



Interreg
Slovakia-Austria
European Regional Development Fund



Annual Implementation Report 2019

of the

COOPERATION PROGRAMME
INTERREG V-A SLOVAK REPUBLIC - AUSTRIA



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1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB003
Title	Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria
Version	1.0
Reporting year	2019
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	XX.YY.2020

2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Annual Report 2019 of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria Cross-border Cooperation Programme has been prepared pursuant to Annex X of Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2015/207. The report is intended to give an overview of the activities that were undertaken in the frame of the implementation process, focusing on the year 2019.

In the year 2019, the stress of the Managing Authority (MA) with the involvement of all management bodies was given mostly on the acceleration of the implementation process, with the focus on commitment and disbursement of funds. Actually, the year 2019 was the second year when disbursement of funds could be reported. Following the decision made in the end of 2018, the steps have been taken to shorten the pre-implementation phase - from project approval to its contracting to a maximum of 6 months. As of the end of the reporting period, 36 projects have been approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC) under the Programme in the total amount of EUR 61.91 mn from ERDF, which represents 81.57 % of the programme allocation. For 33 projects, decisions on their approval have been issued. The level of contracting represents EUR 49.50 mn from ERDF – 65.22 % of the programme allocation. Disbursement rate has reached EUR 7.98 mn from ERDF, i.e. 10.51 % of the programme allocation. All the implemented measures throughout 2018 and 2019 have lead, among others, to the successful fulfilment of the N+3 rule also for 2019.

The Programme bodies had several meetings including 2 Monitoring Committee (MC) meetings, 3 Task Force meetings and more than 20 technical meetings with the relevant stakeholders (including representatives of MA, RB's, JS, national, regional authorities, EC and relevant Ministries).

Four open Calls for proposals (hereinafter referred to as CfP) were launched in December 2016, covering the complete budget of the programme for Priority axes 1, 2, 3 and 4, i.e. EUR 71,339,118 from ERDF. After 3 rounds of CfP in 2017 and 2018 with 47 project proposals submitted, 3 more rounds followed in 2019. Under the 4th round with the deadline on 31st January 2019, 3 applications were submitted. The 5th round had the deadline on 28th June 2019 with 4 applications submitted. The deadline for the 6th round was set on 29th November 2019 and 9 applications were submitted. At the 8th MC meeting, the deadline for the 7th round was set on 28th February 2020.

The selection of project proposals submitted in the 4th assessment round of CfP was carried out during the 7th MC meeting held on 7th May 2019 in Bratislava, Slovakia. All 3 submitted project proposals in the



amount of EUR 7.19 mn from ERDF were approved by the MC. At the 8th MC meeting held on 15th October 2019 in Petronell-Carnuntum, Austria, the selection of project proposals submitted in the 5th assessment round of CfP was carried out. Out of 4 project proposals totalling EUR 8.24 mn from ERDF only 1 was approved by the MC in the amount of EUR 4.41 mn from ERDF.

As for the CfP for the Technical Assistance (Priority axis 5), which was launched in May 2017, no project has been submitted in 2019.

In the reporting year, 3 audits were carried out on the Programme, system audit and audit of operations on the Slovak side and also the system audit on Austrian side (carried out at level of Joint Secretariat, national controllers Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland).

The system audit on Slovak side (A815, K4462), which was concluded in October 2019, identified 20 deficiencies, out of which 7 with high importance. The most important deficiencies concerned ambiguous and insufficient procedures regarding expert assessment of applications (e. g. assignment of points by JS staff), breach of deadline for issuing decision of approval/non-approval of applications, insufficient audit trail concerning the verification of the cost-effectiveness of expenditures, insufficient financial verification of public procurements, insufficient audit trail concerning verification of payment requests and insufficient data collection, recording and storage in the monitoring system ITMS2014+. 3 out of identified deficiencies were of a financial nature resulting in ineligible expenditures in the amount of EUR 2,424 (EUR 2,060.40 from ERDF, EUR 342.15 from Slovak state budget). The overall result of the system audit was 2 (average).

During the audit of operations (A972), which was also concluded in October 2019, expenditures in the total amount of EUR 593,488.46 were subject to verification and 6 deficiencies were identified. The most important deficiencies concerned administrative financial verification of public procurements and list of declared expenditures. As a result of these deficiencies, expenditures in the amount of EUR 2,894.62 were identified as ineligible (EUR 2,460.42 from ERDF, EUR 429.74 from Slovak state budget).

The MA adopted effective measures to avoid the occurrence of deficiencies identified by both audits in the future. In December 2019, another system audit was launched with expected conclusion in 1st half of 2020.

On Austrian side, the system audit, which was also concluded in October 2019, identified:

- at the level of Joint Secretariat: 1 deficiency of medium seriousness, non-financial and systemic nature related to insufficient proof of the verification of the economy and of the efficiency of the expenditure in the application approval process,
- at the level of national controller Niederösterreich 4 deficiencies, out of which 2 with high importance related to breach of deadline to perform administrative verification of list of declared expenditure, missing evidence of verification of some aspects of the eligibility of expenditure,
- at the level of national controller Burgenland 3 deficiencies, out of which 2 with high importance related to breach of deadline to perform administrative verification of list of declared expenditure and missing evidence of verification of some aspects of the eligibility of expenditure,



- at the level of national controller Wien 4 deficiencies, out of which 4 with high importance related to breach of deadline to perform administrative verification of list of declared expenditure, missing application of the four-eyes-principle, missing evidence of verification of some aspects of the eligibility of expenditure, lack in assessing conflict of interests.

Regarding the information and publicity activities, 3 newsletters were sent out to the subscribed readers in 2019. The MA/JS continuously informed the target groups about the stages of the implementation, provided useful information, downloadable documents and project news via the programme website and through Facebook. In addition, Keep database with project information is regularly updated.

In order to support the effective implementation of projects and of the Cooperation programme, in 2019 the MA in close cooperation with JS organized 3 “Lead beneficiary and partner seminars” - on 23rd January, 26th June and 17th December 2019.

In addition, so-called “Open days” (consultations with applicants) were organized by the JS at 8 different dates during 2019 corresponding to particular assessment rounds of CfP – 15th January in Bratislava, 17th January in Vienna, 27th May in Vienna, 11th June in Bratislava, 30th September in Vienna, 22nd October in Bratislava, 6th November in Vienna and 13th November in Bratislava.

On 12th December 2019, the Annual Event of the Programme with the title “*Destruction of Borders*” - *not only among countries but also among people*, took place in Bratislava at Pistori Palace. The aim of the event was to interconnect children with young handicapped artists, to show the diversity in order to increase mutual understanding, respect and knowledge of different worlds. The event consisted of interactive workshops and various educational activities for children and adults.

In the reporting year, evaluation activities have been initiated in accordance with the updated Evaluation plan (approved by the MC at its 6th meeting in October 2018). The public procurement for the external evaluator was launched in January, but since none of the tenderers fulfilled the criteria for participation, the procurement was annulled. The repeated public procurement was launched in July 2019, which resulted in successful conclusion of contract with external evaluator in September 2019. In October 2019 the evaluator submitted the Inception report describing approach to evaluation and its individual tasks, as well as an updated timetable of evaluation activities. According to the Inception report, the 1st Interim report shall be submitted in January 2020, the 2nd Interim report in May 2020 and the Final evaluation report in July 2020.

Reimbursement of funds

Disbursement

Disbursement on national level

Cumulative expenditures approved by the Certifying Authority (“CA”) as of 31.12.2019 were in the amount of EUR 9,382,554.21, (EUR 7,607,015.55 from ERDF, out of which in 2019 in the amount of EUR 5,697,639.36), which after deducting irregularities and recoveries in the amount of EUR 3,085.11 from ERDF amounts to 10.02 % of the total programme allocation (EUR 75,892,681.00).



Progress in disbursement in comparison with 31.12.2018 represents an increase of 7.50 percentage points.

Disbursement towards the EC

As of 31.12.2019, the CA declared expenditures in the total amount of EUR 7,975,170.82 from ERDF (out of which 2 interim payment applications in the total amount of EUR 5,956,199.64 € from ERDF in 2019), which amounts to 10.51 % of the total programme allocation. The N+3 rule was successfully achieved by 31.12.2019.

Financial flows towards the EC

In 2019, the CA received payments on its account for Interreg V-A SK-AT from the EC in the total amount of EUR 7,542,494.25 from ERDF, out of which:

- EUR 2,181,914.58 constitutes the pre-financing for the year 2019;
- EUR 5,360,579.67 represents 90 % of the reimbursement of interim payment application approved by the EC.

Cumulative payments of EUR 13,723,397.47 were received from the EC within the programme.

At the same time, the payment in the amount of EUR 2,087,048.73 from ERDF was sent to the EC account in 2019, which represents the payment of negative balance of accounts for the 4th accounting year.

Interests

The cumulative amount of generated interest as of 31.12.2019 is EUR 1,551.97 (out of which EUR 461.76 in 2019), which is used to finance the programme on an ongoing basis.

Certification of expenditures and of the System of Management and Control

In 2019, 2 certification verifications were carried out within Interreg V-A SK-AT at Managing authority and Paying unit. Verified sample of expenditures amounts to EUR 34,922.78 (all sources) and the amount of verified public procurements is EUR 200,866.50.

Findings identified in the field of public procurement involved incomplete and ambiguous description of the subject of the contract, biased criterion for assessment of offers in the process of concluding a framework agreement, lack of verification of amendment to the framework agreement, insufficient estimation of contract value and insufficient verification of potential conflict of interest in the public procurement process.

Other findings involved insufficient proof of verification of economic efficiency within expert assessment, insufficient verification of potential conflict of interest of expert assessors, lack of state aid tests related to call for proposals, insufficient proof of eligibility of salary costs, incorrect assessment of eligibility of accommodation and catering costs, lack of proof of sufficient procedures for monitoring of state aid conditions and lack of verification of accuracy of timesheets completion.

Certification verifications are closed.

Irregularities and financial corrections



In the reporting period from 1.1.2019 until 31.12.2019 the Certifying authority deducted no irregularities within Interreg V-A SK-AT towards the EC.

Progress in the designation process

The Programme was successfully designated in 2018. Further information can be found in AIR 2018.

Implementation Process and Measures taken

After a rather sluggish start of the Programme (with reasons explained in previous AIRs), in 2019 the MA together with programme partners continued to follow the measures adopted in 2018 (see AIR 2018) which resulted in a steady progress in Programme implementation.

In addition, further measures were adopted, in particular weekly monitoring of the FLC performance, with the aim to accelerate the verification of expenditures in order to achieve financial targets. The N+3 goal for 2019 was successfully reached.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
PA 1	Contributing to a smart cross-border-region	<p>Open call for proposal (hereinafter referred to as CfP) was launched on 9th December 2016 with the total amount of EUR 19,683,142 from ERDF (25.9 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 1b)¹. 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.

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



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>The 1st and 2nd assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 15 project applications submitted (EUR 24.9 mn) and 3 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 11.2 mn). 2 projects were approved with conditions at the 5th MC meeting in the amount of EUR 1.4 mn under the 2nd round of CfP in 2018.</p> <p>Under the 3rd and 4th rounds launched in 2018, 4 and 1 projects were submitted respectively in the total amount of EUR 5.9 mn. At the 6th MC meeting 2 projects (one with conditions) under the 3rd round of CfP were approved in the overall sum of EUR 1.6 mn. At the 7th MC meeting, the only submitted project within this PA under 4th round was approved in the amount of EUR 1.54 mn.</p> <p>Under 5th round no project application was submitted, thus the MC did not select projects within this PA at the 8th MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6th round 5 projects were submitted in the total amount of EUR 4.19 mn. The project selection is expected at the 9th MC meeting in April 2020.</p> <p>The deadline for the 7th round of CfP was set to 28th February 2020, while the project selection is expected in second half of 2020.</p> <p>Overall, EUR 15.87 mn from ERDF was allocated to 8 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2019.</p>
PA 2	<p>Fostering natural and cultural heritage and biodiversity</p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9th December 2016 with the total amount of EUR 27,820,000 from ERDF (36.7 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on the Investment Priorities 6c) and 6d)². 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>The 1st and 2nd assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 14 project applications submitted (EUR 21.3 mn) and 8 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 15.9 mn). 3 projects were approved with conditions at the 5th MC meeting in the amount of EUR 2.7 mn under the 2nd round of CfP in 2018.</p>

² 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>Under the 3rd and 4th rounds launched in 2018, 3 and 1 projects were submitted respectively in the total amount of EUR 3.8 mn. At the 6th MC meeting 2 projects under the 3rd round of CfP were approved with conditions in the overall sum of EUR 2.6 mn. At the 7th MC meeting, the only submitted project within this PA under 4th round was approved in the amount of EUR 0.62 mn.</p> <p>Under 5th round 1 project application was submitted in the amount of EUR 4.41 mn, which was subsequently approved at the 8th MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6th round 1 project was submitted in the amount of EUR 0.51 mn. The project selection is expected at the 9th MC meeting in April 2020.</p> <p>The deadline for the 7th round of CfP was set to 28th February 2020, while the project selection is expected in second half of 2020.</p> <p>Overall, EUR 26.39 mn from ERDF was allocated to 15 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2019.</p>
PA 3	<p>Supporting sustainable transport solutions</p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9th December 2016 with the total amount of EUR 9,655,000 from ERDF (12.7 % of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 7c)³. 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>Within 1st and 2nd assessment round of CfP no projects were submitted. In 2018, the first project under this PA was submitted within 3rd assessment round of CfP in the amount of EUR 5.03 mn from ERDF. However, the assessment of this project (“VYSOMARCH”) was suspended due to the fact that declarations on property ownership were not submitted within the given deadlines – condition which was valid at the time of the project submission.</p> <p>The same project was resubmitted within 4th assessment round of CfP, and was subsequently approved at the 7th MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 5th round 2 project applications were submitted in the total amount of EUR 3.53 mn, however, none of them was approved at the 8th MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6th round 1 project was submitted in the total amount of EUR 3.07 mn. The project selection is expected at the 9th MC meeting in April 2020.</p>

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



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>The deadline for the 7th round of CfP was set to 28th February 2020, while the project selection is expected in second half of 2020.</p> <p>Overall, 5.03 mn EUR from ERDF was allocated to 1 project selected by the MC until the end of the year 2019.</p> <p>The factors that determine the underperformance of this PA are, among others, the financial and organisational complexity of projects, which implies that there is only a limited number of potential beneficiaries (almost exclusively from public sector) with the capacity to undergo such challenge. Moreover, the investments in cross-border infrastructure projects are often subject to public opinion of residents concerned, which may vary. In addition, the 2018 municipal elections in Slovakia, which in some cases resulted in changes in municipal management bodies, might have played a role in postponement of realisation of planned projects.</p>
PA 4	<p>Strengthening cross-border governance and institutional cooperation</p>	<p>Open call for proposal was launched on 9th December 2016 with the total amount of EUR 14,180,979 from ERDF (18.7 % out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The Priority Axis rests on Investment Priority 11⁴. 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>The 1st and 2nd assessment rounds were closed in 2017 with 10 project applications submitted (EUR 17.4 mn) and 4 projects approved by the MC in 2017 (EUR 5.4 mn). 3 projects were approved with conditions at the 5th MC meeting in the amount of EUR 4.3 mn under the 2nd round of CfP in 2018.</p> <p>Under the 3rd and 4th rounds launched in 2018, no projects were submitted under this PA, thus the MC did not select projects within this PA at the 6th and 7th MC meetings.</p> <p>Under 5th round 1 project application was submitted in the amount of EUR 0.29 mn, however, the project was not approved at the 8th MC meeting.</p> <p>Under 6th round 2 projects were submitted in the total amount of EUR 1.80 mn. The project selection is expected at the 9th MC meeting in April 2020.</p>

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



ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>The deadline for the 7th round of CfP was set to 28th February 2020, while the project selection is expected in second half of 2020.</p> <p>Overall, 10.32 mn EUR from ERDF was allocated to 7 projects selected by the MC until the end of the year 2019.</p>
PA 5	<p>Technical assistance</p>	<p>The call for proposal was launched on 21st June 2017 with the total amount of EUR 4,553,560 from ERDF (6% out of the total programme allocation).</p> <p>The corresponding specific objective is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the cooperation programme. <p>In 2017, 5 project applications in the total amount of EUR 4.3 mn from ERDF were submitted and out of them 4 were approved. The remaining TA project of MA/JS (TA004) in the amount of EUR 1.97 mn from ERDF was approved in January 2018 within <i>per rollam</i> procedure.</p> <p>All 5 TA projects in the total amount of EUR 4.3 mn from ERDF had been contracted prior to the reporting period of this AIR.</p> <p>TA beneficiaries proceeded with their tasks related to the overall management, implementation, control and audit as well as the publicity of the programme.</p>



3.2 Common and programme specific indicators

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

Priority Axis	Specific objective	ID	Indicators	Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Observations
PA1	1.1	R1.1	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the regional innovation system	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.8	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					2.6		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.
	1.2	R1.2	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve higher education and lifelong learning	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.5	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					2.2		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.
PA2	2.1	R2.1	Monthly average of cyclists and pedestrians at the counting point "Freiheitsbrücke" (Morava/March)	persons	15,066	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					21,020		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.
	2.2	R2.2	Number of major bottlenecks along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor which interrupt the wildlife corridor	number	12	2014	9 (reduction by 25%)							In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.
PA3	3.1	R3.1	Capacity in public cross-border transport on an average work day	Total capacity in person	30,700	2014	31,314					38,280		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.



Priority Axis	Specific objective	ID	Indicators	Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Observations
PA4	4.1	R4.1	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen institutional capacities	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.9	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					2.2		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.
	4.2	R4.2	Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen the cooperation between educational institutions	Ordinal scale, min 1, max 7	2.3	2014	Increasing (qualitative target)					2.0		In accordance with the Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A SK-AT, the data shall be reported in 2018, 2020 and 2023.

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	0	0	2	4					
	1b.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation (P)	number	5		0	0	0	0.1 ⁵	0.2					
	1b.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes related to research & innovation (P)	number	125		0	0	0	5	117					
	1b.1.4	No of research facilities developed (P)	number	1		0	0	0	0.1	2.2					
	1b.1.5	No of new researchers in supported entities (EU)	number in FTE	20		0	0	0	1	4					
	1b.1.6	No of research institutions participating in cross-border projects (EU)	number of organisations	6		0	0	0	0	0					
	1b.2.1	No of jointly developed major products & services related to higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	4		0	0	0	0	1					
	1b.2.2	No of institutions directly involved in cooperation aiming at better quality of higher education and lifelong learning (P)	number	20		0	0	0	0	11					
	1b.2.3	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	persons	500		0	0	0	0	856					

⁵ Value from approved Monitoring report represents a partially developed product.



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA2	6c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	80		0	0	0	9	20					
	6c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (P)	number	16		0	0	0	2	7					
	6c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	400		0	0	0	0	881					
	6c.1.4	Increase in expected number of visits at supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attraction (EU)	number	32,000		0	0	0	0	3,150					
	6d.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of green infrastructures (P)	number	34		0	0	0	0	11					
	6d.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (P)	number	8		0	0	0	6	13					
	6d.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	194		0	0	0	83	3,800					
	6d.1.4	Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (EU)	hectares	1,000		0	0	0	1.50	72.5					



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA3	7c.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in the development of environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	persons	23		0	0	0	0	0					Despite of the effort of programme bodies and stakeholders, no projects were contracted within this PA in 2019
	7c.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems (P)	number	7		0	0	0	0	0					Despite of the effort of programme bodies and stakeholders, no projects were contracted within this PA in 2019
	7c.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	175		0	0	0	0	0					Despite of the effort of programme bodies and stakeholders, no projects were contracted within this PA in 2019



Priority Axis	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
					2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PA4	11.1.1	No of organisations/entities participating in institutional cooperation (P)	number	80		0	0	0	23	152					
	11.1.2	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools (P)	number	8		0	0	0	0	3.5					
	11.1.3	No of participants in joint training schemes (P)	number	200		0	0	0	0	938					
	11.2.1	No of jointly developed major products & services related to pre-primary and primary education (P)	number	5		0	0	0	0	0					
	11.2.2	No of educational institutions directly involved in cooperation at pre-primary and primary level of education (P)	number	25		0	0	0	97	116					
	11.2.3	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders (EU)	number	625		0	0	0	0	0					



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



3.3. Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework⁶

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

PA	ID	Indicator Type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018	Final target 2023	Actual status in 2019	Observations
PA1	F0001	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 1	EUR	3,010,363	23,156,638	2,668,612	Value includes partially implemented projects.
	K1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (1b)	number	4	9	7	
	1b.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to research & innovation	number	0	5	0.2	Value includes partially implemented projects.
PA2	F0002	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 2	EUR	4,254,824	32,729,412	2,639,033	Value includes partially implemented projects.
	K2.1	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6c)	number	6	16	7	
	6c.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to cultural & natural heritage development (6c)	number	0	16	7	Value includes partially implemented projects.
	K2.2	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (6d)	number	4	8	6	
	6d.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to ecological networks and green infrastructures (6d)	number	0	8	13	The milestone for 2023 has already been achieved. Value includes partially implemented projects.
PA3	F0003	Financial Indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 3	EUR	764,559	11,358,824	0	
	K3	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (7c)	Number	3	7	0	
	7c.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to environment friendly and low carbon transport systems (7c)	number	0	7	0	
PA4	F0004	Financial indicator	Total expenditure certified to EC for Priority axis 4	EUR	2,168,856	16,683,505	2,184,431	Value includes partially implemented projects.
	K4	Key implementation step	No of contracted projects (11)	number	4	13	7	
	11.1.2	Output indicator	No of jointly developed major products & services related to institutional cooperation, integrated frameworks and planning tools	number	0	8	3.5	Value includes partially implemented projects.

⁶ Submitted in Annual Implementation Reports from 2017 onwards



3.4. 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	20,429,238.49	88.22	20,295,573.54	2,668,612.04	11.52	7
PA2	ERDF		Total eligible cost	32,729,412.00	85	24,920,996.48	76.14	24,604,821.73	2,639,032.68	8.06	13
PA3	ERDF		Total eligible cost	11,358,824.00	85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
PA4	ERDF		Total eligible cost	16,683,505.00	85	12,138,611.94	72.76	11,902,296.64	2,225,276.11	13.34	7
PA5	ERDF		Total eligible cost	5,357,130.00	85	5,313,573.80	99.19	5,313,573.80	1,890,478.12	35.29	5
Total				89,285,509.00		62,802,420.71	70.34	62,116,265.71	9,423,398.95	10.55	32

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	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable					13,511,287.65	13,511,287.65	1,657,845.61	1
			60 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking								1,980,833.33	1,980,833.33	382,337.52	1
			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 focusing on low carbon economy and on resilience to climate change								2,124,765.10	2,065,271.55	495,515.13	1
			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 knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences								0	0	0	0
			118 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes											



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	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable					10,418,429.98	10,195,295.54	1,316,673.93	6
			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								1,450,160.62	1,450,160.62	596,601.68	1
			94 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage assets								13,052,405.88	12,959,365.57	725,757.07	4



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
PA3	ERDF		36 Multimodal transport	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	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	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
PA4	ERDF		115 Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal pathways for reintegrating into education and training	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable					4,273,354.07	4,168,481.70	1,335,852.40	1
			119 Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance								4,671,257.09	4,671,257.09	778,071.28	4
			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								3,194,000.78	3,062,557.85	111,352.43	1



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
PA5	ERDF		121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	01 – Non-repayable grant	07 – Not applicable	07 – Not applicable					3,420,407.30	3,420,407.38	1,148,196.83	5
			122 Evaluation and studies								946,583.22	946,583.22	371,140.65	2
			123 Information and communication								946,583.20	946,583.20	371,140.64	2



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 ⁷ 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

⁷ ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.



4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

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

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

According to the updated Evaluation plan, evaluation activities have been initiated in the reporting year. The public procurement for the external evaluator was launched in January 2019, but since none of the tenderers fulfilled the criteria for participation, the procurement was annulled.

The repeated public procurement was launched in July 2019, which resulted in successful conclusion of contract with external evaluator in September 2019.

In October 2019 the evaluator submitted the Inception report describing approach to evaluation and its individual tasks, as well as an updated timetable of evaluation activities.

In terms of time range the evaluation should cover progress from the beginning of the programming period i.e. 1 January 2014 till 31 December 2019 (cut-off date). The subject to the evaluation activities is the Co-operation Programme Interreg V-A Slovakia-Austria 2014 – 2020, its management structures and all interventions implemented within the framework of this programme. From the geographical point of view, it covers all the regions eligible for the support of the programme on both sides of the border between Slovakia and Austria. The evaluation activities will not include activities carried out within the priority axis Technical assistance, due to its different nature not related to the evaluation assignment.

The evaluation is expected to review the programme's relevance and assess if the programme interventions correspond with the current needs of the concerned regions. It should further deal with the evaluation of the administrative processes/procedures and identification of possible measures to make these more efficient. The final stage of the assignment should focus on the produced outputs and potential results and/or impacts as well as the likelihood to achieve programme objectives.

It is also understood that the evaluation should prove its role as a useful management tool. Besides the assurance that the programme implementation develops in compliance with the original plan and preparation of the proposed corrective measures it should also bring common understanding of the programme intentions and achievements among all relevant programme stakeholders.

The evaluation assignment should thus comprise following three tasks:

1. revisiting the programme strategy,
2. investigating options to reduce the administrative burden, and



3. evaluating and illustrating key impacts of the programme.

The evaluation outputs will consist of the Inception report, Interim report 1 and 2 and Final report. The 1st Interim report describing findings specified for task 1 concerning the programme relevance, conclusion and recommendations shall be submitted in January 2020. The 2nd Interim report describing findings specified for task 2 concerning the programme efficiency, conclusion and recommendations shall be submitted in May 2020. The Final evaluation report containing summary of interim report 1 and 2 plus findings specified for task 3 related to the effectiveness, sustainability, impact, partnership and cooperation, conclusions and recommendations shall be submitted in July 2020.

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

5. a) Issues and measures taken

After a rather sluggish start of the Programme (with reasons explained in previous AIRs), in 2019 the MA together with programme partners continued to observe the following measures to ensure the smooth implementation of the Programme and the fulfilment of n+3 rule and programme indicators adopted in 2018:

1. Taking steps for fulfilment of n+3 rule for 2019:
 - Further simplification of application package and programme documentation for applicants and beneficiaries
 - Setting 2 deadlines for CfP round in 2019 – deadline for 4th round on 31st January 2019 and deadline for 5th round on 28th June 2019 (In addition to the initial Action plan, the deadline for 6th round was set on 29th November 2019)
 - Increasing frequency of consultations for applicants and beneficiaries
 - Interactive communication with applicants and beneficiaries on a daily basis
 - Enhance public-awareness about the Programme
 - Ongoing monitoring of status of Programme's implementation on a weekly basis
 - Providing active assistance to applicants with the submission of applications, including the organisation of ITMS seminars (16th, 24th, 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st January 2019 in Bratislava, 14th June and 14th November 2019 in Vienna)
 - Providing specific assistance to Austrian applicants with ITMS2014+
 - Providing active support for beneficiaries during the project's implementation (mainly with submission of expenditures and payment requests)
2. Implementing measures to improve the efficiency of the implementation and to accelerate the disbursement of funds:
 - At the FLC level:
 - Shortening of periods for verification of lists of expenditures from 90 days to shorter periods (currently approximately 60 days on SK side);
 - Providing a possibility to submit expenditures below the set threshold of 10 000 €;



- Active communication with beneficiaries on a daily basis and providing support with submission and completion of necessary documentation;
- At the JS level:
 - Active communication with beneficiaries on a daily basis with the aim to increase the number of submitted lists of expenditures and payment requests;
 - Providing active assistance to beneficiaries with submission of expenditures;
 - Providing active support with uploading of relevant documentation into ITSM2014+;
 - Providing specific assistance to Austrian beneficiaries with ITMS2014+;
 - Accelerating the contracting phase – shortening of periods for commenting and approving MC meeting minutes and for fulfilment of conditions set by the MC and/or required in order to prepare and sign the decision letters;
 - Shortening of periods for processing the payment requests (currently approximately 4-6 days);
- At the MA level:
 - Monitoring of the status of submitted and processed lists of expenditures and payment requests on a daily basis;
 - Active communication with beneficiaries with the aim to increase the number of submitted lists of expenditures and payment requests;
 - Uploading documents into ITMS2014+ together with beneficiaries in order to facilitate and accelerate the process of submission and approval;
 - Issuing instructions and guidance for ITMS2014+;

3. Ensuring the fulfilment of programme indicators:

- Setting deadlines of CfP rounds in a continuous manner;
- Continuation of publishing CfP rounds on the basis of information from consultations and “open days” with the aim to commit remaining allocation and secure the fulfilment of n+3 rule for remaining years and the fulfilment of programme indicators through approval and implementation of good projects;
- Providing a sufficient number of trainings, seminars and “open days” for applicants and beneficiaries;
- Active communication with applicants, regional partners and other partners within the programme;
- Continuation of intensive communication with beneficiaries with the aim to accelerate the process of submission of expenditures, minimise errors on the beneficiary side and secure the submission of payment requests according to agreed schedules;
- Ongoing monitoring of status of Programme’s implementation on a weekly basis (or shorter if necessary).

In addition, pursuant to the Decree of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 29th August 2019, the Programme was put under “crisis management” (according to Slovak national legislation) due to non-satisfactory results achieved in 2018, which resulted in closer monitoring from the Central Coordination Body (CCB). The Government decree bound the MA to provide from September 2019 regular weekly



reports per PA's (contracting and disbursement status) and monthly reports on progress in Programme implementation and fulfilment of goals. The closer monitoring and reporting shall continue until the "crisis management" is revoked, which could be achieved in 1st half of 2020.

All the implemented measures throughout 2018 and 2019 have led, among others, to the successful fulfilment of N+3 rule for 2019 (in relation to the financial commitment for 2016), by certifying and declaring expenditure of EUR 7.98 mn to the EC.

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

5. b) Assessment whether progress is sufficient

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

However, it must be stated that the Programme still carries its legacy of the past that resulted in the delayed implementation. On the one hand, the commitment rate of the Programme shows rather satisfactory results – 81.57 % of the Programme allocation; on the other hand, the disbursement rate of 10.02 % remains rather low. The main reasons for the delays within the programme are explained in previous AIR's. From the information and data mentioned above it is evident that there was significant effort made to ensure progress in programme implementation.

6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

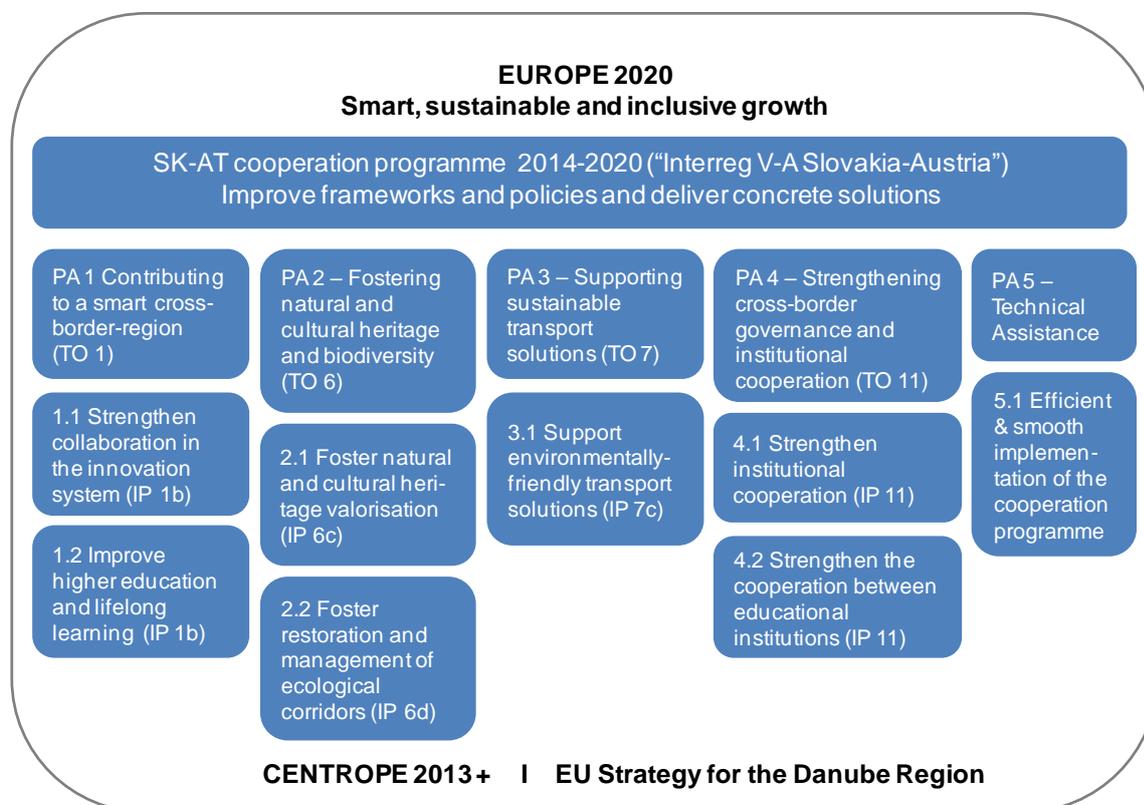
A citizen's summary of the contents of the Annual Report has been made public and uploaded as an annex to the Annual Implementation Report.

The Annual Report 2019 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 an overview of the activities that were undertaken in the frame of the programming process, focusing on the year 2019.

Regarding its structure, the Interreg V-A SK-AT cooperation programme addresses five investment priorities (IP) under four priority axes (PA). In addition, a fifth priority axis on technical assistance has been introduced.



Composition of the cooperation programme (priority axes and investment priorities)



The total funding of the Programme represents EUR 89.3 mn, out of which EUR 75.9 mn from ERDF.

Funding of the cooperation programme (priority axes and investment priorities) (EUR)

Priority axis	Thematic objective	EU support (€)	National sources (€)	Total financial sources (€)
PA 1	TO 1	19,683,142	3,473,496	23,156,638
PA 2	TO 6	27,820,000	4,909,412	32,729,412
PA 3	TO 7	9,655,000	1,703,824	11,358,824
PA 4	TO 11	14,180,979	2,502,526	16,683,505
PA 5	Technical assistance	4,553,560	803,570	5,357,130
Total		75,892,681	13,392,828	89,285,509

The programme area consists of the Austrian Länder: Wien, Niederösterreich, Burgenland (only Nordburgenland and Mittelburgenland) and of the Bratislavský kraj and Trnavský kraj on the Slovak side.



The programme area



Pursuant to the approval of the Cooperation Programme by the European Commission on 28th July 2015, throughout the years 2016 - 2019 the Managing Authority supported by the Joint Secretariat and the partners elaborated and updated key programme documents. In 2019, the stress of the Managing Authority (MA) with the involvement of all management bodies was given mostly on the acceleration of the implementation process, with the focus on commitment and disbursement of funds. Actually, the year 2019 was the second year when disbursement of funds could be reported.

Four open Calls for proposals (hereinafter referred to as CfP) were launched in December 2016, covering the complete budget of the programme for Priority axes 1, 2, 3 and 4, i.e. EUR 71,339,118 from ERDF. After 3 rounds of CfP in 2017 and 2018 with 47 project proposals submitted, 3 more rounds followed in 2019. Under the 4th round with the deadline on 31st January 2019, 3 applications were submitted. The 5th round had the deadline on 28th June 2019 with 4 applications submitted. The deadline for the 6th round was set on 29th November 2019 and 9 applications were submitted. At the 8th MC meeting, the deadline for the 7th round was set on 28th February 2020.

As of the end of the reporting period, 36 projects have been approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC) under the Programme in the total amount of EUR 61.91 mn from ERDF, which represents 81.57 % of the programme allocation. For 33 projects, decisions on their approval have been issued. The level of contracting represents EUR 49.50 mn from ERDF – 65.22 % of the programme allocation. Disbursement rate has reached EUR 7.60 mn from ERDF, i.e. 10.02 % of the programme allocation. All the implemented measures throughout 2018 and 2019 have lead, among others, to the successful fulfilment of the N+3 rule also for 2019.



In order to support the effective implementation of projects and of the Cooperation programme, in 2019 the MA in close cooperation with JS organized 3 “Lead beneficiary and partner seminars” - on 23rd January, 26th June and 17th December 2019.

In addition, so-called “Open days” (consultations with applicants) were organized by the JS at 8 different dates during 2019 corresponding to particular assessment rounds of CfP – 15th January in Bratislava, 17th January in Vienna, 27th May in Vienna, 11th June in Bratislava, 30th September in Vienna, 22nd October in Bratislava, 6th November in Vienna and 13th November in Bratislava.

On 12th December 2019, the Annual Event of the Programme with the title “*Destruction of Borders*” - *not only among countries but also among people*, took place in Bratislava at Pistori Palace. The aim of the event was to interconnect children with young handicapped artists, to show the diversity in order to increase mutual understanding, respect and knowledge of different worlds. The event consisted of interactive workshops and various educational activities for children and adults.

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.