

# Annual Implementation Report 2017

of the

INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA-AUSTRIA  
COOPERATION PROGRAMME

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## 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB003
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## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Annual Report 2017 of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Cross-border Cooperation Programme has been prepared pursuant to Annex X of Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2015/207. The report is intended to give a brief overview of the activities that were undertaken in the frame of the implementation process, focusing on the year 2017.

In the year 2017 the focus of the Managing Authority (MA) with the involvement of all management bodies was given mostly on the setting up the monitoring system for the programme. Beside that the finalisation, resp. updates of programme documents were carried out – with regards on the designation process (Description of Management and Control System, Manual for Applicants, Manual for Beneficiaries, ERDF Contract, Memorandum of Understanding, etc.). The Programme bodies had several meetings including two Monitoring Committee Meetings, 4 Task Force Meetings and more than 30 Technical meetings with the relevant stakeholders (included representatives of MA, NA, JS, national, regional authorities, included EC and relevant Ministries).

During the 2 MC meetings held in 2017, the key decisions related to the implementation have been made. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting (held on June 2017 in Podersdorf, Austria) the 1<sup>st</sup> selection of project proposal was done. The 4<sup>th</sup> MC meeting (on 13<sup>th</sup> December in Bratislava, Slovakia) was strategic and of utmost importance. The Programme bodies decided to use Electronic Monitoring system (ITMS 2014+) for the Cooperation Programme. The strategic decision contains also clear list of necessary adjustments, timeframe and responsibilities. Having decided on the use of the ITMS 2014+ monitoring system is a vital and necessary step for speeding up the implementation process and ensuring the financial flows. The decision directly affected the finalisation of the programming documents – this will have significant influence on the speeding up of the designation process of the Programme.

The open Call for proposal (hereinafter referred to CfP) was launched in December 2016, covering the complete budget of the programme, i.e. EUR 75 892 681 of ERDF eligible under Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4. The 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for submission of project applications was launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the second one on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> round there were 26 project applications submitted within PA1, PA2 and PA4. Within 2<sup>nd</sup> round 13 project applications were submitted again within PA1, PA2 and PA4. There was no project application submitted within PA3.

The evaluation process contains formal & eligibility and quality check of the submitted applications. Besides the staff of the Joint secretariat in Bratislava and in Vienna who are performing the quality assessment of the projects there are Slovak external experts obligatory involved in the quality assessment of the projects (Austrian regional experts might be involved if needed). Prior the start of the quality assessment a training was provided to external evaluators led by the MA/JS.

The 1<sup>st</sup> selection of submitted project proposals has taken place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC held on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 in Podersdorf, Austria. From 26 submitted project applications, 15 were approved in the amount of EUR 32, 5 M. which means 45% commitment of the programme's allocation. The selection of project proposals submitted in 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round is expected in March 2018.

The project Dream SK-AT as a strategic project displays potential synergies within the Danube region and significantly contributes to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). However not only this project contributes to EUSDR, the cooperation programme pays due attention to the Strategy (EUSDR) in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase.

The Call for Proposal for the Technical Assistance within PA5 (ensurance of efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme) was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017 in the total amount of EUR 4 553 560. Five (5) project applications have been submitted and three (3) projects were approved within per rollam (written procedure). Project application of the JSP-Vienna was approved at the 4<sup>th</sup> MC meeting in December 2017. The project application of the MA/JS of Bratislava is expected to be decided upon per rollam in January 2018 (the information is specified later, see chapter 3.1 PA 5).

In order to support the effective implementation of projects and of the Cooperation programme the MA in close cooperation with JS organized the so called "Lead beneficiary and partner seminar" during 10.-11. October 2017, where more than 160 participants from both countries participated.

In order to support the efficient day-to day communication of the Cooperation programme towards the general public, a Facebook (FB) page was launched. With the FB page and the programme website, the programme bodies as well as the stakeholders and the general public from the programme area will be better informed about activities and the programme related results.

On 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 the Annual Event of the Programme was organised. The event with the theme innovations in the cross border region took place in the innovative Bratislava automotive factory. The title of the Annual Event was "*Innovation in cooperation, cooperation in innovation*" and the various speakers talked about different factors of the innovations and its importance for the cross border region. The event had many interesting expert inputs and a lively discussion. After the official part, a tour of the factory as well as a mini robot show enriched the event's programme.

In line with Article 114 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council the Evaluation Plan was submitted and approved during the 2<sup>nd</sup> MC meeting in the previous year.

In the reporting year, no evaluation activities have been initiated. The major progress in this issue in accordance with the Evaluation Plan is expected in 2018.

### Reimbursement of funds

By 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 the initial and annual pre-financing payments transferred to the Certifying Authority (CA) amounted to EUR 4 268 963,31 (ERDF), including 2017 pre-financing payment of EUR 474 329,26 (ERDF) credited to the Programme account. As no summary request for payment has been submitted to the CA in 2017, no expenditure has been certified. The CA registered no irregularities in the reported period.

The interest generated on the ERDF account will be used after a mutual agreement of the participating MS for programme purposes (such as programming for the forthcoming period or programme closure). The MA plans to submit a proposal for the use of the generated interest to the MC at a later stage of programme implementation.

Since the Cooperation Programme was approved by the European Commission on 28th July 2015, the financial commitment for 2014 should be fulfilled (according to the N+3 rule methodology) together with the financial commitment for 2015 by the end of 2018.

### Progress in the designation process

Regarding the designation process, the significant part of the necessary workflows involving all management bodies continued in 2017. The following documents have been finalised or updated: Description of the Management and Control System, ERDF contract templates, Manuals for Applicants and Beneficiaries as well as the Manual for Technical Assistance (TA). Besides these also Internal manuals (procedures) within MA, Joint Secretariat (JS) in Bratislava as well as within FLC-body in Bratislava have been elaborated and updated.

The final decision about the use of the monitoring system within the cooperation programme was an important step toward further programme implementation and speeded up all processes. Since there was no progress reached on the automatic data transfer between eMS<sup>1</sup> and ITMS2014+, the decision on the use of only one monitoring system was inevitable. It should be stated that ITMS2014+ is the only monitoring system linked to the payment system (ISUF) in Slovakia which allows smooth certification of expenditures by the CA and eventually the transfer of ERDF funds to Lead beneficiaries.

The discussion to use the ITMS2014+ has lasted several months, it was also subject of discussion during the Task Force in September 2017 where also representatives of the Central Coordinating Body (hereinafter referred to "CKO"<sup>2</sup>) were invited. The decision was made during the 4<sup>th</sup> MC in December 2017. Based on decision made at the MC about the use of the monitoring system ITMS 2014+, the

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<sup>1</sup> eMS – Monitoring system developed by Interact

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter Central Coordinating Authority = „CKO“ – from Slovak abbreviation : Centrálny koordinačný orgán.

programme documents will be updated with this information. Right after completion of documents, the MA shall inform the AA and ask for reopening of the designation audit<sup>3</sup>. Based on the first discussion with the Audit Authority it is foreseen to finalise the designation process until April 2018.

### **Implementation Process and Measures taken**

The delayed implementation process has several reasons. Some of them were already discussed in the AIR 2016 and are still valid. In spite of all challenges the finalisation of programme documents was achieved (such as Description of Management and Control system, ERDF contract templates, Memorandum of Understanding). The key question for 2017 indicated in previous AIR 2016 was clarified – monitoring system used within Programme is ITMS2014+.

Moreover, during the year 2017 the first projects were approved by the MC and some of them have started their implementation.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS**

### **3.1 Overview of the implementation**

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<sup>3</sup> Audit File No. A 732

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
PA 1	Contributing to a smart cross-border-region	<p>Open call for proposal (hereinafter referred to as CfP) was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with a total amount of EUR 19 683 142 (25,90 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 1b)<sup>4</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in order to enhance knowledge transfer, capacity building and the establishment of common frameworks, common research and innovation activities and joint research facilities.</li> <li>▪ Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round was closed on 28<sup>th</sup> February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. During the reporting year within the above mentioned assessment rounds altogether 14 project applications were submitted within PA1.</p> <p>From the 9 submitted project applications within 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round, 3 projects applications were selected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting in June 2017 in Podersdorf, Austria. The MC set the conditions to the selected project applications. The conditions given by MC have to be met before signing the ERDF contracts. The contracting procedure has started and it is expected to sign contracts in the beginning of 2018.</p> <p>The delay has been caused by several factors such as the extended length for approving the minutes (inquiry to partially improve the formulation of project conditions), the deadlines given to the applicants for meeting the conditions (call for completion) and the need for finalisation of the ERDF contract template (expectance of approval within per rollam/ written procedure in January 2018).</p> <p>Within the selection also one strategic project was selected (recognition of its strategic position within per rollam) – Dream SKAT. The project shows synergetic effect for the Danube region and is in line with Danube strategy.</p> <p>In the 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round 5 projects application were submitted within PA1. The selection of the project application is expected in March 2018.</p> <p>The milestone for 2018 (number of contracted projects) is set on “4” projects. Based on the results from the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round there where</p>

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

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>3 project application approved. Taking into account that within 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round there were 5 project applications submitted, <b>the milestone/ target will be very likely met.</b></p> <p>Eventhough the indicator “number of contracted projects” will likely be met, related <b>financial indicator will not be achieved.</b> It is mainly due to the following reasons: no signed contracts (see for more details above), no monitoring system was in 2017 in place that would enable financial flows (it shall be ensured by using ITMS2014+ since it is linked to the Slovak ISUF). It is expected that the programme documentation including the description of the use of ITMS2014+ shall be finalised in beginning 2018, so that payments towards LB are possible.</p>
PA 2	<p><b>Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 opening EUR 27 820 000 (36,70 % out of the total programme allocation). The Priority Axis rests on the Investment Priorities 6c) and 6d)<sup>5</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen common approaches to valorise the natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way in order to further develop the programme area as an attractive tourism destination.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the cross-border integration of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures in order to preserve biodiversity and to contribute to the stability of ecosystems.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round was closed on 28<sup>th</sup> February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. During the reporting year, counting both assessment rounds altogether 14 project applications were submitted within PA2 (10 project proposals within 1<sup>st</sup> application round and 4 project proposals within the 2<sup>nd</sup> application round).</p> <p>From 10 submitted project applications within 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round (5 project proposals within 6c and 5 project proposals within 6d), 8 projects applications were selected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting in June 2017 in Podersdorf, Austria (4 project proposals within 6c and 4 project proposals within 6d). The MC has set the conditions to the selected project applications. The conditions given by MC have to be met before signing the ERDF contracts. The contracting procedure has started and it is expected to sign contracts in the beginning of 2018.</p> <p>The delay has been caused by several factors such as the extended</p>

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

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>length for approving the minutes (inquiry to partially improve the formulation of project conditions), the deadlines given to the applicants for meeting the conditions (call for completion) and the need for finalisation of the ERDF contract template (expectance of approval within per rollam/ written procedure in January 2018).</p> <p>In 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round 4 projects application were submitted (3 project proposals within 6c and 1 project proposals within 6d). The selection of the project application is expected in March 2018.</p> <p>The milestone for 2018 (Number of contracted projects) is set on “6” for 6c and for “4” for 6d. Based on results from selection from 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round where 4+4 project applications were approved, and taking into account that within 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round were 4 project applications submitted, <b>the milestones/ targets will be very likely met.</b></p> <p>Even though the indicators “number of contracted projects” will likely be met, related <b>financial indicators will not be achieved.</b> It is due to following reasons: no signed contracts (see for more details above), no monitoring system was in 2017 in place that would enable financial flows (it shall be ensured by using ITMS2014+ since it is linked to the Slovak ISUF). It is expected that the programme documentation including the description of the use of ITMS2014+ shall be finalised in beginning 2018, so that payments towards LB are possible.</p>
PA 3	<p><b>Supporting sustainable transport solutions</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with the total amount of <b>EUR 9 655 000</b> (12,70% of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 7c)<sup>6</sup>. The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round was closed on 28th February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. During the reporting year <b>no applications have been submitted</b>, no contracts have been concluded and thus no payments have been made therefore no indicators will be achieved.</p>

6 in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>Within the preparation phase of the Cooperation programme, it was planned that 2 bridges could be build (for improving the mobility in the region) as well as some other related actions. However situation has changed and in 2017 it is envisaged that only 1 bridge can be constructed: the projects in preparation is the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists between Vysoka pri Morave and Marchegg as a sustainable transport solution for the inhabitants in the cross border region.</p> <p>The milestone for 2018 (number of contracted projects) is set on 3 projects. Given the fact that within 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment rounds no project application submitted, and for 2018 it is expected that only 2 project proposals could be submitted, <b>the milestones will not very likely be met.</b></p> <p><b>Taking into account situation within PA3, the revision of Cooperation programme seems to be the only option in near future.</b></p>
PA 4	<p><b>Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation</b></p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 opening <b>EUR 14 180 000</b> (18,70 % out of the total programme allocation). The first round of CfP was closed on 28<sup>th</sup> February and the second round of CfP was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017.</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Thematic Objective 11<sup>7</sup>. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen the institutional cooperation in the cross-border area through mobilizing stakeholders and building the capacities for planning and acting in the framework of multi-level governance.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes.</li> </ul> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round was closed on 28<sup>th</sup> February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round was closed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. During the reporting year, counting both assessment rounds altogether 11 project applications were submitted within PA 4 (7 project proposals within 1<sup>st</sup> application round and 4 project proposals within the 2<sup>nd</sup> application round).</p> <p>From the 7 submitted project applications within 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round, 4 projects applications were selected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting in June 2017 in Podersdorf, Austria. The MC set the conditions to the selected project</p>

<sup>7</sup> in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>applications. The conditions given by MC have to be met before signing the ERDF contracts. The contracting procedure has started and it is expected to sign contracts in the beginning of 2018.</p> <p>The delay has been caused by several factors such as the extended length for approving the minutes (inquiry to partially improve the formulation of project conditions), the deadlines given to the applicants for meeting the conditions (call for amendment) and the need for finalisation of the ERDF contract template (expectance of approval within per rollam/ written procedure in January 2018).</p> <p>In 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round 4 projects application were submitted. The selection of the project applications is expected in March 2018.</p> <p>The milestone for 2018 (number of contracted projects) is set on 4 projects. Based on results from the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round there where 4 project applications approved. Taking into account that within 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round there were 4 project applications submitted, <b>the milestones/ targets will be very likely met.</b></p> <p>Eventhough the indicators “number of contracted projects” will likely be met, the related <b>financial indicators will not be achieved</b> It is mainly due to the following reasons: no signed contracts (see for more details above), no monitoring system was in 2017 in place that would enable financial flows (it shall be ensured by using ITMS2014+ since it is linked to the Slovak ISUF). It is expected that the programme documentation including the description of the use of ITMS2014+ shall be finalised in beginning 2018, so that payments towards LB are possible.</p>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
PA 5	<b>Technical assistance</b>	<p>The call for proposal was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 with the total amount of EUR 4 553 560 EUR (6% out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme.</li> </ul> <p>During the reporting year, 5 applications have been submitted within PA5.</p> <p>The per rollam (6) was launched in September 2017 and closed in October 2017, where 3 projects of TA were approved (TA002_TA Burgenland SK-AT, TA003_AA, TA005_TP SK-AT FLC 2014-2020). The TA project of TA001 – JS-P Vienna was approved at the 4th MC meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and the approval of TA project TA004 TP SK-AT RO a STS is expected in January 2018.</p> <p>No contracts have been concluded until the end of the year and thus no payments have been made.</p>

### 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators

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

Priority Axis	Indicators	Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Observations
PA1	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the regional innovation System	Ordinal scale min 1, max 7	2.8	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)		2.8				
	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve higher education and lifelong learning	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.5	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)		2.5				
PA2	Monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March)	persons	15,066	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)		15,066				
	Number of major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor	number	12	2014	9 (reduction by 25%)		12				

Priority Axis	Indicators	Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Observations
PA3	Capacity in public cross-border transport on an average work day	Total capacity in person	30,700	2014	31,314		30,700				
PA4	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen institutional capacities	Ordinal scale, min 1 - max 7	2.9	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)		0				
	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions	Ordinal scale, min 1 - max 7	2.3	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)		0				

**Tab. 2: Common and programme specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority)**

Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA1	1b.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in research & innovation related collaboration activities (P)	number	25		0									
	1b.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation (P)	number	5		0									
	1b.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes related to research & innovation (P)	number	125		0									

Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
	1b.1.4	No of research facilities developed (P)	number	1		0									
	CO23	No of new researchers in supported entities (EU)	number in FTE	20		0									
	O11	No of research institutions participating in cross-border projects (EU)	number of organisations	6		0									

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
	No of jointly developed major products & services related to higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	4		0									
PA1	No of institutions directly involved in cooperation aiming at better quality of higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	20		0									

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	persons	500		0	-	-								

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measur ement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA2	No of organisations/entities participating in cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	80		0	-	-							
	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	16		0	-	-							
	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	400		0	-	-							

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measur ement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	Increase in expected number of visits at supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attraction (EU)	number	32 000		0	-	-								
	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of green infrastructures (P)	number	34		0	-	-								
	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (P)	number	8		0	-	-								

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure ment unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA2	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	194		0	-	-							
	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (EU)	hectares	1000		0	-	-							
PA3	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	persons	23		0	-	-							
	No of jointly developed	number	7		0	-	-							

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure ment unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)				0	-	-								
	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	175		0	-	-								
	No of Organisations / entities participating in institutional cooperation (P)	number	80		0	-	-								
PA4	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools (P)	number	8		0	-	-								

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure ment unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	200		0	-	-								

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure ment unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA4	No of jointly major products & services related to pre-primary and primary education (P)	number	5		0	-	-							
					0	-	-							
	No of educational institutions directly involved in cooperation at pre-primary and primary level of education (P)	number	25		0	-	-							
					0	-	-							
	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	number	625		0	-	-							
					0	-	-							

Priority Axis	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measure ment unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
				2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
PA5	No of projects committed and successfully closed (P)	number	53		0	-	-								
	Number of major publicity events (P)	number	8 (1 per year in the period 2015-2022)		0	-	1								
	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	number	10 (2 per year in the period 2015-2019)		0	-	1								
	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA (EU)	number in FTE	18		0	-	9,7								

Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework<sup>8</sup>

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

PA	Indicator Type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Final target 2023	Observations
PA1	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 1	EUR	3,010,363 (13%)	23,156,638	The milestone will not be achieved
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	number	4	9	The milestone will likely be achieved
	Output	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	number	0	5	N/A
PA2	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824 (13%)	32,729,412	The milestone will not be achieved
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	number	6	16	The milestone will likely be achieved
	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	number	0	16	N/A

<sup>8</sup> Submitted in Annual Implementation Reports from 2017 onwards

PA	Indicator Type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Final target 2023	Observations
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	number	4	8	The milestone will likely be achieved
	Output indicator (ID 6d.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	number	0	8	N/A
PA3	Financial Indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559 (6.7%)	11,358,824	The milestone will not be achieved (Potential revision of OP)
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7	The milestone will not be achieved (Potential revision of OP)
	Output indicator (ID 7c.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment friendly and low carbon transport systems (7c)	number	0	7	N/A
PA4	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856 (13%)	16,683,505	The milestone will not be achieved
	Key	No of contracted projects (11)	number	4	13	The milestone

PA	Indicator Type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Final target 2023	Observations
	implementation step					will likely be achieved
	Output indicator (ID 11.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools	number	0	8	N/A

### 3.3 Financial data

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

1. Table

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
The financial allocation of the priority axis based on the Cooperation programme						Cumulative data on the financial progress of the Cooperation programme					
Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for the calculation of Union support* (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Total funding (EUR)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%) [column 7/ column 5 × 100]	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR) ERDF	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%) [column 10/ column 5 × 100]	Number of operations selected
PA1	ERDF		Total eligible cost	23 156 638,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA2	ERDF		Total eligible cost	32 729 412,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA3	ERDF		Total eligible cost	11 358 824,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA4	ERDF		Total eligible cost	16 683 505,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA5	ERDF		Total eligible cost	5 357 130,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>				<b>89 285 509,00</b>							

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

Priority axis	Characteristics of expenditure		Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
	Fund	Category of region	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA1	ERDF		58 Research and innovation infrastructure (public)	01 – Non-repayable grant	01 – Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population) 02 – Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population) 03 – Rural areas (thinly populated)	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0
			60 Research and innovation activities in public research centers and centers of competence including networking								0	0	0	0
			62 Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefiting SMEs								0	0	0	0
			63 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefiting SMEs								0	0	0	0
			65 Research and innovation infrastructure, processes, technology transfer and cooperation in enterprises								0	0	0	0
			66 Advanced support services for SMEs and groups of SMEs (including management, marketing and design services)								0	0	0	0
			117 Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the								0	0	0	0

Priority axis	Characteristics of expenditure		Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
	Fund	Category of region	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
			knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce											
			118 Improving the labor market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems								0	0	0	0

Priority axis	Characteristics of expenditure		Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
	Fund	Category of region	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA2	ERDF		85 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	01 – Non-repayable grant	01 – Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population) 02 – Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population) 03 – Rural areas (thinly populated)	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0
			86 Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites								0	0	0	0
			90 Cycle tracks and footpaths								0	0	0	0
			91 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas								0	0	0	0
			94 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage assets								0	0	0	0

Priority axis	Characteristics of expenditure		Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
	Fund	Cat. of region	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA3	ERDF		36 Multimodal transport	01 – Non-repayable grant	01 – Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population)	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0
			43 Clean urban transport infrastructure and promotion								0	0	0	0
			44 Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring control and information systems)								0	0	0	0

Priority axis	Characteristics of expenditure		Categorisation dimensions								Financial data			
	Fund	Cat. of region	1 Intervention field	2 Form of finance	3 Territorial dimension	4 Territorial delivery mechanism	5 Thematic objective dimension ERDF/Cohesion Fund	6 ESF secondary theme	7 Economic dimension	8 Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	The total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
PA4	ERDF		115 Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal pathways for reintegrating into education and training	01 – Non-repayable grant	01 – Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population) 02 – Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population) 03 – Rural areas (thinly populated)	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0
			119 Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance								0	0	0	0
			120 Capacity building for stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectorial and territorial pacts to mobilize for reform at national, regional and local level								0	0	0	0
PA5	ERDF		121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	01 – Non-repayable grant	01 – Large Urban areas (densely populated > 50 000 population) 02 – Small Urban areas (intermediate density > 5 000 population) 03 – Rural areas (thinly populated)	07 – Not applicable					0	0	0	0
			122 - Evaluation and studies								0	0	0	0
			123 - Information and communication								0	0	0	0

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

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

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

#### 4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

The MA of the Interreg V-A Programme Slovak Republic - Austria 2014 - 2020 has established an evaluation plan in order to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme. In line with Article 114 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the Evaluation Plan was submitted and approved in 2016.

The Plan foresees an external evaluation in two phases:

- 2017-2018: Evaluation of achievements related to specific objectives and impact of interventions of the cooperation programme, Public procurement is expected to be undertaken in 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile of 2018.
- 2021-2022: focussing on programme impacts and achievements towards specific objectives; In the second stage, it is intended to assess the achievements also from a broader perspective i.e. from the perspective of the strategic EU objectives; if possible, at this stage the evaluation will seek to build a bridge to the strategic objectives of the forthcoming period 2021-2027.

The indicative budget for both evaluation stages amounts to EUR 60 000 (budgeted in TA as part of the intended TA-project for MA/JS Bratislava).

Taking into account the current status of the programme implementation the day-to day activities are foreseen in 2018 in terms of project assessment and evaluation in line with the programme documentation/Evaluation Plan. In the reporting year, no evaluation activities have been initiated. The major progress in this issue in accordance with the Evaluation Plan is expected in 2018.

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

##### 5. a) Issues and measures taken

The development of the Monitoring System is a strategic milestone in the programme implementation with a significant influence on the future designation process. In December 2017, during the Strategic Monitoring Committee it was finally decided to use the monitoring system ITMS2014+ (this decision had been preceded by a discussion within the Task Force). The decision was of utmost importance, because there was no possibility to develop interface between the two systems (eMS and ITMS 2014+) and without being linked with ITMS2014+, the payment would not have been possible. For 2018 it will be important to finalise the documentation based on decision to use ITMS2014+ and meet all the steps with deadlines given at the 4th MC meeting in December 2017.

The designation documents have been subject to initial discussion with the Independent Audit Body<sup>10</sup> in the previous year and it is intended to close the designation process in the second quarter 2018.

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

During the reporting year significant progress has been made in the finalisation of the programme documentation required to implement the Cooperation programme. The ultimate aim was to launch the next assessment rounds of Call for proposal (within open call for proposal) under priorities PA1, PA2, PA3, and PA4 as well as of the technical assistance projects within PA 5/TA.

Final decision regarding the use of the monitoring system ITMS2014+ was for the progress of the Cooperation programme of utmost importance. In 2018 it will be necessary to speed up the process of contracting (the approved project proposals from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment rounds) and focus shall be put on assisting the beneficiaries and their partners with timely project implementation. At the same time the MA, RB and JS should concentrate on encouraging new applicants with project preparation.

With a view to ensuring the financial flows and payments, it is vital to finish the designation process (this is expected till April 2018).

Numerous steps have been taken in order to increase the administrative capacities on the Slovak side within the JS Bratislava and the MA. These steps came into effect mainly in 2017. The MA increased the number of employees during the narrated year as follows: there are 2 programme managers fully involved in the Cooperation programme, 1 information and publicity manager and 1 project manager (one project manager is expected to be hired soon (March 2018)).

The other reasons for the delays within the programme have been explained in the chapter 2. From the information and data mentioned above it is evident that there was significant effort made to ensure progress in programme implementation.

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<sup>10</sup> Audit File No. A 732

## 6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

A citizen's summary of the contents of the Annual Report has been made public and uploaded as an annex to the Annual Implementation Report

The Annual Report 2017 of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Cooperation Programme has been prepared pursuant to Annex X of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/207. The report is intended to give a brief overview of the activities that were undertaken in the frame of the programming process, focusing on the year 2017.

Pursuant to the approval of the Cooperation Programme by the European Commission on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015, throughout the year 2016 and 2017 the Managing Authority supported by the Joint Secretariat and the elaborated and updated the key programme documents, which were discussed at Monitoring Committee meetings (included 20.-21<sup>th</sup> June 2017 Podersdorf, Austria and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 Bratislava, Slovakia).

The Call for proposal (launched in December 2016) covered the total budget of the programme, i.e. EUR 75 892 681 of ERDF under Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4. The 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round's deadline for submission of project applications was on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the second was on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment round there were 26 project applications submitted and 15 of them were approved in an amount of 32, 5 M EUR, which is commitment of 45% of programme allocation. Within 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment round 13 project applications were submitted and the selection of project proposals is expected in March 2018. There was no single project application submitted within PA3 in any of the mentioned assessment rounds.

From all approved projects so far, only the project DREAM SK-AT was labelled as strategic project of the cooperation programme. The project Dream SK-AT displays potential synergetic effect for the Danube region and significantly contributes to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). However not only this project contributes to EUSDR, the cooperation programme pays due attention to the Strategy (EUSDR) in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase.

On the 10-11 October 2017 the MA in close cooperation with JS organized a Lead Beneficiaries and partners seminar (further as "LB Seminar"), where more than 60 project partners from both countries of the 15 approved projects participated. Next LB seminars for newly approved project applications are planned in 2018.

On 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 the Annual Event of the Programme was organised. The event took place in innovative car factory in Bratislava. The main topic/ theme of the Annual Event was Innovation and Cooperation ("*Innovation in cooperation, cooperation in innovation*") and it's importance for the cross border region. The event was characterised by interesting expert inputs and a lively discussion. After the official part, a tour of the factory enriched the event's programme. The participants had an opportunity to exchange innovative ideas with the invited panel experts.

In order to support the efficient day-to day communication towards the general public, the Facebook page was launched. With the launch of the FB page and through the existing programme's website the wide public as well as the programme bodies and regional stakeholders will be kept informed in detail about the various programme activities and results.

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

Not relevant.

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

### **8.1. Major projects**

Not relevant.

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

Not relevant.