



Annual Implementation Report 2016

of the

INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA-AUSTRIA
COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Contents

Contents	2
1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	3
2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION	3
4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS	29
5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN	29
6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY	30
7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS	30
8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS & JOINT ACTION PLANS.....	30
9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME.....	31
10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT	34
11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	35
12. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT PRIORITY AXIS AND PROGRAMME LEVEL.....	37

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB003
Title	Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria
Version	1.0
Reporting year	2016
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Annual Report 2016 of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Cross-border Cooperation Programme has been prepared pursuant to Annex X of Commission implementation 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 2016.

In the first half of 2016 the Managing Authority (MA) with the involvement of all management bodies continued to elaborate the programme documents. From February till June 2016 the Programming Group (PGs) included representatives of MA, NA, JS, national, regional authorities, included EC and relevant Ministries held exactly nine meetings in Vienna and Bratislava.¹ Owing to the PG's work the following documents (templates) have been finalised: Rules of Procedures for the MC, Selection criteria, Methodology for Assessment and Selection, Manual for Applicants, Manual for Beneficiaries, ERDF Contract, Partnership Agreement, Eligibility rules, Assessments Sheets, Documents for launching the call for proposals (so-called Application pack). During the MC meeting in September 2016 it was decided to replace the PG by a Task Force which is in charge of furthering the implementation process. In the Task Force the key programme partners respectively bodies are represented.²

On basis of Art. 47 of EU Regulation 1303/2013 the Monitoring Committee for the programme Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria was established. The Committee had its 2nd meeting in September 2016. In accordance with the partnership principle, members of the Monitoring Committee are composed of national and regional authorities, representation of local authorities (SK) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), active in the field of environment. In accordance with the Rules of Procedures (RoPs) the function of MC chair was given to the new Managing Authority (MA), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the SR. The MC members discussed and approved among other materials like evaluation plan, the communication plan and endorsed the application package for the first Call for proposal (CfP).

¹ February 5th and 12th, March 11th, 17th, 30th, April 26th, May 31st, June 15th, 29th

² I.e. the MA/JS and representatives of the three Austrian regions (Länder); if required other bodies such as CA, AA or FLC will be invited to join the meetings

During the 2nd and 3rd quarter of the year 2016 the programme implementing bodies focused their attention on preparing of the first open Call for proposal of the programme which included day-to-day technical meetings and a Task Force meeting which was held on 7 of November 2016.

The open Call for proposal was launched on 9th of December 2016 covering the complete budget of the programme, i.e. EUR 75 892 681 of ERDF funding eligible under Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Programme. The 1st deadline for the submission of applications has been the 28th February 2017. The first MC for selection is going to be held in June 2017 and the MA expects that a significant part of the programme allocation will be committed.

In order to support the efficient day-to day communication of the Programme towards the general public and the interested potential applicants, a new website was set up and launched in March 2016. Besides the new website www.sk-at.eu also the websites of the MA as well as of the five regions involved in the Programme have also been effectively used.

The main communication media in 2016 had been the electronic newsletter sent via mail: during the reporting year one newsletter was sent to the about 2,700 persons registered in the programme's contact database – the newsletter announced the start of the Call.

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 during the 2nd MC meeting. 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 2017.

Although in the reporting period no projects have been approved the cooperation programme pays due attention to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) both in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase. Strategically important projects with a synergetic effect for the Danube region are expected in February 2017.

Reimbursement of funds

By December 31st 2016 the initial and annual pre-financing payments were transferred to the Certifying Authority (CA) amounting to EUR 3 794 894,11 (ERDF) and in sum EUR 1 749 634, 00 (ERDF) to the account of Paying Authority (PA). During the reporting period no expenditures for certification were reported by the CA. The CA did not notify any irregularities in the reported period.

The interest generated on the ERDF account will be used for programme purposes such as programming for the forthcoming period or programme closure; the MA will make a proposal for the use of the interest to the MC at a later stage of programme implementation.

The financial commitment from 2014 is not relevant for Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria since the Cooperation Programme was approved by the European Commission on 28th July 2015.

Progress in the designation process

Regarding the designation process the discussion involving all management bodies continued in 2016. As a result the following documents have been elaborated: the Draft Description of the Management and Control System and several key programme documents, such as the Eligibility rules, the Methodology for assessment and selection, the Contract templates, the Rules of Procedure of the MC, the Manuals for Applicants and Beneficiaries as well as the Manual for Technical Assistance (TA) Projects. Besides these documents which had been prepared at programme level, system documentations for the MA the Joint Secretariat (JS) as well as the FLC-bodies have been elaborated.

The designation documents have been subject to initial discussion with the Independent Audit Body³ in the first half of 2017 and it is intended to close the designation process in 2017.

The development of the Monitoring System is another milestone in programme implementation. The Task Force also agreed to use eMS, i.e. the Monitoring System developed by Interact. The decision was taken since the use of ITMS 2014+ posed many difficulties from the perspective of programme partners. Major progress in this question is expected in 2017. Key questions to be clarified in 2017 include:

- Options related to the development of an interface between eMS and ITMS 2014+
- To which extent programme work flows will be integrated into the Monitoring System

Implementation Process and Measures taken

The delayed implementation process is owed to several reasons. Major ones have been the differences in the administrative systems of Slovakia and Austria which resulted in longer discussion processes in order to come to a shared understanding on key documents such as Contract templates and Eligibility rules, the restructuring process in the Ministry hosting the MA as well as staff constraints.

During the reporting year significant progress has been made in the programme's documentary background with the aim to launch the first Call for proposal in the reporting year. Besides that several meetings were organised concerning ITMS 2014+ and eMS. Numerous steps have been taken in order to increase the administrative capacities. Resulting effects are expected in 2017.⁴

³ Audit File No. A 732

⁴ Other measures concerning the significant progress expectations are also mentioned on the page 4, 5 and in the chapter 5 and 9.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
PA 1	Contributing to a smart cross-border-region	<p>The open call for proposal was launched on 9 of December 2016 opening EUR 19 683 142 (25,90 % of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 1b)⁵. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen the collaboration of key actors in the regional innovation system in order to enhance knowledge transfer, capacity building and the establishment of common frameworks, common research and innovation activities and joint research facilities. ▪ Improve the capacity of the cross-border educational system to provide human resources knowledge and skills demanded by the regional innovation system. <p>During the reporting year no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.</p>
PA 2	Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity	<p>The open call for proposal was launched on 9 of December 2016 opening EUR 27 820 000 (36,70 % of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on the Investment Priorities 6c) and 6d)⁶. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ 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. <p>During the reporting year no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.</p>

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

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
PA 3	Supporting sustainable transport solutions	<p>The open call for proposal was launched on 9 of December 2016 opening EUR 9 655 000 (12,70% of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 7c)⁷. The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve joint planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally-friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area. <p>During the reporting year no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.</p>
PA 4	Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation	<p>The open call for proposal was launched on 9 of December 2016 opening EUR 14 180 000 (18,70 % of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Thematic Objective 11⁸. The corresponding specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Strengthen the links between institutions providing pre-primary and primary education (kindergartens and primary schools) to jointly develop and implement educational programmes. <p>During the reporting year no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.</p>
PA 5	Technical assistance	<p>The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme. <p>During the reporting year no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.</p>

⁷ In accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5

⁸ In accordance with the Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, Article 5

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	.9			
	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	.10			
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	-			

⁹ Assumption that it remained unchanged – a new survey will be launched in preparation of the AIR 2019

¹⁰ The same assumption was taken



Interreg Slovakia-Austria



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	-								
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)	Measurement 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	-									



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	-									

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)	Measur ement 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)	hectars	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	-									



	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	-								
	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	-								



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	-													
	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	number	10 (2 per year in the period 2015-2019)		0	-													
	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA (EU)	number in FTE	18		0	-													

Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework¹¹

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	
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	number	4	9	
	Output	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	number	0	5	
PA2	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824 (13%)	32,729,412	
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	number	6	16	
	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	number	0	16	

¹¹ Submitted in Annual Implementation Reports from 2017 onwards

	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	number	4	8	
	Output indicator (ID 6d.1.2)	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	number	0	8	
PA3	Financial Indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559 (6.7%)	11,358,824	
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7	
	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	
PA4	Financial indicator	Total funding certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856 (13%)	16,683,505	
	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (11)	number	4	13	
	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	

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)	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	19 683 142	85%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
PA2	ERDF		Total eligible cost	27 820 000	85%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
PA3	ERDF		Total eligible cost	9 655 000	85%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
PA4	ERDF		Total eligible cost	14 180 979	85%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
PA5	ERDF		Total eligible cost	4 553 560	85%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
Total				75 892 681							

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								0	0	0	0

	settings, upgrading the 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 ¹² 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%

¹² ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

In the reporting year no evaluation activities have been initiated. For more information on the intended evaluation steps please see section 11.1.

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

5. a) Issues and measures taken

Key issues which have affected the performance of the programme the changes in Management System of the Programme in comparison to previous programme period must be mentioned. In line with the decision between the National Authorities respectively the representatives of the Member States the role of the Managing Authority, the function of Certifying Authority and Audit Authority was handed over to the Slovak Republic. This significant change required other modifications in the set-up of the Programme with a view to the differences in the administrative and legislative systems. The parliamentary elections in the Slovak Republic have influenced the managing bodies and led to a restructuring process and personal changes in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of SR which acts as MA of the Programme. The restructuring process implied frequent staff changes thus hampering progress and effectiveness in negotiations and in the subsequent execution of tasks. The other reason of the delayed implementation process is owed to the differences in the administrative systems of Slovakia and Austria which resulted in longer discussion processes in order to come to a shared understanding on the key documents. The designation process is mainly affected by the challenging development of an interface between eMS and ITMS 2014+. The key questions are expected to be clarified in 2017.

5. b Assessment whether progress is sufficient

During the reporting year significant progress has been made in the documentation required to start the Programme. The ultimate aim was to launch the open Call for proposal in 2016 despite all challenges related to the agreement on respectively the alignment of the main programme documents. Several meetings were organised concerning ITMS 2014+ and eMS but the set-up of the Monitoring System and the completion of the designation process remain challenges for 2017.

Numerous steps have been taken in order to increase the administrative capacities. These steps should come into effect in 2017.¹³

Reasons for the delayed start of the programme have been explained in chapter 2.

¹³ Other measures concerning the significant progress expectations are also mentioned on the page 4, 5 and in the chapter 5 and 9.

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 2016 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 2016.

Pursuant to the approval of the Cooperation Programme by the European Commission on 28th July 2015, throughout the year 2016 the Managing Authority supported by the Joint Secretariat and the Programming Group has elaborated the key programme documents which were approved in the 2nd MC meeting which was held on 22nd and 23rd September 2016 in Bratislava. The MC members discussed and approved the application package of the first Call for proposal (CfP) but also documents of a more strategic nature such as the evaluation plan and the communication strategy.

The open Call for Proposals was launched on 9 of December 2016 covering the total programme allocation (EUR 75 892 681 ERDF) under Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4. The first MC selecting projects will meet in June 2017.

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.

9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme

The open call for proposal was launched on 9 of December 2016 covering the complete programme allocation, i.e. EUR 75 892 681 ERDF under Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Programme. The 1st deadline for the submission of the applications has been scheduled for 28th February 2017.

Thus in the reporting year all preparatory steps required to launch the Call for Proposals have been completed but no funds have been committed. A first major step forward will be the commitment of funds which can be expected in mid of 2017. In an anticipation of the report for 2017 it can be stated that:

- One can expect visible commitment of funds in Priorities 1,2 and 4 after the 3rd meeting of the MC; priority 3 on transport repeats the experiences made in the previous period, i.e. that project under this Investment Priority (7c) take longer time to mature and might be presented at later stage of programme implementation
- work on designation has been continued and it is expected to close the process in 2017; eMS is being tested in 2017 thus posing the opportunity to decide on the most suitable solution to link it to the payment system of the Slovak Republic.

The guiding principles for selection of projects have been taken over in the so-called Methodology for Assessment and Selection as selection criteria in the qualitative assessment. The Methodology is part of the Application package and thus also an explicit element of the Call documents. The criteria provide the backbone for the Assessment Sheets which are used in the qualitative assessment done by the JS.

Anti-fraud measures so far have been developed at level of the Member States. The exchange on the measures taken at level of Member States and the clarification of coordination requirements is understood as part of the designation process. Similarly the approach towards the risk-based samples for on-the-spot controls of projects is going to be agreed between the MA/JS and the four FLC-bodies involved.

9.2 Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

Separate package of warnings was engaged to the sensitization of the potential applicants during the consultations process of 1st CFP were the relevant Programme bodies clearly informed about the obligatory requirements relating to HPs.

So far no specific actions to promote equality between men and women as well as to promote non-discrimination have been launched in programme implementation. However, it is ensured that all

projects and their activities are in accordance with these principles. The respective monitoring of compliance rests on the following elements:

- Information sheet as part of the Application Package
- Explanatory text provided by the applicant as part of the Application Form
- Compliance check by the JS as part of the Eligibility Check
- Briefing on options to actively support these principles
- Specific section on the compliance with respectively the contribution to these principles as part of the regular progress reports provided by the projects

With regard to support for persons with disabilities it is important to note that the building regulations of both participating Member States foresee the compulsory requirement for barrier-free access to public buildings. In case of investment projects it will be checked whether the intended investments consider this aspect.

9.3 Sustainable development

First it is important to note that Priority Axis 2 – based on Investment Priorities 6c and 6d of the Programme is intended to support projects which pro-actively support the principle of sustainable development; i.e. a considerable part (about 37%) of the total ERDF-allocation of the programme is dedicated to it. The significant financial weight of the Priority illustrates the willingness of the programme partners to contribute to sustainable development. In case of projects including support for tourism environmentally friendly transport is an important issue in consultation and quality assessment. Similar to the other two horizontal principles the monitoring of compliance rests on the following elements:

- Information sheet as part of the Application Package
- Explanatory text provided by the applicant as part of the Application Form
- Compliance check by the JS as part of the Eligibility Check
- Briefing on options to actively support these principles
- Specific section on the compliance with respectively the contribution to these principles as part of the regular progress reports provided by the projects

Also in institutional terms environmental sustainability is strongly anchored in the programme. The involvement of environmental authorities and partners in the programme respectively the project cycle is as follows:

- National environmental authorities (i.e. the respective Ministries and a NGO) are voting members of the MC
- On Austrian side national and regional environmental authorities have acted in the period 2007-13 respectively will act in this period as co-financing bodies thus demonstrating their commitment and consent to those project applications which in their view meet best the national and regional interests and legal provisions

- On Slovak side the State Nature Conservancy has acted frequently as beneficiary in projects and will continue to act as applicant respectively beneficiary; the Slovak Ministry of Environment has also the option to act as Strategic Partner in projects or to provide a Letter of Interest

In the quality assessment done by the JS the environmental authorities have no role since this would pose a conflict of interest to their role as MC Members.

9.4 Reporting on support used for climate change objectives

Figures calculated automatically by the SFC2014 based on categorisation data

The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives is EUR 15,739,030 which represents 20, 8% from ERDF allocation of the Programme mainly in the PA3. In the reporting period no applications have been submitted, no contracts have been concluded and thus also no payments have been made therefore no indicators were measured.

9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme

The partnership principle will be adequately applied in the implementation process. The main option to contribute to actively contribute monitoring and evaluation is the representation in the Monitoring Committee (MC). The MC currently includes representatives of the local level as well as a NGO representing environmental protection and sustainability. In 2016 attempts have been made to identify a suitable organisation to represent the principle of non-discrimination and equality between men and women but so far these attempts have not been successful.

The decision on the selection of partners invited to the MC has been taken by the Programming Group. The major objective has been to include representatives for the Horizontal Principles as well as the local level in the MC.

So far no further involvement of partners beyond participation in the MC can be reported. As full Members of the MC the partners receive all information accessible for MC Members and are entitled to express their wish for further information on all aspects of the implementation process.

Experience in the previous period has shown that the interest of potentially important stakeholders to act as MC members is quite limited since most of social partners as well as many NGOs pro-actively supporting civic society concerns - such as those formulated as horizontal principles of the programme – prefer to act as beneficiaries instead of joining the MC.

10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT

10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of 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 during the 2nd MC meeting.

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
- 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).

10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

The communication strategy of the Interreg V-A SK-AT was approved on the 2nd Monitoring Committee Meeting in Bratislava. Given the fact that the attention was focussed on preparation of the pre-requirements to get the programme operational and to launch the Call for Proposals the actual information and publicity activities in 2016 have been limited.

However, the key objective, i.e. to make as many potential applicants as possible aware of the opening of the Call had been achieved.¹⁴

In more detail the major achievements in 2016 comprised:

- The new website of the programme was launched in February 2016; contents have been continuously updated since.
- The promotion of the open call for proposals (CfP) on the programme and the MA's website plus corresponding information on the websites of the five regions,

¹⁴ This is documented by the fact that during the first Call which ended in February 28 2017 in total 26 applications have been submitted – this represents in terms of the preceding programme a quite high number of applications since the SK-AT programme (in comparison to other CBC programmes with participation of SK) had always a tendency towards fewer and larger projects

- A newsletter in order to announce the opening of the programme to the interested public – the electronic newsletter was sent via mail to 2,700 institutions respectively persons registered in the programme's contact database
- With the opening of the Call the option for Consultation days in JS seated in Bratislava and Vienna has been offered; during December 2016 about 14 groups of applicants have used the option for face-to-face consultation
- The unified layout of programme documents, emails and letters have supported the visibility of the programme.

Thus the activities in 2016 have mainly contributed to the Specific Objective 1.1 of the Communication Strategy, i.e.

- Promote the funding opportunities offered by the programme and disseminate the results.

Communication objectives and indicators

The main target group of communication actions in 2016 have been potential applicants. The main media used, i.e. the new website, the electronic newsletter and the consultation days for applicants have addressed this target group.

Major annual information activity

In November 2015 the kick-off event for this programme was held. Since the preparation of the Call took longer than expected it was difficult to plan any major event. Workforce and attention was focussed on the requirements to get the Programme afloat. Thus the major annual information activity in 2016 is a combination of the most effective tools in order to attract the attention of potential applicants:

- The launch of a new website in February 2016
- The newsletter stating the opening of the Call in December 2016
- The subsequent consultation days for applicants which have been held in December 2016 and January 2017.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

11.1. Progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme

The programme has decided to foster integrated development in three so-called focus areas:

- Supporting cooperation in spatial planning and social infrastructure provision in the Bratislava cross-border agglomeration (focus area 1); cross-border urban sprawl poses a multi-faceted

challenge for local and regional governance in the urban territories of Bratislava and the adjacent municipalities on Austrian side.

- Strengthening coordinated planning, funding and project implementation in the Danube-March-Thaya Region (focus area 2) where the differing demands of nature protection, flood protection, agriculture and forestry, transportation and settlement areas require prudent strategy development and negotiation of compromises.
- Strengthening the Smart City cooperation Vienna-Bratislava (focus area 3).

As a preview to coming reports it can be stated that project applications which are potentially relevant for these focal areas have been submitted in the first application round.

11.2. Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF

Related to administrative capacity of authorities the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development acting as a Managing Authority of the Interreg V-A SK-AT programme in accordance with the Slovak Government Resolution¹⁵ had organised a several meetings in November with the relevant programme bodies including the Slovak Government Office and the external Companies Consulting Associates with the request to increase the administrative capacities of the ETC programmes – the request explicitly named also the Interreg V-A SK-AT programme. Major progress is expected in 2017.

11.3. Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

So far no projects have been approved thus the section focusses on the consideration of Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS) in the application stage. Given the programme area the relevant MRS is the EU-Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR).

In the Application Form applicants are asked to describe the potential contribution to macro-regional strategies. The intended contribution is assessed during the quality assessment of the project applications. It is part of the assessment of the application's relevance for EU respectively national and regional strategies.

11.4. Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

Not relevant for Interreg V-A SK-AT.

¹⁵ According to the Slovak Government Resolution No. 519/2014 from October 2014

12. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT PRIORITY AXIS AND PROGRAMME LEVEL

For the purpose of assessing progress towards the achievement of milestones and targets set for financial indicators in the years 2018 and 2023.

	13	14
	Data for the purpose of the performance review and performance framework	
	Only for report submitted in 2019: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries and certified to the Commission by 31/12/2018 Article 21(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013	Only for final implementation report: Total eligible expenditure incurred and paid by beneficiaries by 31/12/2023 and certified to the Commission Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
Priority axis 1	-	-
Priority axis 2	-	-
Priority axis 3	-	-
Priority axis 4	-	-
Priority axis 5	-	-
Total	-	-