices on waste management and recycling</li> <li>• Promoting integrated strategies for waste management and developing innovative technologies to improve resource efficiency</li> </ul> <p>The form of support is grant.</p>
PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility	SO 7 - Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity, and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution	2	<p>The richness of biodiversity and geodiversity in the Programme regions is defined by the presence of protected areas, unique landscapes, territory's flora and fauna, natural parks and landscapes included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and NATURA 2000 sites. However, such a variety of natural resources should be tackled attentively to protect the area from natural hazards and pollution.</p> <p>The selection of SO 7 will provide the Programme with the opportunity to finance actions aimed at the preservation of the biodiversity and geodiversity of the cross-border area as well as at reduction of pollution.</p> <p>It will also give the possibility to implement a strategic project focusing on the protection and promotion of coastal and maritime area (addressing issues concerning coastal and marine biodiversity, green and blue infrastructures, reducing environmental pressure, etc.).</p> <p>Implementing coordinated cross-border measures and enhancing cooperation in the Programme area will allow to achieve the desired changes identified below:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and protecting nature and biodiversity in the Programme area</li> <li>• Enhancing Green Infrastructures Networks and foster shared approaches to manage and promote protected areas</li> </ul> <p>Biodiversity protection is crucial for the Programme area and IP 2021-2027 will support reaching biodiversity objectives with 19% of the total ERDF contribution.</p> <p>The form of support is grant.</p>
PO4 - A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	SO 6 - enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	3	<p>Cultural and natural heritage is an important asset of the Programme area, also being a factor of great tourist attraction. Intangible heritage too is considered an element of great relevance for the territory, given the richness of linguistic minorities and cultural identities present in the area. In this framework, there is potential for the development of the employment of disadvantaged groups of population in the sector by encouraging bilingual education and by supporting the coordination between enterprise and the tertiary education systems to match labour market needs.</p> <p>Moreover, the selection of SO 6 will add value to the Programme by approaching cultural industry as economic asset, by diversifying the tourist offer adjusted to new demands also considering the effect of the pandemic on the sector. Social development of the area will also be considered ensuring positive impact on local communities.</p> <p>It will allow to implement 2 strategic operations: ADRIONCYCLETOUR, concerning the implementation of the EUSAIR flagship and cross pillar project idea Adriatic Ionian Cycle route for sustainable Tourism in the Programme area and a strategic project KRAS-CARSO II, concerning the promotion of the sustainable development and joint cross-border</p>

			<p>management of the Classical Karst towards the establishment of the EGTC Kras/Carso and promotion of sustainable development of Geopark Kras Carso.</p> <p>Implementing coordinated measures and enhancing cooperation in the Programme area will allow to achieve the desired changes identified below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting initiatives to support sustainable tourism and cultural assets for overcoming the pandemic crisis impact</li> <li>• Introducing digitization to improve accessibility to the natural and cultural heritage for a wider public</li> <li>• Investing in education and training to meet the current needs of cross-border labour market</li> <li>• Promotion of cultural heritage through support to creative industries and sustainable/ accessible tourism</li> <li>• Supporting the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia to increase tourist attractiveness</li> <li>• Promoting the linguistic minorities</li> <li>• Developing a diversified cross-border tourism offer along the cycle routes</li> </ul> <p>The form of support is grant.</p>
ISO 1 – A better cooperation governance	ISO 1.(b) - enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between	4	Due to legal, administrative and language barriers, governance and collaboration in the area is a demanding issue. The selection of ISO1(b) will allow the Programme to encourage the cooperation among local and regional actors to approach the most relevant cross-border issues, such as accessibility of public services in the remote areas, sustainable and multimodal transport, need for digitalization.

	citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions		<p>To overcome these issues, the Programme will foster administrative simplification in the whole cycle of policymaking and project implementation in all sectors. It will also support providing more territorial services (through digital services) focusing on the needs of the population, especially in most isolated and remote areas.</p> <p>The form of support is grant.</p>
ISO 1 – A better cooperation governance	ISO 1.(c) - build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions	4	<p>The stakeholders in the Programme area have a significant background in territorial cooperation initiatives, but civil society is still under-represented in the governance processes. Consequently, there is a need to promote their involvement in the cross-border collaboration through people-to-people initiatives at the local level.</p> <p>In this way, the selection of ISO 1.(c) will contribute to building trust on the territory and to facilitate cooperation and will allow to achieve the desired change of focusing on the needs of population through an improved participation and involvement of local actors (NGOs, third sector, environmental, cultural and social associations, actors able to promote and develop public-private partnerships, etc.).</p> <p>The form of support is grant.</p>

## 2. PRIORITIES

### 2.1. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

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PO 1 – A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity

#### 2.1.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

SO 1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

#### 2.1.2 RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE

[max 7.000]

In terms of R&D, the Programme area is characterized by a low level of expenditure and a scarce inclination to collaboration in the processes' innovation. Moreover, the majority of enterprises in the area lack competitiveness due to their relatively small size and low capacity to apply available research and technology to develop new products and services.

To tackle these issues the Programme will promote cooperation among R&D centres and enterprises, facilitating technological transfer to SMEs, fostering the creation of cross-border networks and the capitalisation of R&D results within a new integrated framework taking advantage of common S3 priorities.

The action identified to address these objectives is "Promoting a cross-border ecosystem for R&D and strengthening the innovation capacities of local actors", and the relating exemplary actions are:

- Supporting the implementation of joint pilot actions to foster innovation processes through the exploitation of new advanced technologies (e.g., nanotech, biotech, quantum tech)
- Developing partnerships through the approach of the quadruple helix -public bodies, enterprises, research centres and civil society- in order to stimulate knowledge sharing, open innovation strategies and the joint development of new product and services, mainly in the field of eco-innovation
- Promoting technology transfer processes also through the capitalisation of past experiences and the synergy with Horizon Europe valorising non-financed Seal of Excellence projects (rif. Art. 73.4 CPR)
- Building partnerships among clusters / business networks, innovation poles, business acceleration providers (incubators, accelerators) and other actors to improve their



positioning (and that of the companies involved) in existing or new global value chains, taking into consideration common specialisation areas

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State’s methodology.

Furthermore, projects that will be financed are expected to achieve tangible and measurable results. For this purpose, the Programme will favour the implementation of joint pilot actions and the capitalisation of good practices stemming from the previous Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme as well as from other Interreg and EU programmes such as Horizon and Erasmus +. In order to increase the impact on the cooperation area and the development of an effective research and innovation ecosystem, the Programme will promote synergies with the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) and specifically with Objective 1 – Thematic Policy Area 1: Developing innovation and research capacity and transfer into practice.

Moreover, the Programme will pay particular attention during the implementation to its potential contribution to ERA and its policy objectives through fostering exchange of experience among relevant actors and promoting synergies among projects.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects.

### 2.1.3 INDICATORS

Table 2  
Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
1	1.1	RCO 90	Projects for innovation networks across borders	projects	0	1
1	1.1	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	3	6
1	1.1	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	2	5
1	1.1	RCO 87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	14	29

Table 3  
Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	1.1	RCR 84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0	2021	12	Monitoring System/ad hoc analysis	
1	1.1	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	2021	5	Monitoring System/ad hoc analysis	

#### **2.1.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS**

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Academic and education institutions
- Training organisations
- Research centers
- Private companies
- Entrepreneur and business support organizations
- Innovation agencies
- Business clusters
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)

#### **2.1.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS**

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

#### **2.1.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

### 2.1.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Table 4

#### Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	1.1	010	2.253.673,00
1	ERDF	1.1	026	2.253.673,00
1	ERDF	1.1	028	1.931.719,00

Table 5

#### Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	1.1	01	6.439.065,00

Table 6

#### Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	1.1	33	6.439.065,00

## 2.2. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility

### 2.2.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

SO 4 - Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, and resilience, taking into account ecosystem based approaches

### *2.2.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE*

[max 7.000]

The variety of climatic zones across the Programme area leads to a great number of related challenges, namely vulnerability to floods, increase of the average temperature due to global warming and natural disasters. Thereby, a major need of the territory is to create common specific measures to jointly address climate related challenges.

Thus, the Programme will reinforce actions aimed at adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects on the territory. Such measures may contribute to improving risk prevention and management practices and, consequently, quality of life on the Programme area.

The action identified to address these objectives is “Fostering resilience capacity to climate change and mitigating risks related to natural disasters”, and the exemplary actions are:

- Application of joint tools to counteract the effects of climate change and extreme events and to improve quality of life in the cross-border space
- Strengthening cross-border cooperation among local authorities to build up integrated risk management systems and joint action plan
- Promoting investments for the development / strengthening / modelling of joint early warning and risk monitoring systems as well as small infrastructures for risk prevention and management, also with bio-engineering techniques
- Promoting active awareness of risks due to anthropogenic changes and related climate changes on local ecosystems (including forest areas), in particular at local communities’ level with the involvement of citizens and schools
- Design of coordinated rescue protocols and actions

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State’s methodology.

Moreover, projects that will be financed are expected to achieve measurable results and have added value. For this purpose, the Programme will favour the implementation of joint tools and monitoring systems and coordinated protocols. Local communities’ involvement will be also encouraged as it is considered a crucial element to achieve desirable changes. The Programme will favour initiatives aimed to create synergies with EUSAIR Macroregional Strategy and specifically with the flagship “PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF THE AI REGION BY IMPLEMENTING ICZM AND MSP ALSO TO CONTRIBUTE CRF ON ICZM OF BARCELONA CONVENTION AND THE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREA” as well as initiatives in line with EUSALP Objective 3 – Thematic Policy Area 3: Alpine risk management including risk dialogue, to tackle potential threats, such as those of climate change.

Synergies with the LIFE Programme will be encouraged through the co-financing of projects awarded with the Seal of Excellence and/or with strategic nature projects and/or strategic integrated projects.

In addition, synergies with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism will be considered in order to develop a stronger cooperation in terms of prevention, preparedness, and response to disasters.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects.

### 2.2.3 INDICATORS

Table 2  
Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
2	2.4	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	0	2
2	2.4	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	2	4
2	2.4	RCO 87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	0	19

Table 3  
Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
2	2.4	RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy /action plan	0	2021	4	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	
2	2.4	RCR 84	Organisations cooperating across	organisations	0	2021	8	Monitoring System/	

			borders after project completion					ad hoc analysis	
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#### 2.2.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Academic and education institutions
- Research centers
- Private companies
- Civil protection bodies and emergency services
- Rescue organisations
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)

#### 2.2.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

#### 2.2.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

#### 2.2.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Table 4

Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.4	058	2.709.389,00
2	ERDF	2.4	059	2.709.389,00
2	ERDF	2.4	060	2.615.962,00

2	ERDF	2.4	061	1.307.981,00
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Table 5

Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.4	01	9.342.721,00

Table 6

Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.4	33	9.342.721,00

## 2.3. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility

### 2.3.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

SO 6 - Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

### 2.3.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE

[max 7.000]

The circular economy promotes bottom-up approaches to developing and executing coordinated supply chain cycles at local or regional level (e.g., waste of one industry as a resource for another). Such approaches could help to reduce pressure on natural resources of the area. Two major obstacles for the Programme in this regard result from the different governance of water and waste management in the two sides of the border as well as from high infrastructure costs.

To face this challenge, the Programme will support the development of common approaches for capacity building on circular economy and the capitalisation of good practices on sustainable

economic activities. It will also promote integrated strategies for waste management and developing innovative technologies to improve resource efficiency.

The action identified to address these objectives is “Developing shared model/solutions for the circular economy”, and the exemplary actions are:

- Innovative and sustainable solutions for the conversion of production activities from a linear model towards a circular economy model, also capitalising past experiences/good practices
- Exchanges of good practices for the design of new models for the optimization of the use of resources and the diffusion of eco-innovations through the quadruple helix approach
- Developing cross-border services based on ICT solutions in order to increase the efficiency and sustainability of economic activities (logistic, delivery, mobility services, etc.)
- Supporting the creation of experimental supply chains in the context of the circular economy and sustainable food production, using digital technologies and artificial intelligence
- Developing and testing innovative technologies following the concepts of industrial symbiosis and facilitating waste reuse, as well as carbon capture, utilization or storage
- Supporting projects relating to ecosystem services (e.g., pro biodiversity business) and water management

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State’s methodology.

In addition, projects that will be financed are expected to achieve measurable and tangible results. For this purpose, the Programme will favour the implementation of innovative joint solutions and promotion of good practices exchanges. Besides, an integrated approach is necessary to ensure the link between innovation and change in the production system and sustainability of the economy at large. The Programme will also coordinate with EUSAIR macro-regional strategy to create possible synergies with flagship “FOSTERING QUADRUPLE HELIX TIES IN THE FIELDS OF MARINE TECHNOLOGIES AND BLUE BIOTECHNOLOGIES FOR ADVANCING INNOVATION, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ADAPTATION IN BLUE BIO-ECONOMY”. Synergies with the LIFE Programme will be encouraged through the co-financing of projects awarded with the Seal of Excellence and/or with strategic nature projects and/or strategic integrated projects.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects.

### 2.3.3 INDICATORS

Table 2  
Output indicators



Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
2	2.6	RCO 81	Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	50	100
2	2.6	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	2

Table 3

### Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
2	2.6	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	2021	2	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	

#### 2.3.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Environmental institutions
- Academic and education institutions
- Research centers
- Private companies
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Waste operators

#### 2.3.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

### 2.3.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

### 2.3.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Table 4

#### Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.6	029	3.970.656,00
2	ERDF	2.6	075	1.323.552,00

Table 5

#### Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.6	01	5.294.208,00

Table 6

#### Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.6	33	5.294.208,00

### 2.4. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

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PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility

#### *2.4.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE*

SO 7 - Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

#### *2.4.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE*

[max 7.000]

The programme area is defined as rich in terms of biodiversity and geodiversity with plenty of animal and plant species, landscapes, including river basins, marine protected areas, natural parks, the unique Karst landscapes and Dolomiti included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The area is also characterised by a high concentration of NATURA 2000 sites. Such richness in natural resources and their fragility leads to the elevated necessity of safeguarding and protecting the area from natural risks and pollution.

Therefore, the Programme will foster shared approaches to management of protected areas, safeguarding and protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, cross-border management of pollution reduction, implementing green and blue infrastructures that can become the basis for the development of sustainable tourism in the area.

The action identified to address these objectives is "Conservation, protection, promotion of the cross-border area natural capital", and the exemplary actions are:

- Promoting green and blue infrastructures (for example green urban spaces, protection of ecosystems, development of ecological quality in agriculture, protection and restoration of coastal and marine biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites)
- Promoting, applying through pilot actions, capitalising joint strategies for the conservation and protection of biodiversity and geodiversity in the cross-border area (through the protection of habitats, the reduction of the presence of invasive species, promotion of protected areas)
- Preserving and restoring the natural capital of the cross-border area and promoting mitigation measures, including carrying out capacity studies and visitor management plans, in order to limit the anthropogenic pressure also linked to tourism, through inclusive actions involving public institutions, businesses, third sector organisations and citizens
- Promoting sustainable spatial planning, including transfer of best practices and pilot actions linked to application of sustainable spatial planning solutions aiming to preserve soil as a natural resource and ensure sustainable land use and landscape management
- Implementation of the strategic project POSEIDONE - Promotion Of greenSEa Infrastructure Devoted tO a New Enviroment

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State's methodology.

In addition, projects that will be financed are expected to achieve measurable and tangible results. For this purpose, the Programme will favour the implementation of green and blue infrastructures and pilot actions on cross-border level. Moreover, local communities' involvement is crucial as they play a key role for the implementation of policies and projects. The capitalisation of good practices stemming from the previous Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme is also important as many projects were dedicated to preservation and restoration of natural and cultural heritage and green infrastructures creating a solid base for the future Programme. The Programme will also coordinate with EUSALP and EUSAIR macro-regional strategies, in particular POSEIDONE strategic project is very much in line with the EUSAIR Flagship "PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL TERRESTRIAL HABITATS AND ECOSYSTEMS" and will contribute to the EUSAIR objectives representing a best practice for other areas in the region to create possible synergies in the field of sustainability and environmental quality. Synergies with the LIFE Programme will be encouraged through the co-financing of projects awarded with the Seal of Excellence and/or with strategic nature projects and/or strategic integrated projects.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects.

The programme also foresees the implementation of a strategic project – POSEIDONE - addressing the North Adriatic Sea functional area stretching from Chioggia to end of Slovene coastal area. The project will contribute to the protection of nature and biodiversity; green and blue infrastructures (for agricultural and coastal biodiversity also in Natura 2000 sites); natural parks' visitor management plans linked to tourism in order to reduce environmental pressure. The following is an indicative non-exhaustive list of actions:

- Strengthening of institutional technical skills and knowledge transfer with the aim to identify and promote innovative eco-sustainable management strategies for water and beach quality and implement knowledge and monitoring of climate change effects on identified coastal environments, as a basis to plan the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures;
- Collaboration between institutions and private operators to study coordinated systems against beach erosion and to improve floodwater runoff through integrated inlet management systems;
- Monitoring of coastal habitats important for biodiversity and planning of interventions to remove the causes of environmental alteration.

The POSEIDONE partnership will adopt an approach aimed at possible collaboration with LIFE projects in terms of exchange of lessons learnt, practices, useful recommendations.

### **2.4.3 INDICATORS**

Table 2

Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
2	2.7	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	3	11
2	2.7	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	3	7
2	2.7	RCO 81	Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	0	25

Table 3

### Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
2	2.7	RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy /action plan	0	2021	7	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	

#### 2.4.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Academic and education institutions
- Research centers
- Private companies
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Local action groups and similar

#### 2.4.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

#### 2.4.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

#### 2.4.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Table 4

##### Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.7	079	10.171.344,00

Table 5

##### Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.7	01	10.171.344,00

Table 6

##### Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
2	ERDF	2.7	33	10.171.344,00

#### 2.5. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

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PO4 – A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights

##### 2.5.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

SO 6 - Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

## *2.5.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE*

[max 7.000]

In terms of cultural heritage, the Programme area is very rich and diversified (plenty of tangible and intangible resources; presence of UNESCO protected sites; the Italian and Slovene minorities and other cultural and linguistic identities). Given the richness of cultural and natural assets, tourism is one of the leading economic sectors in the Programme area, although recently affected by the pandemic. Since there is an increase in the demand oriented towards an integrated and sustainable offer, the Programme could encourage cross-border tourism in the area by promoting local, natural and cultural heritage. It is therefore important to encourage deeper cooperation in the sector and to exploit synergies with the initiatives linked to European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia to maximize the potential effects on tourism in the whole area.

Thus, taking into account the features of the area, the Programme will support digitalisation of the natural and cultural heritage to make it easily accessible also to disadvantaged groups and to foster the creation of cross-border sustainable offer. It will also support the promotion of linguistic minorities through the development of new services offered by creative industries. Tourism in the area has to become more ethic-oriented and directed to smaller/ less popular destinations: it should focus on the social impact of the financed activities, encourage a greater involvement of host communities in the planning and follow-up of tourism activities and let them benefit from the generated income and services provided (as highlighted by the EC report "Transition Pathway for Tourism", 2022). The Programme will therefore aim at promoting peri-urban and rural areas as tourist destinations supporting an integrated approach (even more relevant after the pandemic) in order to take into account all related issues such as culture, nature, education, innovation, transport, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

The action identified to address these objectives is "Preservation, maintenance and promotion of the cultural heritage, implementation of sustainable and innovative practices in tourism, support to education and training to foster employability and social inclusion", and the exemplary actions are:

- Developing integrated tourism products based on the natural and cultural resources of the area (e.g., implementing cultural itineraries based on rural, urban and coastal linkages) and ensuring a variety of services also suitable for less privileged people
- Preservation, revitalisation, maintenance and promotion of common tangible and intangible cultural heritage (e.g., contemporary art, language, folk culture, craftsmanship, historical heritage, architecture, literature, visual arts, music, cuisine, etc.) also in view of the increased well-being of local residents
- Strengthening the linkage between education and tourism/cultural labour market by investing in bilingual and inclusive education and training with particular focus on digital and green skills

- Supporting ECoC 2025 through the Small Project Fund
- Digitalising the tourism and culture sector to help product diversification, to foster recovery after the pandemic, and to make cultural heritage more accessible also to disadvantaged groups of population
- Promoting the linguistic minorities, their culture and identities
- Developing joint strategies, structures and communication platforms for the exchange of experience and know-how in tourism sector
- Contributing to the implementation of macro-regional connections designing / planning /realizing sections of the ADRIONCYCLETOUR cycle route flagship
- Implementation of the strategic project KRAS-CARSO II

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State's methodology.

Projects that will be financed are expected to achieve measurable and tangible results. For this purpose, the Programme will sustain the creation of cross-border tourism products and joint strategies. Moreover, in the selection phase, priority will be given to projects foreseeing revenue-generated activities and thus demonstrating financial sustainability and durability over time. The supported projects should be in line with national and regional tourism policies to avoid overlaps and competition and have an impact beyond the project itself on stimulating tourism activity in the area.

The actions foreseen under this SO will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects, as well as two operations of strategic importance. Furthermore, the Programme will support ECoC through a Small Project Fund.

As for the ECoC, the area may benefit from such small-scale interventions as they can contribute to the promotion of regional and local natural and cultural heritage and therefore to increase tourist attractiveness. The capitalisation of good practices stemming from the previous programming period is also important as many projects were dedicated to tourism and local development, creating a solid base for future actions in this domain. The Programme will also coordinate with EUSALP and EUSAIR macro-regional strategies to create possible synergies in the field of tourism, education and training in strategic sectors, sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. Overlaps with ESF+ interventions on one side and with Italian and Slovenian NRRP interventions on sustainable tourism on the other will be avoided especially during the selection and implementation phase.

ADRIONCYCLETOUR strategic project will support the EUSAIR cross-pillar idea, contributing to the sustainable development of the Programme area, promoting both sustainable tourism and sustainable mobility. The actions foreseen will aim at developing:

- diversified cross-border tourism offer along the cycle routes, based on a "slow tourism" model;



- cooperation among tourism service providers;
- competitiveness of local service providers;
- contributing to insert the entire ADRIATIC-IONIAN Cycle Route in the EuroVelo network;
- contributing to the completion of the coastal cycle route and the main cycle connections to the inland areas;
- network of cross-border and internal intermodal services to support the cyclists' journeys, integrated informative tools on cycle routes and timetables of intermodal connections;
- enhancing infrastructures

As for the strategic project KRAS-CARSO II, the actions foreseen will aim at developing:

- Common structure for joint sustainable management of the Classical Karst cross-border functional area;
- Funding flows to support the Karst geopark management structure identified within the GeoKarst project and for the procedure support of the candidacy to UNESCO Global Geopark Network;
- Common information and reservation system for the joint marketing of products and development a communication platform;
- Innovative, integrated tourist products based on the natural and cultural sights of the Classical Karst area:
- Preservation, revitalization, maintenance and promotion of tangible and intangible heritage;
- Integration of providers from rural areas at local and cross-border level;
- Scientific studies about geology, karstology, geomorphology, hydrogeology and paleontology of the Classical Karst area;
- Documentation and popularization of geoheritage via innovative methods;
- Awareness raising and training/ education of providers, tourism actors, schools, local population;
- Integration of the economic and cultural sector with innovative or creative content;
- Digitization in the tourism sector;
- Promotion of the sustainable mobility and the use of public transport.

More detailed information about the strategic projects could be found in the Annex to the IP dedicated to operations of strategic importance.

### 2.5.3 INDICATORS

Table 2  
Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
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3	4.6	RCO 115	Public events across borders jointly organised	events	16	86
3	4.6	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	8	18
3	4.6	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	0	10
3	4.6	RCO 85	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	0	130
3	4.6	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	2
3	4.6	RCO 58	Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported	km	0	13,4

Table 3

Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
3	4.6	RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy /action plan	0	2021	9	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	
3	4.6	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	2021	5	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	

3	4.6	RCR 81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0	2021	91	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	
3	4.6	Programme specific result indicator	Number of sites/tourist destinations with increased connectivity to cycle routes	sites/ tourist destinations	0	2021	44	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	

#### **2.5.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS**

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Academic and education institutions
- Training organisations
- Private companies
- Entrepreneur and business support organizations
- DMOs and tourist boards
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Local action groups and similar

#### **2.5.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS**

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

#### **2.5.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

#### **2.5.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

Table 4

Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	ERDF	4.6	165	12.590.945,00
3	ERDF	4.6	166	12.590.945,00
3	ERDF	4.6	083	4.671.360,00

Table 5

Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	ERDF	4.6	01	29.853.250,00

Table 6

Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
3	ERDF	4.6	33	23.259.674,00
3	ERDF	4.6	27	6.593.576,00

**2.6. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY**

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ISO 1 – A better cooperation governance

**2.6.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE**

ISO 1.(b) - Enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular, with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions

**2.6.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE**

[max 7.000]

Cooperation governance in the Programme area is challenging due to legal and administrative obstacles together with the language barrier. Although the area is characterized by strong experience of local and regional actors in territorial governance and cooperation approaches, there is still a need to promote administrative simplification in the processes of policy-making and to focus on the needs of the population including residents, commuters, students and tourists. The Programme, thus will foster the cooperation in the Programme area especially concerning the services for citizens regarding, for example, multimodal transport, healthcare, labour market, especially paying attention to most isolated and remote areas and disadvantaged groups of the population.

The action identified to address these objectives is “Increasing governance capacity to optimize services for citizens”, and the exemplary action is:

- Joint investments to improve quality and accessibility of public services for the benefit of the most isolated and remote areas (i.e., through telemedicine, e-services for disadvantaged groups etc.) exploiting ICT technologies to share and process data and developing a bilingual offer
- Exchange of experience and data, training programmes to enhance the capacity of public authorities to design and implement integrated cross-border initiatives on specific issues for the Programme area (e.g., inner and maritime mobility, health services, etc.)
- Improving institutional multilevel governance to reduce administrative, cultural and social obstacles and promote common solutions in specific sectors (e.g., labour market, health services)
- Supporting strategies for multimodal accessibility in view of a better and sustainable connectivity among urban, rural and coastal areas, increasing the offer of cross-border public transport services (land, sea) in favor of residents, commuters, students and tourists

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State’s methodology.

The previous Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme can be considered a basis on which to build a further development path. The agreements signed by different actors from the Member States concerning data harmonization, medical and social services, port security, cross-border mobility, etc., must be taken into consideration for the 2021-27 Programme.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through standard and capitalisation projects.

### 2.6.3 INDICATORS

Table 2

Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
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4	ISO1. (b)	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategies	2	5
4	ISO1. (b)	RCO 81	Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	0	75
4	ISO1. (b)	RCO 87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	6	16

Table 3

Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Base line	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
4	ISO1. (b)	RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy /action plan	0	2021	3	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	
4	ISO1. (b)	RCR 85	Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion	participation	0	2021	23	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	
4	ISO1. (b)	RCR 84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0	2021	6	Monitoring System/ ad hoc analysis	

#### 2.6.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Training organisations
- Private companies
- Entrepreneur and business support organizations

- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Local action groups and similar

**2.6.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS**

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

**2.6.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

**2.6.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION**

**Table 4**

Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(b)	109	1.557.120,00
4	ERDF	ISO1.(b)	173	2.102.725,00

**Table 5**

Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(b)	01	3.659.845,00

**Table 6**

Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(b)	33	3.659.845,00

## 2.7. TITLE OF THE PRIORITY

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### ISO 1 – A better cooperation governance

#### 2.7.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

ISO 1.(c) - Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions

#### 2.7.2. RELATED TYPES OF ACTION, AND THEIR EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO THOSE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TO MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND SEA-BASIS STRATEGIES, WHERE APPROPRIATE

[max 7.000]

The Programme will focus on the needs of population focusing on an enhanced participation and involvement of local actors, such as NGOs, environmental, cultural and social associations, schools and other relevant actors to exchange of experiences, networking and bringing together citizens and local actors to foster cooperation in the fields of common interest and to overcome existing obstacles.

The action identified to address these objectives is "Supporting small-scale projects through people-to-people cross-border initiatives". The exemplary actions are:

- Supporting all types of joint actions in order to strengthen the cross-border common roots and identity, to build trust and to overcome existing obstacles (language, culture, geography)
- Valorising and promoting local cultural elements, such as traditions, customs, art, local food and wine products, from an economic and touristic point of view by participation in international trade fairs and promotional events, organisation of joint workshops, etc.
- Promoting exchange of experiences, networking, living labs bringing together citizens and local actors to foster cooperation in the field of sport, education, nature, and other fields of common interest
- Integrated digitalisation of the cross-border cultural heritage to increase its accessibility to the public and implementing promotional digital solutions, e.g., digital platforms, apps
- Creating education and training possibilities taking into account the needs of national minorities living in the Programme area, such as materials for schools and universities on history, culture, languages and identity of National Minorities, entrepreneurial training courses, targeted language courses, camps for children and young people, etc.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle since they have been assessed as compatible according to Member State's methodology.

The actions foreseen under this specific objective will be implemented through people-to-people actions in the form of projects of limited financial volume in the range of 30.000 - 100.000 euro ERDF and simplified cost options will be applied.



### 2.7.3 INDICATORS

Table 2  
Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Final target (2029)
4	ISO1.(c)	RCO 87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	0	36
4	ISO1.(c)	RCO 81	Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	0	60

Table 3  
Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
4	ISO1.(c)	RCR 84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0	2021	14	Monitoring system/ ad hoc analysis	

### 2.7.4 MAIN TARGET GROUPS

[max 7.000]

Considering the above-mentioned exemplary actions and desired changes, the Programme has selected the following key target groups:

- Local, regional, national authorities and other public institutions and agencies
- Private sector
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Local action groups and similar
- Local population

### 2.7.5 INDICATION OF THE SPECIFIC TERRITORIES TARGETED, INCLUDING THE PLANNED USE OF ITI, CLLD OR OTHER TERRITORIAL TOOLS

[max 7.000]

The actions can be implemented in the whole Programme area as identified in Chapter 1.

### 2.7.6 PLANNED USE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

[max 7.000]

Grants would be used because of the nature of the operations and the relatively small scale does not really allow the efficient deployment of financial instruments.

### 2.7.7 INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EU PROGRAMME RESOURCES BY TYPE OF INTERVENTION

Table 4

#### Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(c)	171	1.500.000,00

Table 5

#### Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(c)	01	1.500.000,00

Table 6

#### Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
4	ERDF	ISO1.(c)	33	1.500.000,00

### 3. FINANCING PLAN

#### 3.1. FINANCIAL APPROPRIATIONS BY YEAR

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF (territorial cooperation goal)	0,00 €	12.111.632,00 €	12.306.181,00 €	12.504.621,00 €	12.707.028,00 €	10.529.307,00 €	10.739.893,00 €	70.898.662,00 €

#### 3.2. TOTAL FINANCIAL APPROPRIATIONS BY FUND AND NATIONAL CO-FINANCING

Policy Objective	Priority	Fund (as applicable)	Basis for calculation of EU support (total eligible cost or public contribution)	EU contribution	Indicative breakdown of the EU contribution		National contribution	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total	Cofinancing rate	Contributions from the third countries (for information)
					Without TA pursuant to Article 27 (1)	For TA pursuant to Article 27 (1)		National public	National private			
					(a1)	(a2)		(c)	(d)			
1	1	ERDF	Total eligible cost	(a)=(a1)+(a2) 6.889.799,00 €	(a1) 6.439.065,00 €	(a2) 450.734,00 €	(b)=(c)+(d) 1.722.450,00 €	(c) 1.702.882,00 €	(d) 19.568,00 €	(e)=(a)+(b) 8.612.249,00 €	(f)=(a)/(e) 80%	

2	2	ERDF	Total eligible cost	26.544.852,00 €	24.808.273,00 €	1.736.579,00 €	6.636.213,00 €	6.560.822,00 €	75.391,00 €	33.181.065,00 €	80%	
4	3	ERDF	Total eligible cost	31.942.977,00 €	29.853.250,00 €	2.089.727,00 €	7.985.745,00 €	7.895.022,00 €	90.723,00 €	39.928.722,00 €	80%	
IS01	4	ERDF	Total eligible cost	5.521.034,00 €	5.159.845,00 €	361.189,00 €	1.380.259,00 €	1.364.578,00 €	15.681,00 €	6.901.293,00 €	80%	
TOTAL				70.898.662,00 €	66.260.433,00 €	4.638.229,00 €	17.724.667,00 €	17.523.304,00 €	201.363,00 €	88.623.329,00 €	80%	



#### 4. ACTION TAKEN TO INVOLVE THE RELEVANT PROGRAMME PARTNERS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE INTERREG PROGRAMME AND THE ROLE OF THOSE PROGRAMME PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

[max 10.000]

The Programme has taken in duly consideration the partnership principle as a fundamental one in the European policy-making. According to the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (EC Delegated Reg. No. 240/2014), the consultation process has ensured the application of the principles of transparency and accountability, effectiveness and coherence whenever partners, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries have been involved.

The relevant Programme partners (i.e., national delegations, regional representatives) have been involved in the preparation of the Interreg Programme with a pivotal role of analysis, deepening and discussing data and programming proposals, towards the definition of the priorities and the strategy of the Programme. Such an involvement started with the Managing Authority of the Programme 2014-2020 proposal of the issue of Interreg Italy-Slovenia 2021-2027 on the agenda of the 9th and 10th Monitoring Committee, held in October and December 2018. During the following 11th meeting of the Monitoring Committee, in May 2019, the European Commission presented the orientation document for preparation of the INTERREG 2021-2027 Programme "Border Orientation Paper-Italy-Slovenia", prepared by the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. In that occasion, the EC representative of DG Regio urged the Programme Monitoring Committee to activate the 2021-2027 programming phase.

Consistently, a Programme Task Force has been established, composed of the delegations of the two Member States, Italy (with the Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions) and Slovenia, formally meeting for the first time on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2019. According to the Task Force Rules of Procedure (adopted in the first meeting and further revised in the following ones and/or through written procedure) the Task Force consists of several members from both countries, ensuring the compliance with the partnership principle and the European Code of Conduct on Partnership:

- a. Members with voting right: up to 6 representatives from Republic of Slovenia (Slovene Delegation); up to 6 representatives from Republic of Italy, out of which at least 3 from regional level, Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto Region (Italian Delegation);
- b. Members in advisory capacity: the European Commission; the Interreg IT-SI 2014-2020 Managing Authority and its staff; on a case-by-case basis by informing the Chair in advance, regional/national experts and observers (i.e., macro-strategies, mainstream programs, S3 experts, economic-social representatives parties, etc.).

Due to the containment measures and dispositions against the health emergency from Covid-19, during 2020 and 2021 the Task Force meetings took place almost entirely in online mode. As of March 2022, the Task Force has already held 24 meetings, dealing with the fundamental features for the definition of the Interreg 2021-2027 Programme, such as:

- confirmation of the role of 2021-2027 Managing Authority to be performed by Region Friuli Venezia Giulia in July 2020 following a process of selection of candidates and a negotiation with the Republic of Slovenia;
- public consultation procedure on the strategic orientations for the new Programme: the first phase of consultation took place in July - September 2020 and the second phase between 28 June and 15 August 2021;
- activation of a specialist support service to the Task Force for the drafting of the new Programme documents (from November 2020);
- agreement on the Programme area in continuity with the 2014-2020 programming period;
- definition of the Programme budget for a total of M€ 88 (of which approx. M€ 70 ERDF and co-financing rate at 20%);
- development of the Socio-Economic and Territorial Analysis, as a basis for the strategic orientations for the Programme;
- agreement on the strategic orientations of the Programme, including the decision on supporting the chosen Policy Objectives and Specific Objectives, definition of actions and exemplary actions to be implemented, selecting the intervention fields and indicators to measure deliverables and outcomes of funded projects;
- acknowledgement of the strategic importance for the Programme area of the European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica - Gorizia as a driver for development;
- definition of the strategic operations to be implemented within the Programme through a top-down approach;
- implementation of the cross-border SEA procedure – Mitigation measures stemming from the SEA procedure have been noted and will be addressed in the implementation phase of the Programme ;
- definition of all the sections of the Programme and the final decision on Programme's financial allocation breakdown (March 2022).

To provide stakeholders and general public with the state of art of drafting of the new Programme a section dedicated to the 2021-2027 programming period is available on the Programme website (<https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/programming-period-2021-2027>)

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In order to support an even broader active involvement of the relevant partners in the programming phase, a public consultation procedure for stakeholders and potential beneficiaries was carried out to facilitate the establishment of the strategic orientations for the Interreg 2021-2027 Programme, thus supporting the Task Force with the definition of the actions to be implemented by the Programme. The public consultation procedure has been developed in different steps: the first step of stakeholders' consultation allowed to collect data from the

territory about the thematic focus of the Programme, which have been further processed, analyzed and elaborated in the framework of the negotiations on Programme content by the Task Force in early 2021.

Moreover, in the first months of 2021, a series of interviews with institutional representatives of Programme partners was carried out as a further element for the Task Force's brainstorming on Programme Strategic Orientations and the outcomes were included in the Territorial Socio-economic Analysis of the Programme area. In the meantime, some requirements necessary for the Programme's development such as thematic concentration have been confirmed in the Regulations published by the European Commission.

The second step of stakeholders' consultation process, aimed at collecting inputs on the actions to be implemented through the Programme, was performed through an online survey and allowed to gather 373 replies. Two workshops (in Slovene and Italian languages) were organized prior to launching the online survey to present it to stakeholders and to clarify its objectives. Among those 373 stakeholders participating in the online survey, 192 were from Italy and 181 from Slovenia, higher education and research organization being the most represented group. All the 10 NUTs3 regions were represented. There were also some respondents from other NUTs 3 regions outside of the Programme area.

The public consultation process has been a great opportunity to share challenges and needs with stakeholders, collect proposals and desired changes, suggestions and recommendations to be considered by the Programme. The outcomes of stakeholders' consultations represented a reliable and shared basis to develop an analysis of the Programme area as well as the other fundamental chapters of the Programme.

The partnership approach adopted during the programming phase will be maintained also during the Programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. The partnership principle will be enabled not only through the membership in the Monitoring Committee, but also involving partners and stakeholders in dialogue and strategic interaction throughout the life cycle of the Programme.

The MC members (and all the programme staff) will comply with the Commission Notice on Guidance on the avoidance and management of conflicts of interest under the Financial Regulation (2021/C121/01). Template for declaration and related instructions (in line with 2014-20 programming experience) will be prepared and shared with the members of the MC to be duly signed.

The implementation of 2021-2027 Italy-Slovenia Interreg Programme will encourage ongoing involvement of relevant partners in order to reinforce transparency of the implementation and strengthen the programme ownership among the partners.

## 5. APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY FOR THE INTERREG PROGRAMME (OBJECTIVES, TARGET AUDIENCES, COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH, WHERE APPROPRIATE, PLANNED BUDGET AND RELEVANT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION)

[max 4.500]

The approach of the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme communication and visibility strategy aims at disseminating the Programme's contents, ongoing activities and results granting the visibility of the EU co-funding. The general objective of the programme's communication is to enhance the public awareness of the EU support for projects in the cross-border area through the effective use of communication instruments.

The working language mainly used among the Programme structures is English, although during the Monitoring Committee, translation services will be guaranteed. Italian and Slovene language will be used for the implementation of the projects.

The main objectives of the communication and visibility strategy are:

- to disseminate the Programme's contents and priorities;
- to promote the Programme's funding opportunities;
- to promote projects' achievements and capitalisation activities;
- to give visibility to the three operations of strategic importance;
- to support programme authorities, applicants and beneficiaries in the effective project development and implementation by ensuring well-functioning internal communication between the programme structures to make the programme function effectively, providing applicants and beneficiaries high-quality and timely support in all phases of the project implementation

The target audiences of Programme and projects' communication and dissemination activities can be subdivided in different target groups:

- applicants and beneficiaries (project partners);
- programme authorities;
- professionals and technical experts;
- general public (youth, families);
- schools and teachers or professors;
- NGOs;
- media.

The Programme will strive at granting an active role in the communication activities of the Programme. This will be implemented via:

- the creation of the website hosting the project webpages, a specific area of the website will be dedicated to the three operations of strategic importance;
- providing a ready-made logo, in line with the coordinated image of the Programme;
- providing guidelines for the visual identity;



- providing guidelines for coordinated social media campaigns;
- organizing targeted communication workshops for the applicants and beneficiaries;
- supporting the organisation of campaigns to disseminate the results of the three strategic projects: POSEIDONE; ADRIONCYCLETOUT and KRAS-CARSO II.

Stemming from the experience of the 2014-20 programming period, the communication needs to be focused on a more active involvement of youth and students, this is one of the reasons for a more intense use of social media in the 2021-27 programming period. Another focus of the communication and visibility actions should be schools and professors: there is a need for greater involvement in the calls for institutions related to education and training, for example as associated partners. The Programme will join the project At School of Open Cohesion (ASOC).

The target groups will be involved via:

- direct involvement in project activities (beneficiaries, applicants, associated partners);
- specific campaigns diversified per age group;
- dissemination of project outputs: use of project results (citizens, technical staff, students, teachers etc.)

Communication channels:

- website including the beneficiaries' webpages;
- social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, Twitter;
- communication campaigns (claim, materials and gadgets, logo);
- dissemination events for the general public;
- public events (annual events, workshops for applicants/beneficiaries/programme structures/professionals);
- online events (for the general public and for professionals);
- direct meetings;
- online campaigns including the production of visual elements (e.g., storytelling, videomaking, infographics);
- Keep.eu portal.

The Managing Authority in continuity with 2014-20 programming period, will identify a communication manager who will be part of the Joint Secretariat and will act in accordance with the Monitoring Committee directions.

The Slovenian National Contact Point as well as the two Italian Regions will provide support in fulfilling the communication tasks and provisions.

Monitoring and evaluation of the communication and visibility activities will be regularly performed by internal or external evaluators. Data for evaluation will come from surveys, internal statistics or website and social media channels analytics. The Monitoring Committee will analyse yearly the communication activities advancement and effectiveness. The programme will use a detailed set of output, result and performance indicators to follow and evaluate the communication activities and to improve their performance. The main output indicators will be:

- Website: number of visits;
- Social media: number of followers, number of published contents, number of views and interactions;
- Public events: number of events organised, number of participants.

Result indicators will concern the general usefulness of communication activities for the target groups and their involvement, while performance indicators will analyse the change in the opinion of the target groups and their increased awareness of funding opportunities.

#### Planned budget

The budget planned for communication of the Programme is at least 1.2% of the total Programme value.

## 6. INDICATION OF SUPPORT TO SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS, INCLUDING SMALL PROJECTS WITHIN SMALL PROJECT FUNDS

[max 7.000]

Projects of limited financial volume, or 'small-scale projects', are foreseen for the Italy-Slovenia Interreg 2021-2027 Programme as a tool that contributes to Programme objectives' achievement and helps overcoming cross-border obstacles to cooperation by building trust between citizens and institutions, raising awareness, promoting mutual understanding and networking.

The Programme is planning to implement them both by supporting projects of limited financial volume directly (Art. 24 (1.a) of the Interreg Regulation) and by using bottom-up approach within Small Project Fund (Art. 24 (1.b) and Art. 25 of the Interreg Regulation).

The European Capital of Culture 2025 Nova Gorica · Gorizia aims at creating and implementing a programme of events highlighting the richness of culture, shared heritage and history and bringing benefits to local communities. The Interreg Italy-Slovenia 2021-2027 Programme will support the ECoC 2025 through the Small Project Fund. The EGTC GO will manage the implementation of the fund as a sole beneficiary via open calls and simplified application procedures. Within the Small Project Fund, a bottom-up approach for selecting the new project proposals will be carried out in order to finance projects that will contribute to the achievement of the Programme goals and will fit the Specific Objective 4.6: "Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation". An annual call for projects is foreseen starting from 2022. 2 types of projects are expected:

- short projects with a maximum duration of twelve months and the budget within 30.000€ and 100.000€. These projects will be implemented mostly in year 2025.
- long projects that exceed the twelve months duration, but end within 24 months. The allocation up to 200.000€.

The Small Project Fund will apply simplified cost options as defined by the Art. 25 (6) of the Interreg regulation for the projects that do not exceed EUR 100 000. The EGTC GO will also support the use of simplified cost options for projects with greater budget. The SCOs will be determined and selected at the Programme level.

In addition to the Small Project Fund dedicated to ECoC 2025 initiatives on Specific Objective 4.6, the Programme will also support people-to-people cross-border initiatives implemented in the form of small-scale projects within Interreg specific objective 1. (c): “build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions”. The actions to be supported will be aiming at strengthening cross-border cooperation by networking and exchanging experiences in the fields of common interest, building trust and strengthening common identity by overcoming language, cultural and geographical obstacles. People-to-people projects in the range of 30.000-100.000€ ERDF are expected and will be developed in 12 months. Relative call for projects can be launched in 2024.

## 7. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

### 7.1. Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of the institution	Contact name	email
Managing Authority	Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia Central Directorate for Finance Accounting Unit	Laura Comelli	adg.itaslo@regione.fvg.it
National authority (for programmes with participating third or partner countries, if appropriate)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audit Authority	Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia Presidency of the Region Directorate General Audit Office	Gianluca Dominutti	audit@regione.fvg.it
Group of auditors representatives	Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia / Presidency of the Region / Directorate General/Audit Office Republic of Slovenia – Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Slovenia, Budget Supervision Office of the RS	Gianluca Dominutti Gregor Greif Director	audit@regione.fvg.it gregor.greif@gov.si
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission	Ministry of Economy and Finance – Inspectorate General for Financial Relations with the European Union (IGRUE)	Paolo Zambuto	paolo.zambuto@mef.gov.it

### 7.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

[max 3.500]

The Managing Authority (MA), after consultation with the Member States/Programme partners, sets up the Joint Secretariat (JS) for the programme in compliance with Article 17(6)(b) and Article 46(2) of the Interreg Regulation.

For the 2021-2027 programming period, the Managing Authority and the participating Member States intend to maintain the Joint Secretariat (JS) staff set up in programming period 2014-20 made up of five bilingual experts who were stabilized with full time permanent contracts within the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Administration.

The Managing Authority and the participating Member States plan to integrate the JS also with additional staff, whose set up reflects the Programme area in terms of sound knowledge of its main relevant aspects and of the two Programme's national languages and English.

The new figures shall be selected in a transparent way by both Member States.

For the JS additional staff recruitment, the Managing Authority shall ensure compliance with the good Programme partnership approach in line with Article 46(2) of the Interreg Regulation and the principles of equal treatment, equality between men and women and non-discrimination.

It is set up under the responsibility of the Managing Authority, with the main role of assisting the Managing Authority on the management of the Programme and effectively supporting the Monitoring Committee in performing its tasks. The JS undertakes the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the Programme, provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme and assists beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

The programme organization will ensure that personnel working on the preparation of applications will not be involved in the selection procedures.

### 7.3. Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third or partner countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

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[max 10.500]

Apportionment of liabilities within the Programme management is ensured consistently with articles 69, 74, 76 and – for the specific purposes of financial management and consequent corrections – 103 of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021.

According to articles 69, 1 and 2, of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021, Member States shall have management and control systems for their programmes in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and the key requirements listed in Annex XI to the Regulation, shall ensure the legality and regularity of expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the Commission and shall take all required actions to prevent, detect and correct and report on irregularities including fraud.

The Member States will bear liability in connection with the use of the Programme ERDF funding as follows:

- each Member State bears liability for possible financial consequences of irregularities caused by the Lead Partners and Project Partners located on its territory and in case of an EGTC where it is registered;

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

The Technical Assistance (TA) is jointly financed by the MSs participating to the Programme. The maximum allocation (ERDF and national cofinancing) for TA is established in line with Article 27 par. 3 of the Regulation (EU) No 1059/202. Core Programme activities will be managed directly by the MA and equally cofinanced by the MS. Details on the TA budget will be provided within the pre-agreement to be signed according to Article 16 par. 5 of the above mentioned Interreg regulation.

Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid, the Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered by the Lead Partner. As a consequence, the Project Partners shall repay the Lead Partner the amounts unduly paid.

As far as procedures for collecting and reporting irregularities are concerned, according to Annex XII of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021, the Member State in which the irregular expenditure is incurred by the beneficiary in implementing the operation shall be responsible for reporting the irregularity in accordance with Article 69(2). The reporting Member State shall inform the managing authority and the audit authority of the Programme.

The task of collecting information on irregularities detected in the eligible area of the Italian State is guaranteed by first level controllers and/or the Audit Authority. The Managing Authority shall communicate them to the Commission duly implementing the OLAF form in the IMS system through the competent central administration of the Italian State (Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for European Policies).

Whereas irregularities are detected in the eligible territory of the Republic of Slovenia, the Government Office for European Development and Cohesion Policy communicates the information collected to the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Budgetary Control (AFCOS) and at the same time informs the Programme Managing Authority and the Audit Authority.

Regarding the irregularities related to Slovenian beneficiaries, the Managing Authority acquires the reports and starts the financial correction procedure, redetermination of the contribution and recovery as described above.

The JS shall feed the information system with data and updates on found irregularities.

According to article 103 of Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021 on financial corrections by Member States, they shall protect the Union budget and apply financial corrections by cancelling all or part of the support from the Funds to an operation or Programme where expenditure declared to the Commission is found to be irregular. Furthermore, financial corrections shall be recorded in the accounts for the accounting year in which the cancellation is decided.

In the management of irregularities, in detail, the Managing Authority shall:

- promptly acquire the reports of irregularities (first reports and subsequent updates) from the beneficiaries directly or through the LP of the project concerned;
- send the reports to the JS for the assessment of the existence of the conditions for communication to the EC, and for feeding the Programme information system;
- proceed to the correction / redetermination of the contribution;
- initiate the consequent recovery procedures of the unduly paid amounts from the concerned beneficiaries;
- periodically (on a quarterly basis) inform the other Programme Authorities about the irregularities received and the related updates;
- duly inform the Monitoring Committee and other relevant bodies about the outcome of the decisions taken the Programme control structures/Authority (First Level Control, Audit Authority), which have detected the irregularities;
- implement the list of irrecoverable amounts, as well as the amounts relating to suspended transactions by virtue of a judicial proceeding or an administrative appeal with suspensive effect.

With regard to financial correction procedure and recovery, following the receipt of an irregularity report (first reports and subsequent updates from the beneficiaries directly or through the Lead Partner of the project concerned), regardless of whether or not it is communicated to the EC, the Managing Authority may proceed by correcting / re-determining the contribution and with the consequent recovery of unduly paid sums from the Lead partner, in the event that the public contribution has already been paid to the beneficiary.

The Managing Authority initiates the recovery procedures directly against the Lead partner (Italian or Slovene), according to the procedures described in the Programme Manuals. Where possible, recovery is carried out by compensation with the amounts to be further paid to the same project or, if compensations not possible, by requesting reimbursement of the concerned amounts. In case the debtor does not fulfill the restitution within the established deadline, any default interest will be applied, in accordance with art. 49 of the FVG Regional Law 7/2000. The recovered amounts are therefore returned to the regional budget and recorded separately.

In line with Article 52 (2) of the Interreg Regulation the Managing Authority will not recover an amount unduly paid if it does not exceed EUR 250 ERDF (not including interest) paid to an operation in a given accounting year.

If the Lead Partner does not succeed in securing repayment from a Project Partner/final beneficiary or if the Managing Authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the Lead Partner or the final beneficiaries, the Member State on whose territory the Project Partner/final beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the Managing Authority the unduly paid amount to that Project Partner.

The Managing Authority is responsible for reimbursing the amounts recovered to the general budget of the European Union once the amounts are recovered from the Lead Partner /Member State.

Should the Managing Authority bear any legal expenses for recovery proceedings – initiated after consultation and in mutual agreement with the respective MS -, even in case of unsuccessful proceedings, it will be reimbursed by the Member State hosting the concerned responsible Lead Partner or Project Partner.

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 unduly paid amounts as a result of an irregularity caused by a beneficiary located in their territory. Where appropriate according to its legislation and in line with Directive 2011/7/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011, a Member State may also charge interest on late payments.

The obligation of refund in favor of the Commission arises only in the case of recoveries from the beneficiary resulting from irregularities relating to amounts already certified to the Commission.

The Managing Authority deducts the amounts withdrawn and those recovered on the occasion of the first declaration of expenditure available before the closure of the Programme, according to the procedures described in the Programme Manuals. If a project has not been certified, the expenditure subsequently certified is net of the financial corrections made.

For the purposes of the correct certification of eligible expenses, the Managing Authority keeps the "recovery register" with the evidence of the amounts submitted within to declarations of expenditure to the Commission and withdrawn from the following certificates of expenditure, as well as the irregularities, renunciations and redetermination of expenditure carried out following subsequent checks.



## 8. USE OF UNIT COSTS, LUMP SUMS, FLAT RATES AND FINANCING NOT LINKED TO COSTS

Table 10

Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Intended use of Articles 94 and 95	YES	NO
From the adoption the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under priority according to Article 94 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 1)		X
From the adoption the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs according to Article 95 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 2)		X

[max 2.000]

The Programme intends to implement the following 3 operations of strategic importance:

1) Strategic project **ADRIONCYCLETOUR** contributes to define the cycling route running along the coast of the Adriatic Sea in Italy (Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions) and in Slovenia (coastal network), including its main cycle connections to the hinterland areas (inland network), and supports the development, at EUSAIR level, of an innovative and attractive cross-border/transnational tourism product on the **ADRIATIC-IONIAN Cycle Route**.

- Lead Partner: Central Directorate for Infrastructure and Territory - Transport, Digital and Sustainable Mobility Infrastructure Service of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
- Timetable: from September 1st, 2022; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

2) Strategic project **POSEIDONE** fosters the sustainable development of the territory on a cross-border scale, promoting the enhancement of the natural environment, the protection of biodiversity, the implementation of green and blue infrastructures and indirectly contributing to the development of sustainable and slow tourism, also capitalising the results of previous Interreg projects.

- Lead Partner: VeGAL – Development Agency of Eastern Veneto
- Timetable: from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

3) Strategic project **KRAS - CARSO II** contributes to the sustainable development of the cross-border functional area of the Classical Karst, promoting sustainable and slow tourism in full compliance with the environmental and historical assets of the area, capitalising the results of previous Interreg projects.

- Lead Partner: Karst and Brkini Regional Development Agency
- Timetable: from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023; duration: 36 months.
- Budget: ERDF 3.500.000 Euro.

Project partners and associated partners relevant for the specific topics of the 3 strategic operations together with a detailed description of the projects are included within the "Other Member State Documents" attached to the present IP.