



Cooperation Programme AT-CZ 2014 – 2020

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SECTION 1 STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION.....	4
1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.....	4
1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities	5
1.2 Justification for the financial allocation	20
SECTION 2 PRIORITY AXES.....	24
2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	24
2.A.1.a Priority axis 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	24
2.A.4.a Investment Priority 1a: Enhancing R&I infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular, those of European interest.....	24
2.A.4.a <i>Investment Priority 1b</i> : Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular,	29
2.A.8.a. Categories of intervention	33
2.A.1.b Priority Axis 2: Environment and Resources.....	35
2.A.4.b Investment priority 2a: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage	35
2.A.4.b Investment priority 2b: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure	39
2.A.4.b Investment priority 2c: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution.....	44
2.A.1.c Priority axis 3: Human resources development	50
2.A.4.c Investment Priority 3a: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes	50
2.A.1.d Priority axis 4: Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation	56
2.A.4.d Investment Priority 4a: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by	

promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions.....	56
2.B. Description of the priority axes for technical assistance	62
2.B.1 Priority axis 5: Technical Assistance	62
2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results	62
2.B.4 Result indicators	63
2.B.5 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives.....	63
2.B.6. Categories of intervention	64
SECTION 3 FINANCING PLAN	65
3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in EUR)	65
3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co- financing (in EUR)	65
3.2.B. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective	67
SECTION 4 INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT	68
4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate).....	69
SECTION 5 IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME.....	73
5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies	73
5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat	74
5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements.....	74
5.5 Use of the Euro (where applicable).....	83
5.6. Involvement of partners.....	83
SECTION 6: COORDINATION	85
SECTION 7 REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES	91
SECTION 8 HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES.....	93
8.1. Sustainable development	93
8.2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination.....	93
8.3. Equality between men and women	94
SECTION 9 SEPARATE ELEMENTS.....	95
9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period.....	95
9.2. Performance framework of the cooperation programme.....	95
9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme	95

SECTION 1 Strategy for the Cooperation Programme's Contribution to the Union Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth and the Achievement of Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy to contribute to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

The European Territorial Cooperation programmes should contribute to the overall – economic, social and territorial – cohesion of the EU. They are intended to complement the European mainstream programmes such as the “rural development” or “investment for growth and jobs” programmes. They aim to strengthen cooperation structures in defined areas linked to activity fields of given priorities; they want to create a common identity, an integrated physical space, promote a balanced development, and improve and harmonize policies and governance structures.

Therefore, the programme also contributes to the specifications in the Position Papers for Austria and the Czech Republic for the development of a stronger coherence with programmes under the 'investment for growth and jobs' goal and other EU or national programmes to exploit synergies for interventions in different thematic areas.

The strategy of the AT-CZ programme is based on the following European documents:

- Europe 2020
- Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020
- Commission's legislative package for the new Cohesion policy
- 5th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial cohesion,
- Regional challenges in the perspectives of 2020 – Regions 2020

and on national and regional strategies, above all, the National Reform Programmes (NRP).

The chosen programme strategy takes into account the content of the Position Paper of the EC. For Austria, the main challenges identified in this Position Paper are related to innovation, the labour market, the reduction of CO2 emissions and resource efficiency. For the Czech Republic the main challenges formulated are related to research and innovation, competitiveness, the education system, the labour market, infrastructure development, resource efficiency and public administration.

Taking guidance from the Europe 2020 strategy and the Territorial Agenda 2020, and with a view to the specific characteristics and challenges analyzed for the Austrian-Czech border region, the main elements of the programme's strategy are:

- Strengthening the existing cooperation and communication structures and the institutional capacities
- Developing an innovative and skill-oriented economic and social system

- Securing regional, social and cross-border accessibility in regard to jobs, housing, public and private services, innovation and know-how, natural and cultural assets
- Strengthening the regional economies' resilience to climate risks
- Improving the quality of the natural and cultural resources
- Harmonising the (regional) legal and institutional framework

The cooperation programme AT-CZ will contribute to Europe 2020 by investing in the following thematic objectives (TOs):

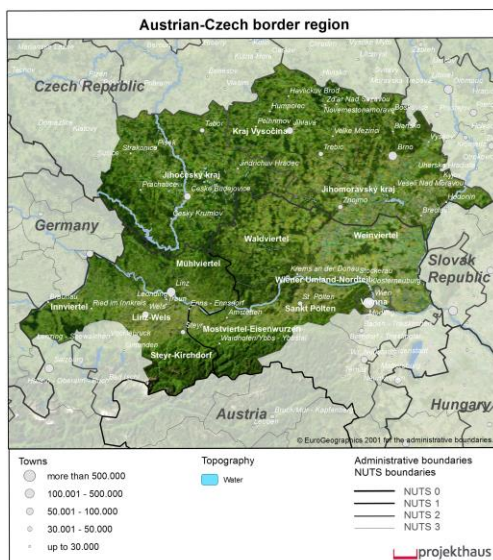
- TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
- TO 6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
- TO 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing educational and training infrastructure
- TO 11: Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities, stakeholders and public administrations by actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF; to support actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations
- Technical Assistance (TA)

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities

The programme area and the socio-economic structure

The following NUTS III regions form the Austrian-Czech border region: in Austria Mostviertel-Eisenwurzen, Sankt Pölten, Waldviertel, Weinviertel, Wiener Umland-Nordteil, Wien, Innviertel, Linz-Wels, Mühlviertel, Steyr-Kirchdorf; in the Czech Republic Jihočeský kraj, Kraj Vysočina, Jihomoravský kraj.

Map: Programme Region



The cross-border region is characterized by villages and small and medium sized towns, on the one hand, and the urban agglomerations of Vienna, Brno and Linz, on the other. Around 80% of the settlements are villages with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants.

Vienna (1.7 million) and Brno (379,000) are the most important centers in the region. The numerous medium-sized and small cities in the region function as regional administrative and local economic centers (Linz 191,000, St. Pölten 52,000, České Budějovice 94,000, Jihlava 51,000). Rural regions close to the urban centers are – measured in demographic or economic terms – mostly dynamic while the peripheral parts – poorly connected to economic urban centers – are declining in terms of population and jobs.

Demographic development

In 2013 about 6.3 million inhabitants lived in the Austrian-Czech Border region, with 28% of the region's population living in Vienna and 19% in Brno and the Brno region. In the long-term perspective, the border region shows a negative population development, but some years ago a demographic change becomes observable. In comparison to the year 2007, the number of inhabitants increased due to migration by around 2.5% in the Austrian border region and by 1.8% in the Czech border region. While the development in the cities and urban agglomerations is very dynamic, peripheral regions and small villages, which are not well connected to the centers, are facing declining tendencies.

Economic development

The Austria-Czech border region is characterized by a highly diversified regional economic structure manifested in different types of regions. On the one hand, there are underdeveloped regions with weak and less competitive branches and enterprises, regions with structural problems where traditional industries dominate and also highly dynamic regions with an innovative and creative economic environment and a large number of established businesses and competitive enterprises. The disparities are also seen between cities and rural regions, and between the Austrian and the Czech border regions. GDP per capita (PPP, 2010) in the Austrian part of the border region attains an economic level of 135% compared to the EU-27 average. The determining factor here is Vienna, as the strongest region. The strongest Czech region is Jihomoravský kraj with a GDP/capita of 75% of the EU 27 average followed by 68% in Jihočeský and Vysočina 65% in Vysočina (2010). (Source: Eurostat)

The **secondary sector** is characterised by traditional branches (metal, textile, wood processing, food processing industry...) especially in rural areas and a dynamic industrial development in the technology and innovation-oriented branches in urbanised areas and traditional industrialized regions. The dominance of the production sector is much higher in the Czech region than in Austria.

The **tertiary sector** is expanding from a high level in the urban areas and from a low level in the rural parts and contributes to a high extent to economic growth. The urban economies are more oriented on a knowledge-based development. The rural areas - with a higher bias towards agriculture than the respective national average - are developing new structures to overcome the decreasing tendencies in the leading branches. In this context, tourism can be classified as one of the most prominent development and innovation factors. It is also becoming the new economic core branch with the highest growth of regional business activities for some less developed rural regions.

The dynamics of economic development are based on the large and growing number of **SMEs**. Generally, the size of enterprises in the Czech regions is higher than in Austria.

Enterprises with more than 500 employees dominate in branches such as the steel industry, chemicals/oil/gas, partly in the vehicle and automotive sector, textiles and leather goods, food and beverage production. With the exception of some social and public services (e.g. health system, administration...), the tertiary sector is dominated by small enterprises. On the Czech side, these enterprises have been set up mostly by foreign investors. These enterprises contribute to a large extent to economic growth in many regions. This new structure also results in changes to working conditions and income, thereby creating a trend towards segmentation of the regional labour markets. In most cases, the average size of an enterprise does not exceed more than 5 to 10 employees.

About 3 million people are **employed in the border region**, some two times more on the Austrian side than in the Czech region. The employment patterns reflect the distinction and the disparities of the regional economic structures and potentials. The labour market centers are the urban agglomerations, therefore, for the people living in the rural areas these centers are the most important commuting destinations.

The economic structure (branches), the level of regional income and the size of regional enterprises determine not only the quantity and quality of employment and the economic growth potential, but also form the basis for the competitiveness of the innovation system. Together with public and private R&I institutions embedded in the national and regional innovation system (support structures, subsidies, research programmes, traditions...), the economic system and the labour market are the most important factors that bolster innovation and R&I activities.

Needs related to economic growth by research & innovation

EU policy context

The strategy of the programme directly contributes to the achievement of the Union commitment formulated as a headline target of **EU 2020 Strategy**: “Improving the conditions for research and development, in particular, with the aim of raising combined public investment levels in this sector to 3% of GDP”.

The strategic orientation of the EU Initiative **Innovation Union** and its commitments target the following: to support the cross-border matching of innovative firms with investors, ensure stronger involvement of SMEs in European R&I programmes, facilitate collaborative research and knowledge transfer, improve the use of ESI-Funds for research and innovation, and other purposes.

Two of the three priorities of **Horizon 2020**, which is the EU Framework programme for research and innovation, are of special relevance for the Austrian-Czech Programme region:

- Industrial leadership (making Europe a more attractive location to invest in research and innovation) and
- Societal challenges (a challenge-based approach to bring together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines, including social sciences and the humanities)

The **National Reform Programmes (NRP)** of both member states put a strong emphasis on R&D. The Austrian NRP emphasises the importance of investment in research, development and innovation, and defines a target of 3.76% for 2020 as compared to 2.76% in 2010. The Czech Republic’s national target for EU 2020 (“Public expenditure allocated to research,

development and innovation to reach 1% of the Czech GDP was formally reached and the NRP 2014 states an achievement of 1.03%¹. Despite this positive trend, another effort in this field is needed to gradually approach the general EU objective, i.e. total investments in R&D&I of 3% of GDP. Not only the NRPs, but also other key strategic documents and regional strategies underline the importance of R&I for national and regional economies. (see Bibliography in the Annex)

Characteristics

The structure and the development of the research and innovation sector in the Austrian-Czech border region are very heterogenous. According to the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2013, the Czech Republic is characterised as a moderate innovator with a below average performance while Austria is characterised as an innovative follower with an above average performance.

Concerning R&I, the cross-border region is highly developed in the urban areas of Vienna and Brno followed by the Upper Austrian central region of Linz-Wels. In these regions, the 3% target declared by the EU has been reached or can easily be reached. The other non-urbanised regions are lagging behind.

The regional innovation system determined by the economic structure is based on the broad range of universities, specialized colleges and public and private research institutions as well as on innovative and/or research-based enterprises – mainly in the secondary sector – as well as specialized regional technology centers and centers of excellence. The employment structure in the R&I sector is rather unbalanced in terms of gender: only about 1/5 to 1/3 of all R&I employees in the region are women.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

The Position Papers of the EC for Austria and the Czech Republic point out the following challenges for research and innovation:

“The Czech government should clarify how the target for public R&I (1% of GDP by 2020) will be attained in terms of areas of research, of research centers/universities, allocation of funds and type of priority expenditure, quality performance, overall governance model and cooperation with the private sector, promotion of international cooperation, transfer of research results to SMEs, etc. The government should also encourage the private business sector to spend more on R&I activities and may introduce incentives to reach this objective. A more active involvement of the private business sector, in particular SMEs, in innovation is of key importance for enterprises that have to move up the value chain in order to remain competitive on the EU, as well as on the global market. A priority should therefore be given to the creation of an innovation-friendly business environment by better matching R&I support to business demand and by providing the necessary ancillary infrastructure. A number of strategies in the area of innovation and competitiveness have been elaborated over recent years. It is advisable to use these strategies as a main input into a smart specialisation strategy (S3) for the Czech Republic. This strategy should prioritise those sectors including "key enabling technologies", clusters, niches, institutions and research activities which could contribute to an increased competitiveness of the Czech business

¹ Data of the year 2013, R&D&I expenditure includes those covered by EU resources, the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

sector. The strategy should also provide recommendations for a national governance model for R&I activities. Given that a substantial amount of EU support has been allocated to the construction of new and the extension of existing research centres in the current programming period.”

“Austria should raise the share of technology and knowledge-intensive products and services in export revenues, by reinforcing the innovative strength of its business sector, both in the national and broader regional context, and the efficiency of the governance. The leverage effect of the funds used on research and development expenditure and the efficiency of direct and indirect support of firms should be increased. Measures should be taken to adequately address weaknesses and bottlenecks in the transfer of innovation from research institutes to businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.”

The allocation of the R&I institutions in the region shows a concentration although there are efforts for the diffusion of these activities. Technology transfer activities and the establishment of R&I institutions in the peripheral areas should bring these locations and the regional enterprises closer to the national/international innovation system.

All regions have worked out their regional innovation strategies based on their economic potentials and enterprises, the innovation system and the labour supply. Public or semi-public institutions supporting R&I play an important role in the field of applied research, innovation, transfer of technologies helping entrepreneurs and companies to introduce innovations, to start spin-off activities etc.

The most innovative enterprises are those of the secondary sector. Small and micro enterprises that predominate in the service sector often do not have the capacities for systematic innovation strategies and neither the national nor regional innovation scheme is sufficient to support adequately. In general, the innovative and development capacities are found in larger enterprises rather than smaller ones. The attitude of small and medium enterprises to the R&I results (or even implementation of their own innovative activities) is rather weak.

The existing cluster initiatives in the region can be seen as an excellent starting point for the co-ordination of institutional support for the formation of cross-border enterprise networks. The regional clusters are specialized in

- Construction,
- Renewable energy and environmental technologies (e.g. water treatment..)
- Wood processing
- Food processing
- Mechanical Engineering
- Biotechnology and bioinformatics
- Microelectronics
- Plastic processing
- Automobile and transport
- Mobility
- Information technology

Most of them work on a national level. The potential of cross-border cooperation is not yet being exploited.

The cross-border basic research networks of universities and basic research institutions are much more developed than the cross-border networks of applied research. Czech and

Austrian actors are more involved in international innovation and patent networks, than in regional and cross-border cooperation structures.

Needs related to education and qualification

EU-policy context

The programme's strategy directly contributes to the achievement of *Europe 2020's* headline target: "Improving education levels"

At the same time, the programme focuses on the targets of the EU initiatives "*An Agenda for new skills and jobs*" (e.g. stepping up reforms to improve flexibility and security in the labour market, equipping people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow) as well as the initiative "*Youth on the move*" by carrying out educational and training measures to increase of young people's education and employability,

The main national EU 2020 targets are set in NRPs in the field of education. The target for Austria is to reduce the rate of dropouts of pupils to 9.5% by 2020 and to raise the proportion of 30 to 34-year-olds graduated tertiary education to 38%.

The Czech Republic's national target in the field of education described in NRP 2014 is first, to reduce the early school dropout rate to a maximum of 5.5%, and second, to increase the share of the population aged 20 to 34 having completed tertiary education to 32%. The Czech Republic was successful in reaching the first target in 2013: the national target value was reached (5%). Despite this fact, compared to previous periods, there was a slight increase in the indicator (in 2010 and 2011 the value was 4.9%); further efforts and measures are needed to maintain or improve the value. The second target has not been reached yet and the share of the population aged 20 to 24 having completed tertiary education was only 26.5% in 2013.

The increase in the quality of the education sector and its interaction with the needs of the labour market and business sector is essential. Beside other measures described in the NRP, increasing the quality of vocational training in cooperation with employers seems to be the most important goal in a regional and cross-border context.

Challenges and needs addressed in the Position Papers of the EC for Austria and the Czech Republic will be picked up in the programme strategy with respect to the cross-border dimension.

In the Czech Republic, there is "a mismatch between qualification training and the requirements of national and regional labour markets. The rate of adults' participation in further education is still low and the figures fall further with advancing employee age. Additionally, rural areas and the smallest municipalities are characterized by a lower share of working-age population. The countryside is threatened by migration due to lack of employment opportunities. In rural communities the level of economic activity is lower and the structure of economic activities remains less diversified."

"In order to reach its national employment target, Austria will have to improve labour market participation of older workers, women, migrants, young people as well as other vulnerable groups. The employment rate of older workers is still below EU-27 average, as is the effective retirement age. The promotion of active ageing within companies is not sufficiently developed and lifelong learning policies for older workers are not effective enough. Enhancing women's employment opportunities and reducing gender segmentation on the labour market is another challenge."

Characteristics

In general, the level of education is high in the Austrian-Czech border region, although there are distinct disparities. The highest shares of inhabitants with tertiary education are seen in the urban agglomerations and the lowest ones in areas with a high concentration of the agricultural sector. Especially the more industrialised regions have above national average shares of persons with secondary education (skilled workers).

In the last decades, the educational level of women rose as a consequence of the increasing attendance rates and graduates from upper secondary schools and universities. In spite of this development, the concentration on specific fields of education and qualification or branches of studies follows a traditional male/female orientation (more technical courses and jobs/social and communication issues).

The workforce in the border region is well trained. The share of employed persons with upper secondary school education accounts for about 80% in the Czech Republic and 67% in Austria. Concerning the tertiary education, the Austrian border region reaches 16.1% and the Czech border region 18.0%. Major differences can be identified across the various age groups, between male and female, and in a regional context.

The Austrian-Czech border region is well-equipped with educational infrastructure. There are universities in Wien, Linz, Krems, in Brno and České Budejovice. In Jihlava there is a College of Polytechnics and a Faculty of Management was set up in Jindřichuv Hradec. Higher vocational education is concentrated mostly in the large cities; the Fachhochschulen in Austria are located also in medium and smaller towns to foster regional development and cooperation with regional/local enterprises. On secondary level the school systems offer a general and specialized education, there are technical schools, schools for management and business and also for health and social affairs.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

The cooperation among universities is based mostly on individual contacts of the researchers and concrete projects. The cooperation among schools is in an early stage and depends on the initiative of single schools and teachers and seems to be much more institutionalised. Until now the previous cross border programmes offered a good opportunity to implement school projects. There are some schools cooperating very intensively in the border region. Most of them started with projects and school-to-school contacts, student exchanges and concrete partnership agreements.

Apart from the technical and economic capabilities, language learning and thus an insight into other cultures is one of the most important issues for the development of the region and the development of the cross border cooperation process. The number of secondary schools, upper secondary schools and colleges at which Czech or German has become part of the official curriculum is growing on both sides of the border.

Demographic changes with a perspective of an ageing population and a decrease in the share of the population of pre-productive age in some parts of the border region have implications for optimising the infrastructure, especially for pre-school, primary and secondary education. Existing partnerships and links between municipalities (and towns), which are providers of pre-school and primary education offers a good basis for expanding cooperation to also cover the field of education. Early childhood education and primary education can effectively

address the growing interest of inhabitants to better explore the Austrian-Czech region and to improve understanding of the official languages.

To improve the relation between the education system and demand from the labour market, fostering the cross-border mobility of the workforce in general will be an issue for cooperation.

The low participation of the adult population in life-long learning calls for cooperation focused on introducing and delivering a joint programme and education products.

Needs related to the environment and natural and cultural resources

EU-policy context

The programme's strategy responds to the need for sustainable growth, generally meaning that economic growth should not collide with the need for the sustainable utilization of resources and energy. The strategy will also contribute to greater stability and adaptive capacities of ecosystems and partially even to the overall mitigation of the impact of climate change.

The **Integrated Guidelines** make a reference to the need for Member States to "... decouple economic growth from resource use, turning environmental challenges into growth opportunities and making efficient use of their natural resources."

The orientation and the formulation of the programme will contribute to the attainment of the objectives and intentions of the EU Initiative "**A resource-efficient Europe**" as one of two EU initiatives that directly address sustainable growth.

The strategy also refers to the **EU 2020 headline target**: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right, increase the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

The national and regional reference documents are: the **National Reform Programmes** that set out the **national targets** for the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy as described in part in "*Climate protection and energy*" and primarily in the section "*Efficient use of natural resources – efficiency of resources*" of the Austrians NRP. There is as well a direct link to Czech NRP 2014, solving in the part "Energy and climate protection" topics of environment -renewable resources, climate and energy framework, waste management and use of waste as a substitute to primary resources, reducing risks of flooding and drought impacts and others

With these main tasks the NRPs respond to the **Position papers from the EU for Austria and the Czech Republic**. For the cross-border programme, the following priority proposals for funding are taken into account.

The Czech position paper declares that "resource efficiency improves competitiveness and creates new jobs while protecting natural resources. Therefore, improved waste and water management is of high importance for the Czech Republic. The investments need to focus on the activities with the highest added value in meeting the EU requirements, notably in the solid waste sector. Similarly, energy and material recovery are important benefits of the investment in the waste management. ... Resource efficiency should also be reinforced through the promotion of sustainable land and water management, including the preservation of natural resources (including Natura 2000 and high nature value areas),

biodiversity, air quality protection and ensuring climate change resilience by strengthening the adaptive capacity of ecosystem services.”

“Austria should enhance risk prevention, risk management and environmental protection (including enhancement of biodiversity, NATURA 2000 areas, and water, soil and air) in all its territories. In order to achieve the national Europe 2020 target which itself will have a positive impact on the environment, and also to promote overall resource efficiency, measures have to be intensified in a number of areas, such as research and development and innovation, traffic and transport, energy management, and general awareness. Cross-border and transnational cooperation, especially in the overall context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, should be fully exploited.“

The **EU’s Biodiversity Strategy (2011)** sets the goal of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem functions by 2020, and of restoring them to the extent feasible. In this respect, the Natura 2000 network, which consists of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), provides a common EU framework to safeguard natural assets and serves as the main European instrument to achieve the biodiversity objectives.

Characteristics

Landscape and protection of nature

The Austrian – Czech border region covers an area of 49,738 km² and offers a variety of very different landscapes: in the western part, the low mountain range, one of the oldest geological formations in Europe, while the Danube valley forms the southern boundary. Towards the Eastern part, the landscape changes into hills and the granite and gneiss highlands, valleys and lowlands. The Carpathian region forms the border in the southeast. Moravský kraj is one of the most significant karst areas in Central Europe. The northern Vienna Basin is a depression between the Alps. The river systems Danube, the Thaya/Dyje and the March/Morava do not only form the character of the landscape, they are also the habitat of specific fauna and flora and part of the National park system in the region. In the region, a number of reserves (National parks, nature parks, natural landscape reserves, Natura 2000 areas) were founded to protect natural and cultivated landscapes and preserve them for future generations. In the programme area comprises

- Five national parks (Thayatal, Donau-March-Thaya-Auen and Šumava/Böhmerwald National Parks, Podyjí National Park, OÖ-Kalkalpen).
- Eight large protected landscape areas, almost 800 small-size protected areas and nearly 400 “Natura 2000” sites in the Czech Republic.
- Nine nature parks and 148 Natura 2000 sites in Austria and
- the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2005

Besides these clearly defined sites, the entire so-called “Green Belt” that stretches along the state border is becoming more and more important. Due to the restrictions that once characterised the former “Iron Curtain”, the Green Belt has kept its original character and remained a very valuable landscape.

Most of these preserved areas are also important areas of recreation as well as for touristic and education activities. All the national parks offer a wide range of spiritual, scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities, which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

In some cases, especially the national parks, nature parks and Biosphere Reserve are well connected to the touristic infrastructure and are important elements of the regional touristic attractions. An example is the information center of the Thayatal-Podyjí national park that counts more than 25,000 visitors per opening season, which is a very high potential for a less developed region.

Climate change

The region covers two climate zones – the continental and the Pannonian climate zone. The forecasts state an increase in temperature, more and heavier precipitation, and more strong winds and storms. The expected climate change impacts for the region are the growing risks from water scarcity, heat waves and natural hazards (floods, droughts, landslides, storms, rockfalls, forest fires).

Water

The main continental (European) divide between the Elbe and Danube river system is located in the programme area. While the Czech regions drained largely into the North Sea, the Austrian regions drain to the south into the Black Sea. This geographic situation has an immediate influence on the watercourses or water regimes and this important for analysing the risks regarding flood protection and water pollution. In the last 15 years, the border region has been – nearly annually - confronted with large and some smaller (regional or local) catastrophic floods.

Land use

The intensity of land use is steadily growing – the natural character of the landscape is changing, especially due to intensive agricultural use and construction activities in the area - road construction, growing of municipalities, etc. Especially in the eastern part of the Czech programme area, the landscape has changed considerably as consequence of natural risks when compared to the original natural landscape. Among other reasons, a cause is the enormous proportion of arable lands accounting for nearly 50 of total area.

Air Pollution

The abundance of protected areas, the high proportion of forested lands in the western part of the territory, the settlement structure and the limited number of big polluters results in relatively low degree of air pollution and emission production in the rural parts of the programme region.

On the other hand, industrial districts and urban agglomerations centres (Linz, Wien, České Budějovice, Brno or Tábor) surpass average levels in the CBC region by twice as much or more and are an enormous contrast to rural areas with minimum presence of large polluters like traffic and industrial sites (e.g. districts of Vyškov, Třebíč or Prachatice).

Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage and cultural activities in the Austrian-Czech border region are unique and of a large variety. There are sights of global importance (UNESCO sights) like the historic centre of Vienna, the palace and gardens of Schönbrunn, Wachau Cultural Landscape, Historic Centre of Český Krumlov, Historic Centre of Telč, Holašovice Historical Village Reservation, Jewish Quarter and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč, Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, Tugendhat Villa in Brno and the Church of St. John Nepomuk at Zelená Hora.

The intangible heritage represented by folk traditions, handicrafts, folklore with typical folk dances (one of them – verbuňk - danced in South Moravia has been entered in the UNESCO List of Intangible Heritage) and other persisting activities are no less important signs of the cross-border region. Besides those mentioned well-developed sites, there is a great number of protected buildings of historical value in the programme area. Hundreds of them are open to the public and host thousands of cultural events every year (exhibitions, concerts, theatrical performances, etc.). Especially for the rural parts of the programme area where these sites are located, the further development and integration into regional touristic strategies and touristic packages could contribute to a fruitful economic development. Besides these aspects, accessibility and a well-equipped traffic infrastructure are considered essential for the ecological and socio-economic development of the tourist locations.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

The aim of the European biodiversity strategy running until 2020 is to conserve and enhance natural assets and to manage them sustainably in order to ensuring that nature delivers what we need. The strategy should protect species and their habitats, help to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts and contribute to meeting the goals of the EU's resource-efficient Europe initiative. The strategy focuses on six targets, with this programme being oriented on three of them:

- enhancing efforts to protect species and habitats
- maintain and restore ecosystems and their services, and
- step up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss

The development of functional ecological networks and green infrastructures (including the Natura 2000 conservation areas) for the preservation of biodiversity constitutes a particular challenge for the different policy strands, because the management and restoration of natural assets has to be based on integrated concepts of land and water use management.

The forecasted climate change will lead to risks for infrastructure, settlements, economic activities and problems with the water supply, consequences for energy production and agriculture and heat waves especially in cities and urban agglomerations.

Although all of the flood-protection measures have been enhanced since the last extensive floods in 1997 (South Moravia) and in 2002 (South Bohemia, Lower and Upper Austria) and in 2013 in Austria, the risk of floods still exists. Under several treaties, a specialized “Natural Disaster Protection Group” has been established. This group is a very appropriate starting point for common projects, for removing the existing barriers due to different legislation, incompatible equipment, different organizations and different languages.

A specific need concerns the improved connection between the environment and leisure and tourism activities. The cultural and natural heritage sites are very popular recreation and touristic destinations for the regional (urban) population as well as for foreign visitors. The utilisation of this cultural and natural heritage of a tangible and intangible nature needs to be developed in a sustainable and integrated way across the border. Touristic development in the sense of an eco-tourism approach is the most important asset, especially for less developed regions, for starting a dynamic regional development process and increasing employment, above all, in the service sector where women are predominate.

Major challenges for sustainable tourism include:

- Preserving natural and cultural resources

- Limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations, including use of natural resources and waste production
- Promoting the well-being of the local community
- Reducing the seasonality of demand
- Limiting the environmental impact of tourism-related transport
- Making tourism accessible to all
- Improving the quality of jobs in tourism.

Partly existing initiatives have to be expanded to better interlink natural habitats and wildlife corridors, reduce barriers and improve use management and nature protection. Restoration and conservation measures for natural assets should be accompanied by investments in sustainable tourism and accessibility, awareness-raising, training and education as well as communication and information activities.

In Austria, only 8% of the surface water bodies have a poor status and 2% are classified as having a bad ecological status. Concerning the ecological status of surface water, some problems have been identified in the eastern part of the Austrian border region. On the Czech side, the Bohemian region still does not meet the aquis water treatment requirements.

Needs related to cooperation and regional governance

EU-policy context

Strengthening institutional and administrative capacities at all levels, in all fields and promoting good governance principles is important in order to underpin structural adjustments regarding cross-border cooperation. Reducing regulatory and administrative burdens and promoting high standards of transparency, integrity and accountability in public administration also helps to increase productivity and strengthen the competitiveness of the cross-border region. In this respect, the priority should focus on reducing the administrative burden on citizens and businesses, and on increasing transparency, integrity and the quality of public administration as well as efficiency in delivering public services in all sectors (including up-skilling in the fields of policy development, organisational innovations, e-governance and public procurement of innovative solutions).

Characteristic

In the on-going period, the implemented projects helped to promote the integration of civil society in institutions, committees, administrations and also at the political level. Civil society in most of the sub-regions shows a high degree of willingness and commitment in regard to civic involvement and solidarity. Associations, federations and administration unions are widely spread, which shows a highly responsible and active citizenship, especially at the regional and municipal level. Such examples are also stimulating initiatives within the scope of cross-border cooperation structures. Many of these are carried out individually and pragmatically by associations, institutions and private persons covering all kinds of different fields.

The mentality present on both sides of the border is felt to be similar, which also contributes to the integration process and general cooperation. This represents a common pillar to help build a cohesive identity by means of cross-border cooperation projects.

Cross-border cooperation structures enhance the competitiveness and innovative potential of regions. The Austrian-Czech border region has different active institutional networks in operation to improve sharing at the personal, economic and political level. Cooperation may be described along the following structure:

- Cooperation on the institutional level (EUREGIO in cooperation with the communities, the regions and the regional management structures)
- Cooperation on a political and administrative level, and
- Project-based cooperation initiatives

Most of the networking in the sub-regions is oriented towards bilateral structures. Urban centers have gained the most importance in this process and are already becoming supra-regional network nodes. Nonetheless, small-scale networking also takes place. Especially in the border areas where participants and key players at the municipal level have up to now played a relevant role even though their influence and results rarely extend beyond the proximate areas.

Concerning the themes being dealt with, we find mostly cross-border multi-thematic cooperation structures. Regional development networks and networks with a focus on tourism and business have greater visibility in the sub-regions. Also relevant is the primary “bottom-up” nature of most of the networking cross-border cooperation structures present in the area and the limited role of political and administrative levels, at least at the coordination level.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

Important challenges for the regional cross-border governance system are:

The enabling environment, the attitudes, the policy framework, regulations, organisational settings and practices that stimulate and support the effective and efficient implementation of cross-border cooperation reveal serious bottlenecks. Especially the imbalance in governance capacity at the regional level requires a prudent approach to partnership-building.

Table 1 : Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	IP 1a: Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;	The region provides valuable assets for an innovation and research-based economic development (existing R&I infrastructure, university centres, innovative branches with innovative enterprises), but at the same time it is also facing severe challenges in this respect: mainly rural areas with R&I quotas below the national average, lack of cooperation among R&I institutions across the border, insufficient technology and infrastructure. Considering the cross-border dimension of R&I by establishing and developing or

		<p>upgrading a common infrastructure, the cross-border programme should contribute to the regional and national innovation strategy and complement the other ESI funds.</p>
	<p>IP 1b :</p> <p>Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular, promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular, in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies;</p>	<p>In the programme region, the share of SMEs is very high, their contribution to R&I activities and their involvement within the innovation system is low. The innovation system is based on a considerable number of recognized public and private research institutions, universities as well as on scientific parks and the numerous large scale enterprises running their own R&I departments or the specialised regional clusters. Establishing networks and support through technology transfer activities based on the existing innovation strategies can help to open the access and the integration to the regional innovation system. Following this approach the programme will focus on areas like infrastructure, business services and support for business, technology transfer and research. In addition to regional and national activities, cross-border cooperation will extend the activity level of enterprises and contribute to strengthening their position in the competitive surroundings.</p>
<p>TO 6:</p> <p>Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</p>	<p>IP 6 c:</p> <p>Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage;</p>	<p>The natural and cultural heritage (e.g. European Green Belt, UNESCO elements) is an important factor for regional integration, the basis for a high level of living quality and not at least for a sustainable local and regional economic development. In many cases they are not being properly preserved and developed, also due to their difficult accessibility in the immediate border area and insufficient infrastructure. The IP 6c was selected to protect these assets in a coordinated manner, to cautiously develop them further and to maintain this rich diversity for future generations. Increasing the level of the region's attractiveness by protecting the environment and to promote an ecologically and economically sustainable development requires a careful balance between sustainability in environmental, economic and socio-cultural terms.</p>

	<p>IP 6 d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil, and promoting ecosystem services through Natura2000 and green infrastructure;</p>	<p>The (protected) natural resources are not the only unique wealth of the region. It also sets certain limits on infrastructure development as well as on some economic activities. The main environmental challenges in the region include the protection of the sensitive landscape taking into account the demographic and economic development (e.g. water, land, energy) and the consequences of climate change.</p> <p>In order to ensure the effective contribution of this programme to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy the IP 6d was selected to cope with the main environmental challenges in the region such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing land use as a consequence of demographic and economic change with negative effects on biodiversity - The negative impacts of climate change affecting the regional ecosystem, the local population and the economic system - The risk of destabilization and vulnerability of biodiversity
	<p>IP 6 f: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution;</p>	<p>A combination of good natural conditions, a strong tradition in environmental protection, broad know-how in environmental technologies (specialized research institutions are the basic conditions for developing and implementing new approaches, new products and procedures). By selecting this IP, the programme will contribute to resource efficient and eco-innovations by implementing innovative technologies and pilot projects.</p>
<p>TO 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning</p>	<p>ETC Reg. Article 7 (a) iii Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes;</p>	<p>For a smart and inclusive development and growth policy, skills and qualifications are the main assets, especially to improve and foster cross-border activities. In a cross-border context, the development of social innovation and civilization techniques (e.g. languages, cultural activities, common skills, joint experiences...) are very important for the joint development process.</p>
<p>TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public</p>	<p>ETC Reg. Article 7 (a) iv Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and</p>	<p>Cross-border activities are based on intensive cooperation and communication processes. In the last few years, joint governance structures</p>

authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions;	and networks including several institutions, regional actors and the civil society have been established. Network analyses show that there are specific needs to implement and to strengthen the existing networks and cooperation platforms as well as a need to create new possibilities for promoting cooperation between organisations, the administrative sector and citizens.
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1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

The implementation of this programme should support the innovative sustainable development of an innovative smart and inclusive economic development in a cross-border dimension. The thematic objectives and investment priorities were selected to follow a common strategy based on an analysis of the region. During the programming process, several regional and thematic workshops were organised attended by representatives of the administration, of NGOs, municipalities and other private and public institutions to discuss their experiences and needs for the next generation of cross-border programmes. The ex-ante evaluation team accompanied the programming process by analysing the different versions of the OP. Most of the remarks have been integrated after the discussion within the bilateral programming group (BPG).

The following were formulated as main elements of the common strategy:

- Strengthening the existing cooperation and communication structures and the institutional capacities
- Developing an innovative and skill-oriented economic and social system
- Securing regional, social and cross-border accessibility in regard to jobs, housing, public and private services, innovation and know-how, natural and cultural assets
- Strengthening the regional economies' resilience to climate risks
- Improving quality and accessibility to the natural and cultural resources
- Harmonising the (regional) legal and institutional framework

The requirements and specifications for cross-border cooperation formulated in the position paper of the EU for the Czech Republic for this programme have become the guiding principles:

- A stronger coherence with programmes under the 'investment for growth and jobs' goal and other EU or national programmes in order to exploit synergies for interventions in different thematic areas.
- A strategic approach taking into account the experiences from previous programming periods and an increased sense of partnership.

Considering the goals, the existing disparities and the diversity in this border region, the chosen strategic approach leads to a concentration of the programme on four thematic objectives to support a regional development process based on

- Knowledge, research and innovation, integration of SMEs into the innovation system and the establishment of systems for the cross-border exchange of information

- A green and more resource-efficient and competitive economy, including cross-border mobility and taking into account the impacts of climate change.
- The preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage as main elements to strengthen sustainable tourism as part of a territorial strategy aimed at achieving employment-friendly growth;
- Ecological stability and an improved ecosystem;
- The development of the administrative capacity and strengthening cross-border cooperation structures.

Within the next few years, the programme should contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy by supporting projects and activities in the field of research and innovation involving private and public R&I institutions as well as enterprises.

The overall programme budget amounts EUR 115,134,884 with an ERDF contribution of EUR 97,814,933. The cross-border programme needs to be understood as a supplement to the national and regional investment programmes for growth and jobs, and the ESF programme focusing on common and cross-border specific activities. This approach is expressed in the allocation of the financial means for thematic objectives 1 and 10 where about 26 million euro corresponds to approximately 27% of the total ERDF budget.

The high importance of environmental and resource efficiency is demonstrated by the budgetary allocation: 45.4 million euro or approximately 46% of the total ERDF programme budget is reserved for activities under this priority. Within this thematic objective, the IP 6c - protecting, promoting and developing the cultural and natural heritage - is the most important one with a share of approximately 33% of the total programme budget followed by protecting and promoting biodiversity and ecosystem services. This high share of the budget reserved for 6c reflects, among other things, the need for upgrading, modernizing and valorisation of the cultural and natural heritage for recreational and tourism activities. To increase the cross-border accessibility of the existing cultural and natural heritage, these activities will be accompanied by the reconstruction of road infrastructure and improvements to the management of traffic flows.

An amount of 20.37 million euro which is approx. 21% of the ERDF programme budget will be available for projects under thematic objective 11, which is a thematic objective very important for the cooperation programme. In contrast to the other thematic objectives, the project size expected will be smaller so more projects can be realized within this thematic objective.

The budget line for the technical assistance is 6% which is 5.9 million euro in ERDF funding.

The allocation is based on the experience gained in the former periods, the information on planned projects and activities gathered in regional workshops and the projects prepared by the administrative bodies. In line with Article 6 of the ETC Regulation, 80% of ERDF allocation has been concentrated on four of the thematic objectives. Also, the ex-ante evaluators indicated in their interim reports that a more concentrated approach is required. Following their recommendations, a reduction of thematic objectives and of the investment priorities was made as well as structural modifications.

The allocation complies with the requirement to use the available European, national and regional financial means in an efficient and effective way to support cross-border development, to achieve value added, visibility and the efficiency of the actions supported as much as possible.

Financial allocation by IPs (ERDF)

IP	Euro	Share in%
1a	7 419 202	8%
1b	5 063 100	5%
6c	32 586 081	33%
6d	7 475 234	8%
6f	5 358 234	5%
10	13 675 112	14%
11	20 369 075	21%
Technical Assistance	5 868 895	6%
Total	97 814 933	100%

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme – will be generated automatically

Priority axis	ERDF support (in EUR)	Proportion (%) of the total Union funding for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective	Investment priorities	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)				
<1.2.1 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.2 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.3 type='N' input='G'>	<1.2.4 type='S' input='G'><1.2.9 type='P' input='G'>	<1.2.5 type='S' input='G'><1.2.1 type='P' input='G'>	<1.2.6 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.7 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.8 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.9 type='S' input='G'>

SECTION 2 Priority Axes

2.A Description of the priority axes other than technical assistance

2.A.1.a Priority axis 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

ID of the priority axis	1
Title of the priority axis	<i>Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</i>

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

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

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

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total cost

2.A.4.a Investment Priority 1a: Enhancing R&I infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular, those of European interest

2.A.5.a. Specific objective corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 1a	<i>Improved and extended research and innovation capacities</i>
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The region features a considerable number of highly recognized research institutions and advanced infrastructure in innovative branches with high value added such as: biotechnology, materials engineering, nanotechnology, ICT and automotive industries and others.

The ranking of the *Innovation Score Board* identifies the programme region partly as an innovation leader (eastern part of Austria), as an innovation follower (eastern part of the Czech

regions and western part of Austria’s region) and the western part of the CZ region as a moderate innovator.

Investments in adequate infrastructure and increasing capacities, on the one hand, and the possibility of sharing new or existing modernized or adapted or extended capacities, on the other, should help realize synergy effects and diffuse the regional potential.

The results aimed for by these investments are:

- Extension and improvement of the innovation system by jointly-used R&I capacity
- New and intensified cooperation between existing institutions in the strategic fields of R&I
- Realisation of economies of scale by cross-border sharing of existing capacities.

The chosen indicator “research quota”- one of the Europa 2020 main target indicators - represents the level of R&I activities. The planned interventions will contribute to an increase of R&I expenditure so an effect to the research quota is expected. The research quota is defined as the relation of R&I expenditure to the GDP. (R&I quota/GDP). It is assumed that the value of the numerator the expenditures will increase and will influence the research quota.

As baseline value, the amount of 2.7-% for the year 2011 has been assumed. Referring to the development from 2009 to 2011 during which there was an increase from 2.58% to 2.71% was observed, the target value for 2013 has been fixed at 3.0%.

Result Indicator

Table 3 : Programme-specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 1	Research quota	%	2.7	2011	3.0	Eurostat	2017, 2020, 2023

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

2.A.6.1.a A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Within this investment priority and with the aim to reach the specific objective, the following types of activities, as examples, will be realized:

- a) Preparatory studies and planning activities for investments in R&I infrastructure which will be jointly used/shared by cooperating R&I institutions from both sides of the border;
- b) Investments in new jointly used/shared R&I facilities or extension and modernisation of technology facilities, research capacities, laboratories which are of regional/cross border interest;
- c) Supporting concrete joint cross-border R&I activities (projects) using existing R&I capacities on one side and/or the other side of the border with the aim of realizing

economies of scale and by their joint use to increase the utilisation of existing capacities instead of purchasing similar capacities on both sides of the border; supporting the preparation of the implementation of results.

Main target groups

- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences and studies
- Enterprises
- Non-profit sector
- Public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences and studies
- Public authorities (state, regions, municipalities and their organisations)
- Actors in the non-profit sector

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.2.a Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions under the various Investment Priorities:

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have the capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contributes to the strengthening a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)

- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women, and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional specific principles that apply to this Investment Priority are:

- At any supported project, an R&I institution must be actively included as a partner
- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate evidence or realistic assumptions on their real/practical application in the sustainable development of common areas.

2.A.6.3.a Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.a Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.a Output indicators

Table 4: **Common and programme-specific output indicators**

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP1	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of R&I (studies, strategies etc.)	Mechanisms	5	Monitoring	Annual
OP2	Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research	Organisations	15	Monitoring	Annual

	projects				
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2.A.4.a Investment Priority 1b: Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular, promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular, in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

2.A.5.a Specific objective corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 1b	<i>Fostering the involvement of enterprises (primarily SMEs) in the innovation system</i>
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The innovation system of the cross border region is based on a considerable number of recognized public and private research institutions, universities located in the cities as well as in (regional) science parks. The numerous large scale enterprises are running their own R&I departments and specialised regional clusters are supporting their members in networking. In the programme area, SMEs predominate as the main group of enterprises but their involvement in the innovation system and their R&I activities are - in comparison with the large enterprises with special budgets and special R&I departments - very low. Networking, technology transfer activities and other R&I support activities have a strong potential to intensify and ensure the integration of SMEs into the innovation system. Besides the fact that “innovative leaders” are usually large enterprises, these are also important for boosting the innovation potential of the region and in process of introducing SMEs to innovation system.

The results aimed for are:

- Better integrated enterprises (primarily SMEs) in the regional innovation system with the effect of increasing innovation activities (new products, services, processes...)
- Universities and research institutions more connected to regional needs (e.g. SMEs, clusters) and cooperate increasingly with enterprises (primarily SMEs). Cross-border cooperation between businesses and R&I institutions is visible and will be intensified
- Increased regional and sectoral diffusion of research and development processes into the region

This investment priority is focused on the involvement of enterprises (primarily SMEs). The success of these interventions will be measured by the indicator “R&I expenditures in the business sector”. The data will be taken from Eurostat. The estimation of the target value is based on the development since 2009. The R&I expenditure in percentage of regional GDP increased in the period 2009 – 2011 from 1.6% to 1.8%.

Table 3 : Programme-specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI 2	R&I expenditure in the business sector in % of GDP	%	1.8%	2011	2.2%	EUROSTAT	2017, 2020, 2023

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

2.A.6.1.a A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Based on the existing national and regional innovation strategies, it is very important to concentrate on the unused cross-border potential in the business sector as well as on the co-operation of public and private research institutions (incl. universities) with the business sector. SMEs as a key segment for the local and regional economies in cross border area as well as large enterprises acting as “innovation regional leaders” have the potential to boost innovative capacity and to form innovative networks and chains. The planned interventions will support this approach in the following way:

- The business sector (primarily SMEs) will be empowered in its innovative orientation by cooperation with research institutions or by establishing clusters and networks of branches
- Know-how and information transfer will be fostered to improve the commercial viability of the business partners
- Enterprises (primarily SMEs) will be integrated in the regional innovation system to bring them closer to the R&I results
- Institutional cross-border networks will be promoted to secure a systematic development of cooperation and capacity building

Within the investment priority, the following types of activity will be supported:

- a) Joint research projects, technology transfer and know-how transfer between research/technology institutions and businesses (incl. necessary R&I equipment)
- b) Systemic measures to facilitate enterprises (primarily SMEs) in joining the innovation system and using results of regional R&I system (incl. specific services in R&I sector - intermediation of information, contacts, consultancy and other assistance to enterprises (primarily SMEs) aiming at their increased innovativeness)
- c) Promoting networking and cooperation activities among research institutions, educational/research institutions, universities and businesses.

Support will be provided to networking and cooperative actions that enable enterprises (primarily SMEs) to use the results of R&I, increase their innovative capacity and support them in entering the innovation system.

Main target groups

- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Enterprises especially SMEs
- Non-profit sector
- Public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- Enterprises
- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors
- Chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.2.a Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions under the various Investment Priorities:

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies or concepts at the regional or national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have the capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect the socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project meets the cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)
- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that the cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid; Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional **specific principles** that apply to this Investment Priority are:

- Impact of actions on SMEs will be considered
- Where assistance is granted from the Funds to a large enterprise, the Managing Authority will assure itself that the financial contribution from the Funds does not result in a substantial loss of jobs in existing locations within the Union.

2.A.6.3.a Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.a Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.a Output indicators

Table 4 : Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP3	Number of services to support enterprises' innovative capacity introduced or improved	Services	8	Monitoring	Annual
OP4	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Enterprises	6	Monitoring	Annual

2.A.7.a Performance framework

Table 5 : Performance framework of the priority axis

PA	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit,	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
1	Output indicator	OP2	Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Organisation	2	15	Monitoring	
1	Output indicator	OP3	Number of services to support enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Services	1	8	Monitoring	
1	Financial indicator	FI 1	Eligible expenditures certified	EUR	1 791 939	14 685 060	Monitoring	

2.A.8.a. Categories of intervention

Tables: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	058 Research and innovation infrastructures (public)	3,120,576
	059 Research and innovation infrastructures (private, including science parks)	624,116
	060 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	4,368,805
	061 Research and innovation activities in private research centres including networking	1,248,230
	062 Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefitting SMEs	1,872,345
	063 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefitting SMEs	1,248,230
Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)

Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	01 Non-repayable grant	12,482,302
Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	8,737,612
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	3,120,575
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	624,115

2.A.1.b Priority Axis 2: Environment and Resources

ID of the priority axis	2
Title of the priority axis	Environment and Resources

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

2.A.2.b Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not relevant

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

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total cost

2.A.4.b Investment priority 6c: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage

2.A.5.b Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 2a	Valorising the region's cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable way
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The rich cultural and natural heritage of the region includes unique assets of natural character (European Green Belt along the former “Iron Curtain”) as well as cultural assets (with unique local as well as UNESCO elements of the heritage). Some of these natural and cultural attractions are not being properly preserved and developed, also due to their difficult accessibility in the immediate border area. This can be an important obstacle in the protection and valorisation of these natural and cultural resources.

It is the programme’s objective to protect these assets in a coordinated manner, to cautiously develop them further and to maintain this rich diversity for future generations. As a side-effect, this process of valorisation and protection will also create new potentials for economic diversification of the local economies and sustainable/soft tourism. This requires a careful

balance between sustainability in economic, socio-cultural and environmental terms. The programme intends to provide this important framework to do so.

This common approach to cultural and natural heritage is a path to common history and shared culture and will at the same time contribute to common identity and improved ecological stability. At the end of this process and thanks to the programme's investment and integrated framework, the border region will be able to benefit from

- Better protected, preserved and accessible natural and cultural heritage (sites);
- Shared strategic approaches in the protection, development and promotion of heritage, which balances economic, social and environmental interests, and an
- Improved potential for soft tourism, which is built on the careful and sustainable valorisation of cultural and natural heritage.

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ² (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI3	Overnight stays in the region	Number	28,028 Mio.	2013	31.5 Mio.	National statistics	2017, 2020, 2023

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

2.A.6.1.b A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

The supported actions will help to protect, promote and develop the rich and diverse cultural and natural heritage in the Czech-Austrian border region in a sustainable and resource-efficient way.

All the mentioned activities are expected (also if undertaken on only one side of the border) to improve the status and potential for the further sustainable utilization of cultural and natural sights and monuments as long as they are based on national, regional or common strategies. The interventions need to have the potential for triggering a noticeable positive impact for the local economies, the environment and/or the common identity of the regional population.

Where essential to achieve the objective of valorising and protecting the region's natural and cultural heritage, and where accessibility represents an obstacle to this process, transport infrastructure can be developed as an accompanying measure. This investment is however auxiliary to other investment in natural and cultural heritage and shall contribute exclusively to reach the selected thematic objective and investment priority under this specific objective.

Actions supported to reach this specific objective comprise the following types of actions:

² For ERDF and Cohesion Fund the target values can be qualitative or quantitative.

- a) Systemic measures supporting or creating a common framework (e.g. studies, strategies, plans, systematic promotional activities) in the field of preservation, development and utilization of cultural and natural heritage;
- b) Reconstruction, recovery, protection and promotion of regional cultural and natural assets (e.g. natural monuments, protected natural areas, historic sites and museums);
- c) Preservation, development and promotion of the cross-border region's intangible cultural heritage following the UNESCO definition (e.g. knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe...);
- d) Information measures and small scale investment in public touristic infrastructure (e.g. information boards, visitor guidance systems), aiming at the soft/sustainable utilisation of cultural and natural sites ;
- e) Improvement of transport infrastructure, including roads, cycle tracks and foot paths, ensuring the public accessibility of existing cultural and natural heritage sites. The investment in roads is ancillary to other investment in natural and cultural heritage supported by ESI funds and shall contribute exclusively to reaching the selected thematic objective and investment priority under this specific objective. It is of accompanying nature and needs to be complementary to protection and preservation measures for natural and cultural heritage of the border region)

Main target groups

- Local population
- Non-profit sector (esp. in protection, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage)
- Public sector (esp. in protection, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage)
- Enterprises esp. SMEs
- Tourists

Types of beneficiaries

- Public authorities (state, municipalities, regions and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors involved in protection, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage
- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.2.b Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions under the various Investment Priorities:

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contribute to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)
- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: the Commission regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional **specific principles** that apply to this Investment Priority are:

- Supported heritage (sites) need to be open to the public
- Investments in cultural/natural sights and monuments will be in line with relevant regional, national or commonly agreed strategies/concepts
- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate evidence or realistic assumptions on their real/practical application in the sustainable development of common areas
- Projects that improve the accessibility of cultural and natural heritage sites by improving the transport (road) infrastructure and the management of traffic flows will, as a rule:
 - Have to fulfil the criteria of **complementarity** and **interrelation** with other relevant activities (investments), i.e., road construction must complement/interrelate with other investments financed by the cross-border programmes or other programmes

under the Investments for Growth and Jobs Objective in the 2014 to 2020 period, realised in the field of conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage.

- Have to demonstrate clearly that a lack of accessibility is an obstacle which currently hinders the protection, preservation and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage assets

2.A.6.3.b Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.b Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.b Output indicators

Table 4 : Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 5	Number of cultural/natural heritage elements with improved attractiveness	Elements	8	Monitoring	Annual
OP 6	Number of cross-border mechanisms to ensure joint management of common heritage	Mechanisms	12	Monitoring	Annual
OP 7	Number of newly built/improved elements of public touristic infrastructure	Elements	5	Monitoring	Annual
CO14	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	10	Monitoring	Annual

2.A.4.b Investment priority 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure

2.A.5.b Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 2b	<i>Increase of ecological stability and improvement of ecosystem services</i>
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Landscape and natural habitats in the programme area have been and are being adversely affected by humans. Every day several hectares of agricultural and forest land in the region are built up for settlements, infrastructure, energy production, disposal or economic reasons. These

tendencies have a negative impact on biodiversity and on the functioning of ecosystems and lead to their destabilization and vulnerability.

The effects of climate change are also being noticed in the region and floods, droughts and other climate effects are increasingly affecting the regional ecosystems, the local population and some sectors of the economy (e.g. agriculture, tourism, energy).

Landscape and environment are united and inseparable and do not end at administrative borders. It is necessary for the region to look for common solutions that are also cross-border effective.

Thus the expected results of the Investment Priority include:

- Increasingly coordinated approaches and common solutions to tackle issues of landscape transformation, mitigation of climate change effects and conservation of biodiversity,
- Measures of Green Infrastructure realized as an instrument helping to maintain biodiversity in common cross-border region and to assist the ecosystems to function properly,
- To have better managed, protected and gradually upgraded natural habitats and vulnerable landscapes,
- To have enhanced knowledge and awareness of the population and the local communities regarding ecological stability
- The result indicator the “share of weighings for categorie 4 (above average) and 5 (intensive) was chosen for measuring the level of cooperation, integration, harmonization and coherence in local/ regional governance.

The chosen result indicator “share of weighings for categorie 4 and 5 measuring the quality of environment and ecosystem services in cross-border region was created on the basis of a survey organised by the MA and the programme partners in February 2015. (details see annex “Documentation Performance Framework – Methodological remarks”

Table 3 : Programme specific result indicators (by Specific Objective)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ³ (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 4	Share of weighings for categorie 4 and 5 measuring the quality of environment and ecosystem services	%	38,4 %	2015	45 %	Survey (relevant actors in the field of environment /landscape protection) organized by the MA	2017, 2020, 2023

³ For ERDF and Cohesion Fund the target values can be qualitative or quantitative.

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

2.A.6.1.b A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

The protection and restoration of the variety of species and securing the ecosystem is essential for preserving the living conditions and sustainable socio-economic development of the region. In both countries, the biosphere strategies follow the eco-system approach as the leading principle in eco-system management. This means an integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes their conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

According to the national strategies and goals, the interventions of this IP can be summarized under the following bundles:

Coordination, management, public awareness

There is a plurality of different protected areas – national parks, nature parks, RAMSAR and NATURA 2000, biosphere reserve areas and others in the region. Only few of them have special management structures, the systems of monitoring are different. Moreover, needs to increase the understanding of the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use have been identified on both sides of the border.

Eco-system services and risk prevention

Eco-system-based strategies and measures are the most sustainable and effective instruments against the impacts of the climate change. With new innovative solutions using the components and the natural potential of the green infrastructure, the risk for natural disasters can be reduced. The measures of green infrastructure are planned to be supported as an instrument that will help to maintain biodiversity, interlink natural habitats, combat the fragmentation of landscapes and support the ecosystems to function properly.

The following types of actions will be promoted:

- a) Investments in green infrastructure, i.e. natural and landscape elements that contribute to:
 - The prevention of flooding and/or water retention (such as floodplain restoration, wetlands, re-naturalizing rivers and river banks, disaster risk assessment and management)
 - The adaptation to climate change or the mitigation of negative effects (incl. measures to deal with droughts),
 - Easier migration of species in the joint region (artificial landscape elements etc.)
- b) Coordinated preparation and/or implementation of NATURA 2000 and other concepts for protected areas and other measures supporting the preservation of biodiversity
- c) Preparation and implementation of joint cross-border mechanisms – like research, studies, strategies, plans, coordinated management approaches, awareness raising and educational activities and other structural cooperative measures in the field of nature, landscape and river protection and utilization

The strategy and the set of activities under this ID will be in line with the priorities under the pillar “Protecting the environment in the Danube region”, and will support the goal of managing the

environmental risks and the preservation of biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soil.

Main target groups

- Resident population
- Tourists
- Enterprises esp. SMEs
- Non-profit sector
- Public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Public authorities (state, municipalities, regions and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors involved in the protection, management and promotion of environment
- Chambers and associations involved in the protection, management and promotion of the environment

Specific territories targeted

Programme area.

2.A.6.2.b Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions under the various Investment Priorities:

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have the capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contribute to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)

- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid; Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional specific principles that apply to this Investment Priority are:

- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate evidence or realistic assumption on their real/practical application in the sustainable development of common areas.

2.A.6.3.b Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.b Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.b Output indicators

Table 4: **Common and programme specific output indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 8	Number of elements of green infrastructure realized	Elements	4	Monitoring	Annual
OP 9	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of nature, landscape and biological species	Mechanisms	10	Monitoring	Annual

	management				
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2.A.4.b Investment priority 6f: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

2.A.5.b. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 2c	<i>Fostering the utilisation of eco-innovative potential of the region</i>
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The Europe 2020 Strategy requests Member States and regions with its initiative on "A Resource Efficient Europe" to remove barriers that hold back resource efficiency and in this manner create the right set of incentives.

The increased resource efficiency and environmental innovations achieved by interventions in the frame of the programme should be manifested especially in:

- Research findings on energy efficiency and waste management
- Pilot and demonstration projects and infrastructures in the field of energy efficiency and waste management
- Enhanced knowledge and awareness of the population in the field of energy efficiency and waste management

Innovative approaches should be developed in the region and for the region in order to jointly tackle environmental issues by promoting the development and utilisation of new technologies and supporting know-how transfer in the areas of energy efficiency and waste management.

The chosen result indicator Share of weighings for categorie 4 and 5) measuring the level of eco-innovation activities in the region (regional diffusion of eco-innovative activities/technologies) was created on the basis of a survey organised by the MA and the programme partners in February 2015. (details see annex "Documentation Performance Framework – Methodological remarks")

Table 3 Programme specific result indicators (by Specific Objective)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ⁴ (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 5	Share of weighings for categorie 4 and 5) measuring the level of eco-innovation	%	62,4 %	2015	75%	Survey (relevant actors in the field of environment /landscape protection) organized by the	2017, 2020, 2023

⁴ For ERDF and Cohesion Fund the target values can be qualitative or quantitative.

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

2.A.6.1.b A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Eco-innovation is understood as any form of innovation aiming at significant and demonstrable progress towards the goal of sustainable development. This can be achieved either by reducing the environmental impact or achieving a more efficient and responsible use of resources⁵.

This type of innovation will be supported in cases in which significant and demonstrable progress towards the goal of sustainable development is achieved in the whole programme area as well as in cases when such progress is new. For example, introduction of innovative processes which are being successfully implemented in one part of programme area and introduced by supported cooperative action in another part of programme area (as a pilot project, transfer-know how, good practice etc.).

The following types of actions will be supported:

- Realization of cooperation pilot projects for testing and implementing innovative technologies and approaches to improve environmental protection in a joint region (e.g. waste management).
- Innovative cross-border projects that focus on energy efficiency including implementation of low-energy solutions (management plans, pilot actions, know-how and good practice transfer etc.).
- Research, studies, strategies, plans and other mechanisms realized across borders to promote innovative technologies and approaches in the field of environmental protection and resource efficiency.

Main target groups

- Resident population
- Public and private R&I institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Enterprises
- Non-profit sector
- Public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- Public and private R&I institutions

⁵ (see also: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/faq/index_en.htm)

- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Public authorities (state, municipalities, regions and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors involved in protection, management and promotion of environment
- Chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.b Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions under the various Investment Priorities:

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have a capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect the socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contribute to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)
- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on

the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional specific principles that apply to this Investment Priority are :

- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate their evidence or realistic assumptions on their real/practical application, implementation or utilization supporting sustainable development of the programme area

2.A.6.3.b Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.b Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.b Output indicators

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (<i>name of indicator</i>)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 10	Number of eco-innovations introduced in the cross-border area	Eco-innovations	3	Monitoring	Annual
OP 11	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of eco-innovations	Mechanisms	3	Monitoring	Annual

2.A.7.b Performance framework

Table 5 : The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
2	Output indicator	OP5	Number of cultural/natural heritage elements with improved attractiveness	Elements	1	8	Monitoring	

			ss					
2	Output indicator	CO14	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	2	10	Monitoring	
2	Output indicator	OP9	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of nature, landscape and biological species management	Mechanisms	2	10	Monitoring	
2	financial indicator	FI1	eligible expenditures certified	EUR	6 520 356	53 434 764	Monitoring	

“Elements” are understood as concrete tangible/intangible heritage of cultural or natural character (monument, natural park, traditional festival etc). The term “mechanism” refers to solution or combination of solutions developed and/or implemented by cross-border projects to address common / shared challenges faced by the cooperation area and to manage the joint assets in the field of nature, landscape and biological species management. Solutions can inter alia be concepts and strategies; research, studies, plans, coordinated management approaches, awareness raising and educational activities and other structural cooperative measures in the field of nature and landscape protection and utilization.

2.A.8.b Categories of intervention

Tables: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	090 Cycle tracks and footpaths	3,747,113
	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	12,347,459
	092 Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets	2,270,977
	093 Development and promotion of public tourism services	1,391,954
	034 Other reconstructed or improved road (motorway, national, regional or local)	11,581,985
Environment and Resources	085 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	3,179,369
	086 Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites	2,270,977
	087 Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and	3,633,565

	drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures	
Environment and Resources	013 Energy efficiency renovation of public infrastructure, demonstration projects and supporting measures	2,270,977
	017 Household waste management, (including minimisation, sorting, recycling measures)	2,725,173
Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	01 Non-repayable grant	45,419,549

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	4,541,955
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	9,083,910
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	31,793,684

2.A.1.c Priority axis 3: Human resources development

ID of the priority axis	3
Title of the priority axis	Human resources development

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

2.A.2.c Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not relevant

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

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total cost

2.A.4.c Investment Priority 10a: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes

2.A.5.c Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 3a	Extension of common supply of education and qualification activities in order to utilize human resources potential in cross-border region
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In general terms, the population and the labour force of the region are well-educated and qualified. But at the same time, the dynamics of the economic development calls for an adaption process also in the field of education and qualification. This means a higher coherence of the educational systems with the needs and possibilities of the cross-border labour market and the integration of enterprises (esp. SMEs due to their higher flexibility) in the qualification system.

Education and qualification are basic elements in a cross-border integration process and an inclusive development of the society. The knowledge about the political and administrative situation on both sides of the border, about the legal and institutional structure and about the actors and their competences are important conditions for establishing common structures and

cooperation. Investing in people and skills is one of the priority axis formulated in the Danunbe strategy, the identified challenges and planed activities under this IP will contribute to the implementation of a common Danube Region strategy.

The expected results are:

- Existing cooperation activities between education institutions and the economic sector improved
- Increased integration of SMEs in the qualification system
- Improved common framework for education and qualification

For measuring the results of the planned interventions, the indicator “Joint education activities and qualification supply” was chosen. This indicator includes and describes joint (i.e. cross-border) activities in the field of education and qualification (joint: training, courses, educational programmes and other forms of joint education and training, student exchange etc.). Shift in such supply clearly demonstrates reaching the specific objective The baseline was identified through a survey organised in February 2015.

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

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 6	Joint education activities and qualification supply	Number	75	2015	100	Survey	2017, 2020, 2023

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

2.A.6.1.c A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

In border regions, the students and learners are confronted with several problems: access to the education systems is restricted, the administrative structures and certification systems are not standardised, different languages and cultural values as well as historical aspects have an influence on coherence. These problems determine to a great extent the daily life of the inhabitants and the exchange flows.

Apart from technical and economic capabilities, language learning and thus an insight into other cultures is still the most important issue for the further development of the cross-border region (including the labour market) and the integration process. Educational institutions face the challenge of contributing to economic and social harmonisation and to the cultural and psychological integration of border regions.

Within the IP and with the aim to achieve the specific objective, the following types of activities may be realized as an example:

- a) Adaption of educational conditions/systems to the economic and cultural needs of the joint region (meeting the needs of the labour market etc.)

- b) Actions to support harmonisation of the vocational education system for meeting the needs of the joint labour market (e.g. joint schemes to support long-term traineeship of students in companies across the border - “dual education”)
- c) Development and implementation of common systemic measures and jointly implemented programmes in the field of education in form of:
 - Study plans/curricula,
 - Student and staff exchange,
 - Preparing basic principles for harmonization and acceptance of qualifications,
 - Specialised bilateral trainings schemes
 - Language learning

The types of interventions planned cover studies and expertise, planning activities, as well investment in infrastructure, equipment and facilities (under conditions given as specific selection criteria).

Main target groups

- Resident population
- Educational institutions
- Enterprises
- Public sector (esp. labour market institutions)

Types of beneficiaries

- Educational institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences
- Public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors involved in education
- Chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.2.c Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** will guide the selection of interventions

Strategic relevance:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have a capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contribute to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)
- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: the Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional **specific principles** that apply to this Investment Priority are:

Educational infrastructure (as a part of supported action) is funded only on the condition that

- it is necessary for the project and reaching its objective,
- it represents a minor part of its total budget, and
- is directly linked to educational activities.

2.A.6.3.c Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.c Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.c Output indicators

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

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO46	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders	Persons	700	Monitoring	Annual
OP 12	Number of cross-border mechanisms to promote joint training and education	Mechanisms	6	Monitoring	Annual

2.A.7.c. Performance framework

Table 5 : Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
3	Output indicator	CO46	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders	Persons	100	700	Monitoring	
3	Output indicator	OP 12	Number of cross-border mechanisms to promote joint training and education	Mechanisms	1	6	Monitoring	
3	Financial indicator	FI 1	Eligible expenditures certified	EUR	1 963 177	16 088 368	Monitoring	

*The term “mechanism” refers to solution or combination of solutions developed and/or implemented by cross-border projects to address common / shared challenges faced by the cooperation area in the field of education and training. Solutions can inter alia be e.g. studies and strategies; joint training schemes; study plans, documents for harmonization and acceptance of qualifications etc.

2.A.8.c Categories of intervention

Tables: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	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 learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training	3,418,778
	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	10,256,334

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	01 Non-repayable grant	13,675,112

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	6,153,800
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	3,418,778
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	4,102,534

2.A.1.d Priority axis 4: Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation

ID of the priority axis	4
Title of the priority axis	Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation

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

2.A.2.d Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not relevant

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

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total cost

2.A.4.d Investment Priority 11a: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions

2.A.4.d Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Specific objective 4a	Fostering cross-border cooperation of communities and institutions in joint regions
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During the past few years, neighbourly relations have been very good and fruitful not only as a result of existing institutional and professional networks and governance structures, but also in daily contacts with citizens and the organisations of the civil society.

Cross-border cooperation structures enhance the competitiveness and innovative potential of regions. The Austrian-Czech border region has a number of active institutional networks operating to improve the exchange at the personal, administrative and political level. This represents a common pillar to build a cohesive identity by means of cross-border cooperation projects in the field of social, cultural and regional integration and development for a better mutual understanding and promotion a common regional identity.

The interventions within this IP seek to achieve a higher level of regional integration, cross-border coordination and better neighbourhood relations in two areas:

- Intensified coordination, harmonization and cross-border integration of services, standards, planning, and activities of administrative bodies and public service providers on both sides of the border (institutional level) and
- Intensified intercultural exchange aiming a stable integration and cohesion (community level).

These goals are to be achieved by a wide range of cooperation activities between citizens, communities and institutions and making use of participation and civil society activities.

As result indicator measuring the level of cooperation, integration, harmonization and coherence in local/ regional governance the “share of weighings for categorie 4 (above average) and 5 (intensive)”) was chosen. This indicator was identified with a survey prepared and organised by the MA, submitted to 678 persons/institutions in November 2014. (details see annex „Documentation Performance Framework - Methodological remarks“

Table 3 : Programme Specific Result indicators (by specific objective)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 7	Share of weighings for categorie 4 (above average) and 5 (intensive) measuring the level of cooperation/ integration	%	22%	2014	30% categories 4 + 5	Survey organized by the MA 2014	2017, 2020, 2023

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

2.A.6.1.d A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Within the investment priority and with the aim to reach the specific objective, the following types of activities are possible:

- a) Fostering cooperation among municipalities, cities and regions and other institutions within public sector
- b) Strengthening networks (esp. of NGOs) on the local/regional level and fostering the potential for cooperation with clear-cross border approach and targets
- c) Fostering small-scale integration, cooperation between citizens and institutions and other local cohesion activities (SPF).

Such a special fund may be established to support cooperative activities and the cross-border exchange between local residents and the local and regional initiatives and institutions in the field of social, cultural and regional integration and development for a better mutual understanding and promotion a common regional identity.

Examples of concrete areas/activities within the above mentioned types:

- Joint social, cultural and other similar cooperation activities that contribute to mutual understanding and cohesion in cross-border areas
- Systemic cooperation of educational and labour market institutions
- Cooperation activities in the field of transport measures for the better coordination and harmonization of public transport in cross-border regions, measures for the coordination of transport network development etc.
- Cooperation activities of bodies responsible for risk management
- Cooperation activities of schools and others educational institutions (joint meetings, activities for children etc.)
- Other cooperation measures in the field of public services and activities of public interest

Main target groups

- Resident population (local communities)
- Tourists
- Enterprises
- Non-profit sector
- Public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- Public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- Non-profit actors
- Chambers and associations
- Public and private R&I institutions
- Educational institutions
- Universities and universities of applied sciences

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.A.6.2.d Guiding principles for the selection of operations

I. The following **general principles** guide the selection of interventions:

- The project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority and Thematic Objective, as set out in article 9 of the CPR and in article 5 of the ERDF regulation;
- Coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

- The project partners are eligible according to the programme rules and have a capacity for the sound management of the project

Regional relevance:

- Interventions reflect the socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development
- The project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contributes to strengthening the common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

- The project fulfils cross-border cooperation criteria (Art. 12(4) ETC Reg.)
- The project is implemented on both sides of the border or in a single country, provided that cross-border impacts and benefits are identified and clear (Art. 12(2) ETC Reg.)

Specific quality of the project:

- The project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective
- The project outcomes are of a sustainable nature (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

- The interventions consider equality between men and women and non-discrimination principles
- The interventions will be implemented considering sustainable development

State aid:

- It will be executed in accordance with the valid EU rules for State Aid. In appropriate cases, the following will apply: Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, or it will be notified to the European Commission.

II. Additional **specific principles** that apply to this Investment Priority are:

- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate their evidence or realistic assumption on their real/practical application, implementation or utilization supporting a sustainable development of programming area.

2.A.6.3.d Planned use of financial instruments

Not relevant

2.A.6.4.d Planned use of major projects

Not relevant

2.A.6.5.d Output indicators

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

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 12	(Project)Partners responsible in form and content involved in cross-border activities	Partners	320	Monitoring	Annual

2.A.7.d Performance framework

Table 5 : The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
4	Output indicator	OP 12	(Project)Partners responsible in form and content involved in cross-border activities	Partners	40	320	Monitoring	
4	Financial indicator	FI 1	Eligible expenditures certified	EUR	2,924,151	23,963,618	Monitoring	

2.A.8.d Categories of intervention

Tables : Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation	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	20,369,075

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation	01 Non-repayable grant	20,369,075
Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional cooperation	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50,000 population)	6,110,723
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5,000 population)	8,147,629
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	6,110,723

2.B. Description of the priority axis for technical assistance

2.B.1 Priority axis 5: Technical Assistance

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	5
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	Technical assistance

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

<i>Fund</i>	<i>ERDF</i>
<i>Calculation basis (public or total)</i>	<i>Total eligible expenditure</i>

2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results

<i>Specific objective</i>	<i>Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme</i>
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The use of Technical Assistance funds should ensure the functioning of all major bodies which act in programme implementation, i.e. in particular the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, the Controllers, Audit and Certifying Authorities, the Regional Bodies (Länder and Kraje) and the National Authority.

The key results of the programme are successful projects with visible outputs. The services supported by Technical Assistance are considered a means to achieve this end. The programme management bodies should ensure competent services to the beneficiaries throughout all stages of the Project Management Cycle, i.e. from project generation, selection and contracting to control and closure. With a view to the European level the programme management bodies will ensure sound reporting which ultimately should contribute to the acknowledgement of the programme achievements by the relevant Commission services. Therefore, reporting helps demonstrate the value-added of ETC programmes. In accordance with the available budget, the management team will consist of 1.75 fulltime equivalents for the MA and 6 for the JS.

A further dimension is work in information and communications.

Firstly, a key point is to ensure easy access to the information for all interested applicants and beneficiaries. With a view to more technical information for applicants and beneficiaries, the options of internet-based online services should be paired with the offer for face-to-face consultation. Therefore, the broad variety of potential applicants and beneficiaries as well as their differing communications requirements should be taken into account.

Secondly, publicity and information should contribute to the visibility of programme achievements in the programme region through a broad variety of means such as dissemination of good practices, events for a broader audience, campaigns, etc.

2.B.4 Result indicators

Not relevant

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

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

This priority axis includes activities for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the present programme as well as information and publicity to support the active participation of all partners and regions. This should guarantee the preconditions (materials and personnel resources) for programme implementation and efficient and effective monitoring, including control, monitoring, evaluation, information and public relations.

Examples of actions supported to ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme are:

- Adequate staffing of Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat
- Adequate resources primarily for FLCs and also for Regional Bodies and National Authority
- Office and IT cost for these bodies
- Services required by the Audit and Certifying Authorities
- Development and maintenance of the Monitoring System
- Publicity and information measures
- Services related to evaluation, indicator development and programming for the forthcoming period
- Development and implementation of an evaluation plan
- Closure of the programme

As an important action to ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme, an effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures are to be put in place. In this context measures according to the art. 125.4(c) of the Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 will be adopted and can be financed from the TA.

Human resource management

Based on the experience from the last programming periods, human resource management has been identified as a very important task. Special training courses, handbooks and the periodical exchange of experiences in the form of international, regional and national workshops will help to qualify the management team.

In order to guarantee and constantly upgrade the proper functioning of the Management & Control System of the programme, the programme partners provide sufficient TA means for "human resource development" by means of training and qualification purposes of the programme authorities (MA/JS). Here the focus reaches from courses and trainings in languages, organisational and management skills, as well as project management, teambuilding and monitoring. Furthermore, if needed, individualised trainings, in specific questions such as e.g. procurement law, intercultural communication and personnel management etc., will be supported. ETC-specific trainings, workshops and seminars (e.g. by

Interact, etc.) will be attended whenever meaning- and useful for the programme management.

Through constant quality human resource development it is intended to provide the highest possible degree of stability and continuity in the programme management and hence, safeguard long-term know-how (2023 and beyond) for proper programme-implementation and closure.

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

Table 11 : **Output indicators**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data
OP 15	No of projects committed and successfully closed (P)	Number	200	Monitoring
OP 16	Number of major publicity events (P)	Number	2	Monitoring
OP 17	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	Number	12	Monitoring
OP 18	Number of employees (full-time equivalents) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance"	Full time equivalents	15	Monitoring

2.B.6. Categories of intervention

Tables: **Categories of intervention**

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	4,988,561
	122 Evaluation and studies	440,167
	123 Information and communication	440,167
Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	01 Non-repayable grant	5,868,895
Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	1,173,779
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	2,347,558
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	2,347,558

SECTION 3 Financing Plan

3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in EUR)

Table 15:

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<3.1.1 type='S' input='G'>								
<i>ERDF</i>	0	11,935,826	10,116,592	18,381,785	18,749,421	19,124,410	19,506,899	97,814,933
<i>IPA amounts (where applicable)</i>	0							
<i>ENI amounts (where applicable)</i>	0							
<i>Total</i>	0	11,935,826	10,116,592	18,381,785	18,749,421	19,124,410	19,506,899	97,814,933

3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in EUR)

Table16: **Financing plan**

	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d))	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b) (2)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)
					National funding (c)	Public National private funding (1) (d)		
Priority axis 1	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	12,482,302	2,216,357	730,517	1,485,840	14,698,659	0.85
Priority axis 2	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	45,419,549	8,049,148	2,682,949	5,366,199	53,468,697	0.85
Priority axis 3	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	13,675,112	2,416,604	797,479	1,619,125	16,091,716	0.85
Priority axis 4	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	20,369,075	3,601,416	1,200,256	2,401,160	23,970,491	0.85
Priority axis 5 (TA)	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)		5,868,895	1,035,426	1,036,426	0	6,905,321.00	0.85
Total	ERDF	Total eligible cost	97,814,933	17,319,951	6,447,627	10,872,324	115,134,884	0.85
Total	Total all Funds	Total eligible cost	97,814,933	17,319,951	6,447,627	10,872,324	115,134,884	0.85

3.2.B.

Table 17 Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
PA 1	TO 1	12,482,302	2,216,357	14,698,659
PA 2	TO 6	45,419,549	8,049,148	53,468,697
PA 3	TO 10	13,675,112	2,416,604	16,091,716
PA 4	TO 11	20,369,075	3,601,416	23,970,491
TOTAL		91,946,038	16,283,525	108,229,563

Table 18 Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
PA 1	0,00	0,00 %
PA 2	11,831,793.40	12.10%
PA 5	0,00	0,00 %
Total	11,831,793.40	12.10 %

SECTION 4 Integrated Approach to Territorial Development

The economic and socio-demographic structure in the border region can be characterised by marked regional disparities in prosperity and development. The disparities are apparent in the distinct disparities between cities and the countryside and in differentials in prosperity between the Austrian and the Czech regions. There are underdeveloped regions with weak and less competitive branches and enterprises, regions with structural problems and highly dynamic regions with an innovative economic environment and a large number of competitive enterprises.

The challenge of a cross border program is to react in an appropriate way on the regional needs taking into account the different national and regional strategies, different quality levels of development, different administrative and political structures, different languages and legal systems. ETC programmes pursue the goal of cooperation and integration of regions by strengthening the institutional capacities and networks as well as reducing the barriers for a integrated local and regional territorial development. Having this in mind this programme was prepared with a clear integrated approach concerning the relation to other programs. It can be seen as a complementary program to the ERDF programs "Investment and employment" (PA 1), the ESF programs (PA 3) and the EAFDR (PA 2) and follows the strategy to strengthen existing functional cross border areas. The **orientation of an integrated territorial development** within the priorities and IPs can be described as follows:

P1: The allocation of the R&I institutions in the region shows a regional concentration although there are efforts for the diffusion of these activities. Technology transfer activities and the establishment of R&I institutions in the peripheral areas should bring these locations and the regional enterprises closer to the national/international innovation system. About 33% of the financial allocation is foreseen for regions apart from the main urban agglomerations. The activities planned focus on investment and sharing R&I capacities as well as supporting enterprises to participate in the innovation system. This approach can guarantee a more integrated development in the field of R&I.

P2: Environmental questions and resources are closely connected to the diversity of the landscape, the settlement structures, the changing life style and the structure of regional/local economy. Activities and projects will concentrate on preserving natural and cultural heritage especially in the rural areas, the mitigation of climate change and on resource efficient strategies. The problems addressed affect in a very high extent the rural areas, about 90% of the priorities budget was allocated to rural and small urban areas. Fostering the territorial integrated approach resource efficient and sustainable products and processes will be favoured.

P3 & P4: Most of the networking in the sub-regions is oriented towards bilateral structures. Urban centers have gained the most importance in this process and are already becoming supra-regional network nodes. Nonetheless, small-scale networking also takes place. Especially in the border areas where participants and key players at the municipal level have up to now played a relevant role even though their influence and results rarely extend beyond the proximate areas. The financial allocation offers the opportunity to support activities more in the non urban agglomeration.

4.1 Community-led local development

Not relevant

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development

Not relevant

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)

Not relevant

4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

The CP AT-CZ pays attention to the EUSDR both in the programming process and in the implementation phase. How the TOs and IPs refer to the EUSDR targets, priority areas and “actions” of the EU Strategy and th Action plan 2010 is shown in the following table:

Danube Strategy			OP AT-CZ
Pillar	Priority Area	Actions	TO and IPs
Building Prosperity in the Danube Region	To develop the Knowledge Society through Research, Education and information technologies	<p>To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure</p> <p>To strengthen universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points</p> <p>To foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in areas of competence in the Danube Region</p> <p>To improve business support to strengthen the capacities of SMEs for cooperation and trade</p> <p>To support enterprises through high performing training and qualification schemes</p> <p>To eliminate cross-border barriers and bottleneck to people and business</p> <p>To improve framework conditions for SMEs in areas where competitive infrastructure is missing</p>	IP 1a, 1b, 10
	To invest in people and skills	<p>To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies</p> <p>To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments</p>	IP 10

<p style="text-align: center;">Connecting the Danube region</p>	<p>To promote culture and tourism, people-to-people Contacts</p>	<p>To build on cultural diversity as strength of the Danube Region</p> <p>To enhance cooperation and contacts between people of different origins, to encourage creativity, and provide a driving force for cultural innovation and economic development, based on heritage, traditions and tourism.</p> <p>To establish the Danube Region as important European tourist destination”</p> <p>To further enhance interconnection and cooperation in education and scientific and research activities for tourism</p> <p>To improve planning and infrastructure for tourism.</p> <p>To support the improvement of the quality of tourism products</p> <p>To promote sustainable tourism</p>	<p>IP 6 c</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Protecting the environment in the Danube region</p>	<p>To restore and maintain the quality of water</p>	<p>To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure</p> <p>To foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address agricultural pollution.</p>	<p>6 d</p>
	<p>To manage environmental risks</p>	<p>To develop and adopt one single overarching flood management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin</p> <p>To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including “green infrastructure: Example of project: to support the Morava-Thaya Basin initiatives</p> <p>To strengthen operational cooperation among the emergency response authorities in the Danube countries and to improve the interoperability of the available assets</p> <p>Anticipate regional and local impacts of</p>	<p>6 d</p>

		<p>climate change through research</p> <p>To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods</p>	
	<p>To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soil</p>	<p>To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity</p> <p>To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively</p> <p>To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species</p> <p>To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats”</p> <p>To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)</p> <p>To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development</p> <p>To educate children and young people</p> <p>To build capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters</p>	<p>6 d</p>

During implementation, the programme will ensure appropriate coordination with the Macroregional Strategy for the Danube Region by

- Governance arrangements for information exchange, coordination and joint planning in areas of joint interest. During programme implementation, the national coordination committees in the framework of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) for ETC programs will ensure a continuous institutionalised exchange of information on MRS among program partners; and vice versa, information about program activities will be reported to the established national coordination platform for the EUSDR. Furthermore, an embedding into the strategic monitoring process STRAT.AT 2020 would be possible.
- Developing more in-depth working relationships between EU program partners and EUSDR stakeholders, both on transnational, national and regional levels, on identified issues/activities of joint interest in the implementation phase.
- Involvement of EUSDR partners in programme and project capitalisation activities could be a useful method to profit from the specific expertise.

In the Czech Republic the EU strategy for the Danube Region lies within the competence of the Government office of the Czech Republic. In order to coordinate the macro-regional strategies and fulfilling the role of a national contact point the State Secretary established the so called Coordination Group for macro-regional strategies. Members of this group are mainly: Czech representatives of the steering groups, representatives of other resorts, of regional stakeholders and representatives who are in charge of negotiating the CP of Danube trans-national cooperation. Also other entities are allowed to take part on the negotiations within this coordination group. The aim of the group is to fulfil the needs of the above mentioned national Contact Point in the frame of macro-regional strategies (not only the EU Strategy for the Danube Region). This group serves as a platform for a mutual exchange of information between the stakeholders on a horizontal and sectoral level. Information about the development of macro-regional agenda and about the role of the Czech Republic in particular initiatives and projects is being exchanged also within ministries (including the Ministry of Regional Development – National Authority of the Programme). In that manner it can be ensured that all relevant stakeholders are informed. When necessary, particular stakeholders can be invited as guests to the Monitoring Committee meetings.

Section 5 Implementing Provisions for the Cooperation Programme

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 21: Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Office of the Government of Lower Austria Abteilung Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik, RU 2 A-3109 St. Pölten	Dr. Bernhard Köhle
Certifying authority, where applicable	Office of the Government of Lower Austria Abteilung Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik, RU 2 A-3109 St. Pölten	Mag. Hajnalka Triteos Meidlik
Audit authority	Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria A-1014 Wien	Mag. Susanna Rafalzik

The MA and the CA are assigned to the same department but in different sections. The MA is an autonomous section within the department. Both sections are not subject to directives.

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The certifying authority	Office of the Government of Lower Austria A-3109 St. Pölten
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Table 22: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body and department or unit	Head of the authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Center for Regional Development of the Czech Republic, CZ-120 00 Praha 2	Mag. Markéta Reedová, MPA Director general
	Office of Government of Lower Austria Group of Spatial Planning, Environment and Transport (RU), A-3109 St. Pölten	Mag. Alois Zink, Head of respective Control Group
	and Office of Government of Upper Austria, Department for Economics, A-4021 Linz	Hans-Peter Tremmel, Head of respective Control Group
	Office of Government of Vienna, Department European Affairs, A-1080	Mag. Margot Hochleitner, Head of respective Control Group

	Vienna	
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	<p>Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, Department Audit Authority, CZ - 118 10 Praha 1</p> <p>Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, Department IV/3, Ballhausplatz 2 A-1010 Wien</p>	<p>PhDr. Evžen Mrázek, Head of department</p> <p>Mag. Susanna Rafalzik, Head of department</p>

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

The Managing Authority in agreement with the programme partners from Austria and the Czech Republic sets up the Joint Secretariat (JS) for the programme in compliance with the Article 23, paragraph 2 of Regulation on European Territorial Cooperation (ETC).

The Joint Secretariat supports the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee to effectively support the implementation of the programme. The JS undertakes the day-to-day implementation of the programme. Activities of the JS during the programme period will be financed from TA resources.

The JS office will be located both in the Czech Republic, Brno and in Austria, St.Pölten, together with the MA.

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

The next chapter provides the summary of the administrative structure for implementing this programme. All details are outlined in the Description of the Management and Control System.

The two Member States of this programme are differently organised. The Czech Republic is centralised, whereas Austria is a Federal State. The competencies and responsibilities of the Member States are regulated under regulations (EU) No. 1301/2013, No. 1303/2013, No. 1299/2013.

In Austria an agreement between the Federal State and the Austrian *Länder* (Art. 15a Austrian Constitutional Law) regulates the delegation of tasks and responsibilities of the Austrian Member State to the following bodies ("Regional Bodies"):

- Office of Government of Lower Austria
A-3109 St. Pölten
- Office of Government of Upper Austria
A-4021 Linz
- Office of Government of Vienna
A-1080 Vienna

In the Czech Republic, the Member State is represented by the Ministry of Regional Development ("National Authority) of the Czech Republic in Prague. The National Authority supports the Managing Authority with coordination of activities in the Czech Republic.

Prior to submission to the European Commission, the representatives of the two Member States – Czech Ministry of Regional Development and Office of the Government of Lower Austria, Office of the Government of Upper Austria and Office of the Government of Vienna – sign an Agreement on the content of the Cooperation Programme according to Article 8 (9) of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013.

In accordance with art. 74.3 of the Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 effective arrangements for the examination of complaints shall be ensured. Programme-related complaints by beneficiaries can be raised at the level of Managing Authority. Such appeals and complaints will be discussed with the relevant responsible national/ regional bodies. The MC will be informed about the complaints and is responsible for decisions in the cases of disagreements. The detailed procedure will be described in the internal administrative handbook.

Implementation structure

Managing Authority

Managing the Cooperation Programme:

According to the Article 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 (further on CPR for Common Provision Regulation), the Managing Authority is responsible for:

- managing the cooperation programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management;
- support the work of the monitoring committee and provide it with the information it requires to carry out its tasks, in particular data relating to the progress of the cooperation programme in achieving its objectives, financial data and data
- relating to indicators and milestones (specific objectives);
- draw up and, after approval by the monitoring committee, submit to the Commission annual and final implementation reports referred to in Article 50 of CPR;
- make available to intermediate bodies and beneficiaries information that is relevant to the execution of their tasks and the implementation of operations respectively;
- establish a system to record and store in computerised form data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in operations;
- ensure that the data is collected, entered and stored in the system;

Additional functions related to programme management in accordance with Regulation 1299/2013 (further on ETC Regulation) Article 23:

- establish a joint secretariat, after consulting the Member States participating in the programme;

- organise programme meetings, in particular meetings of the monitoring committee which shall take place at least once a year.

Selection of Operations:

- draw up and, once approved, apply appropriate selection procedures and criteria that ensure the contribution of operations to the achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority, are non-discriminatory and transparent and take into account the general principles of gender equality, nondiscrimination and sustainable development;
- ensure that a selected operation falls within the scope of the relevant fund (ERDF) concerned and can be attributed to a category of intervention;
- ensure that the beneficiary is provided with a document setting out the conditions for support for each operation including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, and the time-limit for execution;
- satisfy itself that the beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity before approval of the operation;
- ensure that operations selected for support from the Funds (ERDF) do not include activities which were part of an operation which has been or should have been subject to a procedure of recovery in accordance with Article 71 of CPR following the relocation of a productive activity outside the programme area;
- determine the categories of intervention;

Financial Management and Control of the CP:

- satisfy itself that responsibility for verifications pursuant to Article 125(4) point a) of CPR are clearly assigned to both participating Member States together with delegated authorities (controllers) verify that the co-financed products and services have been delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries has been paid and that it complies with applicable law, the cooperation programme, eventual eligibility rules established at programme level in accordance with CPR, Article 125.(5) and the conditions for support of the operation;
- satisfy itself - in accordance with Article 23 of the ETC Regulation – that expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by the designated controller. Verification mentioned in previous point include the following procedures: i) administrative verification of each application for reimbursement submitted by beneficiaries and ii) on-the-spot verifications of operations the latter may be carried out on a sample basis which is proportionate to the amount of public support granted to an operation and the risk level identified by the audit authority (CPR, Art. 125(5b) 125(6)
- ensure that beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations are reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred; the beneficiaries have to maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation;
- put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified;

- set up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of point (g) of Article 72 of CPR;
- draw up the management declaration and annual summary;

Joint Secretariat (JS)

The Secretariat performs the following tasks:

- provides support to the Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee in their functions;
- provides to potential applicants information on funding opportunities within the programme and assist beneficiaries in implementation of their operations;
- organises Monitoring Committee sessions, including preparation and distribution of relevant documents;
- organises other meetings and events to support effective implementation of the programme and supported operations;
- organises the project selection process, including development of assessment sheets (templates) for appraisal and selection of operations;
- elaborates and distributes bilingual minutes of Monitoring Committee sessions to its nominated members;
- organises the process of evaluation on programme level;
- elaborates ERDF contracts for the lead partners and the MA;
- monitors implementation of supported operations (e.g. on basis of monitoring reports);
- collects relevant information and provides inputs to annual and final implementation reports;
- participates on preparation and implements the programme communication strategy;
- has the responsibility for the content and maintenance of the official programme website;
- participates in the elaboration and update of guidance documents for applicants and beneficiaries;
- collaborates with the Managing Authority on establishment a system to record and store in computerised form data on each operation.

Besides JS, information and consultation to potential applicants as well as guidance are provided also by “Regional Bodies”; in Austria, by the Austrian Member States (see Chap. 5.3) and in the Czech Republic by the following bodies:

- Krajský úřad Kraje Vysočina
CZ - 587 33 Jihlava
- Krajský úřad Jihomoravského Kraje
CZ- 601 82 Brno
- Krajský úřad Jihočeského Kraje
CZ - 370 76 České Budějovice

Certifying Authority

According to the Article 126 of CPR, the Certifying Authority is responsible for:

- drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission, and certifying that they result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the managing authority;
- drawing up the accounts referred to in point (a) of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;
- certifying the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with applicable law and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the cooperation programme and complying with applicable law;
- ensuring that there is a system which records and stores, in computerised form, accounting records for each operation, and which supports all the data required for drawing up payment applications and accounts, including records of amounts recoverable, amounts recovered and amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation or cooperation programme;
- ensuring, for the purposes of drawing up and submitting payment applications, that it has received adequate information from the managing authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure;
- taking account when drawing up and submitting payment applications of the results of all audits carried out by, or under the responsibility of, the audit authority;
- maintaining, in a computerised form, accounting records of expenditure declared to the Commission and of the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;
- keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the budget of the Union prior to the closure of the cooperation programme by deducting them from the subsequent statement of expenditure.

Audit Authority

The Audit Authority has to be located in the same Member State as the Managing Authority. The Austrian Federal Chancellery will again take over this task and responsibility.

The tasks of the Audit Authority are defined in Article 127 of CPR, and among its primary duties include, in particular:

- ensure that audits are carried out on the proper functioning of the management and control system of the cooperation programme and on an appropriate sample of operations on the basis of the declared expenditure. The declared expenditure shall be audited based on a representative sample and with a sampling method in accordance with the provisions in CPR, Article 127.(1);
- ensure that audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards, within 8 months of adoption of an cooperation programme, prepare an audit strategy for performance of audits. The audit strategy shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on operations and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years. The audit strategy shall be updated annually from 2016 until and including 2024. Where a common management and control system applies to more than one cooperation programme, a single audit strategy

may be prepared for the cooperation programmes concerned. The audit authority shall submit the audit strategy to the Commission upon request;

- draw up an audit opinion in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation;
- draw up a control report setting out the main findings of the audits carried out, including findings with regard to deficiencies found in the management and control systems, and the proposed and implemented corrective actions;

In accordance with Article 25 of the ETC Regulation the following provisions have been agreed:

- the Audit Authority shall cooperate with the group of auditors (GoA) composed of a representative from each Member State participating in the programme. The Czech Member State will be represented by the Ministry of Finance. Each Member State shall be responsible for audits carried out on its territory. Each representative from each Member State shall be responsible for providing the factual elements relating to expenditure on its territory that are required by the audit authority in order to perform its assessment;
- the GoA shall be set up within three months of the decision approving the cooperation programme. It shall draw up its own rules of procedure and be chaired by the audit authority for the cooperation programme.

Controllers

In accordance with point 4 of Article 23 of Regulation (EU) No. 1299/2013 each Member State designated body (“controller”) responsible for carrying out verifications according to point (a) of Article 125(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. Controllers are listed in Table No. 22.

Monitoring Committee (MC)

According to Article 47 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the Member States establish in agreement with the Managing Authority, within three months after the approval of the Operational Programme by the European Commission, a bilateral Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee is the highest decision-making body and bears overall responsibility for programme guidance and implementation. The main tasks of the Monitoring Committee include:

- drawing up and adopting its rules of procedure;
- establishment of eligibility rules at the programme level in accordance with the article 18 of the ETC regulation;
- review of implementation of the programme and the progress made towards achieving its objectives. In doing so, it shall have regard to the financial data, common and programme-specific indicators, including changes in the value of result indicators and progress towards quantified target values, and the milestones defined in the performance framework referred to in Article 21(1) of CPR, and, where relevant, the results of qualitative analyses.
- examination of all issues that affect the performance of the programme, including the conclusions of the performance reviews;
- provision of consultation and, if it considers it to be appropriate, an opinion on any amendment of the programme proposed by the managing authority;

In addition to the regulatory tasks of the monitoring committee, as specified under articles 47 -49 of regulations 1303/2013 the MS shall be responsible for

- use of possibility to make observations to the managing authority regarding implementation and evaluation of the programme including actions related to the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries. The Monitoring Committee shall monitor the actions taken as a result of its observations.
- review of the progress made in the implementation of the evaluation plan and measures taken with regard to the evaluation results;
- approval of the methodology and the criteria used for selection of operations;
- selection of the operations based on approved selection criteria;
- approval of the annual and final implementation reports;
- approval of the evaluation plan and any amendment of the evaluation plan;
- approval of the communication strategy for the cooperation programme and any amendment of the strategy and review its implementation
- proposal and approval of amendments to the cooperation programme.

Project cycle

Project application

Potential applicants receive detailed information about the application process on the programme website: www.at-cz.eu. Both the JS and the “Regional Bodies” provide the applicants with consultation and guidance. Generally, an open call system is set up. In this programme, an e-monitoring system will be applied. It will include a communications portal, which enables the electronic exchange of data between programme bodies and applicants/beneficiaries.

Project assessment and selection

The whole project assessment phase is under the overall responsibility of the JS. The JS organises the process of project assessment (exact details and responsibilities will be described in a description of the management and control system as well as in internal manuals).

The JS sums up the assessment results and creates a project summary sheet that forms the basis for the decision-making process in the Monitoring Committee.

Contracting

After the project has been approved by the MC and has met all programme conditions, the Managing Authority issues the ERDF contract. A template of the contract is available on the programme website.

ERDF payments

Beneficiaries are obliged to pre-finance their expenses. Incurred costs will be refunded after their certification. The Certifying Authority sends the ERDF payment to the Lead Partner only. The Lead Partner is obliged to forward the respective amount to its project partners.

Monitoring

As stipulated in Articles 74 and 122 of the CPR, data exchange between the programme and the European Commission will be carried out electronically (by means of the CSFSFC 2014 system). On the side of the programme, the monitoring system (according to Article 72 of the CPR) shall provide data and information needed to fulfil the management, monitoring and evaluation requirements.

In accordance with Article 122(3) of the CPR, the programme will ensure that, if possible already at programme start, but no later than 31 December 2015, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority as well as the controllers can be carried out by means of an electronic data exchange system.

The monitoring system – among others – will ensure fulfilment of the key functions listed below:

- Recording of the work plan based on the Joint Annual Work Plan as approved by the Monitoring Committee;
- Online calls for projects
- Online submission of expenditures to the first level controller and online validation of expenditures;
- Online progress and financial reporting;
- Online progress and financial monitoring;
- Online certification and payments;
- Reporting and administration of irregularities and implementation of recoveries;
- Online provision of information for audit purposes;
- Online exchange of data with the European Commission.

Furthermore, the newly developed e-Monitoring System will comply with the following aspects/requirements:

- Data integrity and confidentiality;
- Authentication of the sender within the meaning of Directive 1999/93/EC4;
- Storage in compliance with retention rules defined in accordance with Article 125 of the CPR
- Secure transfer of data;
- Availability during and outside standard office hours (almost 24/7, except for technical maintenance activities);
- Accessibility by the Member States and the beneficiaries either directly or via an interface for automatic synchronisation and recording of data with national, regional and local computer management systems;

- Protection of privacy of personal data for individuals and commercial confidentiality for legal entities with respect to the information processed (according to Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Directive 1995/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data).

In order to transfer data to the European Commission, the administration system of the e-MS shall facilitate interoperability with the Union frameworks as required by Article 122 (3) of the REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 (CPR).

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

The Managing Authority, assisted by the JS, shall be responsible for setting up, maintaining and running the electronic monitoring system. In particular, the electronic monitoring system developed by INTERACT II (called e-MS) shall be adapted and configured according to the needs of the programme.

Sufficient resources from the Technical Assistance budget have to be provided by the Programme partners.

5.4 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the Managing Authority or the Commission

Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid according to Article 122(2) of the CPR, the Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead partner. In accordance with Article 27 of the ETC Regulation, the project partners shall repay the lead partner any amounts unduly paid.

If the lead partner does not succeed in securing repayment from a project partner or if the Managing Authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead partner, the Member State on whose territory the project partner concerned is located the project partner concerned comes shall reimburse the Managing Authority the amount unduly paid to that project partner according to Article 27(3) of the ETC Regulation. Upon request of the responsible Member State which reimbursed the amount to the Programme budget, the Managing Authority transfer to this Member State the claim of recourse against a Lead partner and/or a project partner or sole beneficiary within two months from the date of request.

The Managing Authority is responsible for reimbursing the amounts recovered to the general budget of the Union, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down below. The MA will reimburse the funds to the Union once the amounts are recovered from the LP/PP/MS.

For a financial correction that cannot be assigned to a particular project partner, the liability is borne by Member States which caused the irregularity that are the source of the financial correction. For a systemic irregularity or financial correction on programme level that cannot be linked to a specific Member State, the liability shall be jointly borne by the Member States in proportion to the ERDF claimed to the European Commission for the period which forms the basis for the financial correction. The details are regulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

For the technical assistance expenditure incurred by the Member States, liability shall be borne by the Member State concerned.

5.5 Use of the Euro (where applicable)

The calculation method as established under article Art. 28., letter b) regulation 1299/2013 will be applied.

5.6. Involvement of partners

The following partners have been included in the developing process of this programme: competent public regional and local authorities; economic and social partners; and relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

The main reason for involving stakeholders in programming is to identify mutual interests and needs, secure commitment and ownership for the programme and ensure its practical implementation.

The programme introduced a number of platforms for effective communication with relevant partners and stakeholders throughout the programming process. The bilateral programming group responsible for the preparation of the programme for 2014-2020 was established in 2012. 18 meetings were held. The members of the Programming Group are:

- Managing Authority
- Czech Ministry for Regional Development (MMR)
- Representatives of the 3 Czech Krajs
- Representatives of the 3 Austrian *Länder*
- Austrian Federal Chancellery
- European Commission

The Monitoring Committee has been informed periodically about the status of the programming process. Beside the programming group, an intensive discussion process was organised in the Krajs/Länder. Regional stakeholders, representatives of regional and civil associations, representatives of the science sector, social and cultural institutions, regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners and non-governmental organisations where participating several thematic workshops organised within the platforms of the accompanying projects PRO2013+, RECOM and EDM. These projects are covering the whole programme area. Several regional workshops were held in the region, regional and local participants were organised within working groups and workshops. On the one hand, the material and results prepared in these projects have been integrated into the analysis and have been substantial inputs for the programmes content and focus. On the other hand, these workshops offered the opportunity to discuss the programme strategy and priorities.

Workshops RECOM:

- 20 March 2014 –Regional/institutional cooperation

- 21 March 2014 - Nature/environment/cultural heritage
- 10 April 2014 – Education/Qualification
- 11 April 2014 - Innovation/Research
- 30 April 2014 – Health/Social affairs

Workshop PRO 2013+

- 28 August 2011 Kick off, Mikulov
- 29 February 2012 WS Lower Austria and Vienna
- 09 August 2012 Common WS Lower Austria and Vienna
- 06 November 2012 Bilateral WS Znojmo
- 29 November 2012 Zukunftskonferenz, Ziersdorf
- 15 November 2013 Abschlusskonferenz Jihlava
- 10 October 2012_Brno – Workshop JMK + KV k tématům spolupráce v oblastech výzkum a vývoj, vzdělávání a kvalifikace, trh práce a zaměstnanost
- 11 October 2012_Brno - Workshop JMK + KV k tématům spolupráce v oblastech životní prostředí, kultura, cestovní ruch, institucionální spolupráce
- 20 September 2013 in Jihlava: prezentace výstupů projektu PRO 2013+ - analýza potenciálu
- 28 November 2013 – konference PRO 2013+ - prezentace výstupů projektu PRO 2013+ - analýza potenciálů
- 16 December 2013 in Telč: jednání Pracovní skupiny Věda a výzkum Dohody o spolupráci mezi spolkovou zemí Dolní Rakousko a kraji Jihomoravským, Jihočeským a Krajem Vysočina
- 19 March 2014 in Brüssel: workshop Evropský region Dunaj – Vltava v kontextu nového programového období 2014 – 2020

Besides the structure mentioned, internal meetings within the national and regional administration organised by the members of the Programming Group took place.

- 17 February 2012, Budweis
- 21 August 2012, Budweis
- 23 January 2013, Budweis
- 12 July 2013, Budweis
- 14 January 2014, Budweis

The information of the departments of the City of Vienna about the new programming period and its thematic objectives started on 2 December 2011 with a meeting followed by 11 interviews at the beginning of 2012 with the main regional stakeholders in the future thematic fields.

Based on the results of the interviews, two thematic workshops were held in autumn 2012 on the main future topics of research and innovation as well as environment, energy and regional planning. The aim was to inform but also gather first project ideas: 55 participants from the chamber of commerce and chamber of labour, public and private research institutions, universities and universities of applied science as well as the responsible departments of the City of Vienna attended the two half-day events.

The main regional stakeholders including the relevant departments of the City of Vienna were asked to comment the first draft of the selected investment priorities in a written procedure. Altogether 100 persons were contacted, more than one third replied.

In July 2013, an internal consultation process was started. The document has been discussed within the regional administrative system and several departments (e.g. environment, transport,

education, science, ...) took the possibility to react on the draft version of the OP. Their proposals have been integrated in the OP. In autumn (Oct./Nov. 2013) a public consultation was organised based on an online questionnaire. This questionnaire was published on the programme website and was open for four weeks.

From 475 public and private national and regional institutions (205 AT, 270 CZ) involved, 203 persons/institutions (118 CZ, 85 AT) sent back the bilingual survey. The institutions represent different policy fields important for the preparatory process of the OP. The survey covered 19 questions focusing on the following issues:

- - Identification/Structure of the respondents (personal data)
- - Content and thematic concentration of the OP
- - Capacity of absorption – Interest for the programme, project ideas
- - Administrative burdens – Experiences with the former or ongoing programme

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the programme was based on a public consultation process. A wider public in the Czech Republic and Austria had an opportunity to comment on the programme, particularly taking into account the expected environmental impacts of implementation.

Section 6: Coordination

In *Austria*, the overall coordination of the EU Structural Funds falls within the competence of the Federal Chancellery which represents the fund corresponding to the area of competence for the ERDF. As the coordination function derives from regional policy as well as spatial planning, the execution takes place from the outset in close cooperation with the Länder. The institutional framework for the national coordination of cohesion policy takes place in the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK), which was also responsible for the elaboration of the **Austrian Partnership Agreement (PA) - STRAT.AT 2020**. These coordination efforts aim at ensuring the complementarity of ESI funds-specific activities and avoiding overlaps (see annex: overview on AT- ESI programmes 2014-2020 with overlapping thematic objectives). The STRAT.AT 2020 process served as a platform for preparing a partnership agreement that is to take place parallel to the programming process for the CSF funds. STRAT.AT 2020 integrates the experience gained in past programming periods and guarantees synchronization with the ongoing programming processes and the implementation process of the ERDF, EAFRD and ESF.

The coordination platforms organised by ÖROK for the ERDF are: Working Group “Managing Authorities” for the Objective Regional Competitiveness and Employment & Convergence Phasing-out Burgenland; Working Group “Cross-Border-Cooperation” (AG CBC) for the Objective European Territorial Bilateral Cooperation and the National Committee for transnational and network programmes. The Working Group CBC assures important links to other committees, enhances synergies and increases the visibility of ETC CBC in other committees for structural funds. Through better information on existing concerns and possibilities of other ETC stakeholders, the working groups enable faster and better harmonized decisions. These three working groups are installed at the ÖROK Subcommittee on Regional Economy, which represents the central coordination committee for regional policy questions in Austria as well as their implementation.

The Working Group CBC consists of representatives of the Länder (“regional bodies”), Managing Authorities of the CBC programmes, representatives of the Federal Chancellery and the federal ministries which are relevant for the implementation of bilateral ETC programmes (Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and

Consumer Protection, Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, Ministry of Science and Research, Ministry of Education the Arts and Culture, Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology) as well as economic and social partners and a representative of the National Contact Point for transnational and network programmes. Therefore, the ministries responsible for the national ESF and EAFRD programmes as well as some Priority Area Coordinators for the EUSDR are in direct exchange with the programme partners. As the Working Group is installed in the framework of the ÖROK, close coordination with the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal (IGJ) is ensured as well.

The main focal points of the Working Group CBC are

- Co-ordination of perspectives, positions and contents on the role and tasks of cross-border cooperation ETC programmes in Austrian EU regional policy: ETC programmes and their anchorage in the partnership agreement “STRAT.AT 2020”, influence of national / macro-regional strategies on ETC programmes (need for co-ordination between CBC & TN), mutual information, co-ordination and exchange on the programming 2014-2020, project development and selection, etc.
- Recommendations for technical / administrative questions for programme and project implementation: Programme closure, evaluation, cross-programme implementation processes, etc.
- Co-ordination of information flows in Austria and to European processes.

Furthermore, coordination with other union instruments relevant for policy areas concerned by the ERDF is important. In the programme area particularly HORZION 2020 and LIFE are relevant for the selected objectives of the programme. In Austria, HORZION 2020 will be accompanied in its implementation by the Ministry of Science and Research. The regional contact points (for the current 7th Framework Programme) are responsible for the coordination of RTDI policy and regional development strategies as well as for embedding the European research and development funding measures at the regional level. As a result of the preparation of the partnership agreement, the corresponding ministry intends to install a platform for responsible ESI funds actors and stakeholders of the RTDI policy in Austria. The LIFE programme will be accompanied by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management. In this programme, the thematic Objectives 6 (environment and resource efficiency) is addressed so adequate attention will be paid to the connection with LIFE.

AT- ESI programmes 2014-2020 with overlapping thematic objectives:

Programmes	Name	Source of Financing	Overlapping Thematic Objectives	Responsible Authorities in Austria
ETC SK-AT 2014-2020	Slovakia-Austria Cooperation Programme 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 1: R&I TO 11: Institutional capacity	Office of Government of Vienna; Office of Government of Lower Austria; RMB - Regionalmanagement Burgenland
ETC AT-HU 2014-2020	Austria-Hungary Republic Cooperation Programme 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 11: Institutional capacity	Office of Government of Vienna Office of Government of Lower Austria RMB - Regionalmanagement Burgenland

ETZ AT-DE (Bayern) 2014-2020	Kooperationsprogramm Österreich- Deutschland (Bayern)		TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 1: R&I TO 11: Institutional capacity	Office of Government of Upper Austria Office of Government of Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wirtschaft und Medien, Energie und Technologie, EU-B, zugeteilt Referat I/5 Regierung von Schwaben, Oberbayern, Niederbayern
IGJ - ERDF	EFRE Programm Investitionen in Wachstum und Beschäftigung Österreich 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 1: R&I TO 3: SME competitiveness TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency	Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning – ÖROK (MA)
LE 2020	Programm für Ländliche Entwicklung in Österreich 2014-2020	EARDF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management – DG II (MA)
EMFF Österreich	Operationelles Programm Österreich EMFF 2014-2020	EMFF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management – DG II (MA)
DANUBE	Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 1: R&I TO 11: Institutional capacity	Federal Chancellery (MC member) / Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning – ÖROK (NCP)
CENTRAL 2020	Central Europe 2020 – Cooperation Programme	ERDF	TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 1: R&I	Federal Chancellery (MC member) / Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning – ÖROK (NCP)
ASP 2014-2020	Alpine Space Programme 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 1: R&I TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency TO 11: Institutional capacity	Federal Chancellery (MC member) / Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning – ÖROK (NCP)
Interregional Cooperation 2014-2020	Interreg Europe 2014-2020	ERDF	TO 1: R&I TO 6: Environment and Resource Efficiency	Federal Chancellery (MC member) / Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning – ÖROK (NCP)

Coordination between the ESI funds, objectives and programmes has been carried out in the **Czech Republic** as part of the preparation for the various programmes, and will also be assured during their implementation.

The primary objective during the preparation of the programs was to identify links between the different programmes, including links between the EFRE and the ESF programmes, in relation to those links define potential synergies and mutual complementarity of intervention and agree on the manner in which these links will be monitored during the implementation of the programmes. The entire process was coordinated with the preparation of the Partnership Agreement (PA). Key platforms, which also involved the National Authority (NA) of the ETC-programme Austria and the Czech Republic, were particularly the Working Party set up to prepare the PA as well as the working group for developing the several OPs where the MAs were included.

Based on the results of discussions with the management authorities concerned, overviews were drawn up of potential synergy and complementarity between the activities in the cross-border cooperation programmes and the EFRE-programmes. From an institutional viewpoint, coordination during the implementation of the programmes will be assured on the national level particularly through the National Coordination Authority as part of the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic. This umbrella body for all operational programmes in the Czech Republic proposes measures to assure synergy across the programmes, and also complementarity and synergy between interventions specified by the PA and between other strategic documents and specifies suitable tools for managing complementarity and synergy. The National Coordination Authority manages also the activities of the working parties and platforms where the coordination and implementation of the programmes is discussed and information is shared between the management authorities. In terms of thematic focus programmes, there are links concerning the following themes to the Czech EFRE-Programmes:

Regarding the infrastructure for R&D, there is a complementarity between support for the construction, upgrading and supplementing of strategically important R&D infrastructure in the OP RDE, including the planned use of this infrastructure in the form of open access. Sharing between a greater number of partners and support for the shared cross-border use of R&D infrastructure in cross-border cooperation programmes should optimise the use of research and innovation capacities in the region. There is also potential for complementarity in support for the establishment of strategic partnerships in workplaces abroad, participation in programmes involving cooperation in international research and other forms of partnership.

The ETC programme is also linked to the OP “Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness (OP EIC)”. Support for the establishment and development of corporate research and development centres in OP EIC is complementary to support cooperation in research and innovation between SMEs and research and innovation institutions as part of the ETC programme AT–CZ thereby increasing the capacities available to enterprises for cross-border cooperation. Support for applied research and the introduction of innovations from OP EIC has a synergistic effect in combination with support for cross-border research and innovation cooperation between SMEs and research institutions from cross-border cooperation programmes.

In the CP Austria – Czech Republic thematic objective (TO 6) focuses on conservation and environmental protection and promoting the efficient use of resources in the shared border region. In the Czech Republic this priority is linked to the “Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP)”. This will be directed via IP 6c to support the most valuable elements of the natural and cultural heritage, which generally represent capital-intensive events of regional or greater importance. In contrast, the ETC programme Austria–Czech Republic will achieve its specific objective through events of local and possibly regional importance with links across the border, thus assuring events that complement IROP interventions.

As regards rural areas, it will also be possible to exploit complementarity with the “Rural Development Programme of the Czech Republic” (RDP) which will also support non-productive investments in forests – including measures to enhance the recreational potential of forest land (including signage, the construction of hiking trails, etc.). Creating suitable links between RDP

activities and investments supported in the programme territory under this programme will achieve a greater effect due to the broadening of their impact, while on the other hand, these investments supported under the RDP may be featured in promotional materials or concepts implemented with funds from the ETC programme. TO 6 has suitable complementarity also with the National Tourism Development Programme of the Czech Republic which focuses primarily on improving supplementary infrastructure designed to increase the appeal of tourism and not only provides minor amenities for tourists (rest areas, hygiene facilities, etc.), but also explores the issue of the accessibility of tourist attractions for tourists with special needs.

The planned intervention in relation to cross-border education (TO10) also has a direct link to IROP, which is expected to support the development of education capacity at all levels (with the exception of tertiary education). Improved educational infrastructure may be used for the effective implementation of joint programmes and education-related activities. There is also a reverse link between programmes, whereby studies, analyses and strategies created for educational purposes in the shared border region from the OP -Austria–Czech Republic may become one starting point for the further development of the requisite educational capacities in the region in question acquired subsequently with support from IROP.

In relation to OP RDE, complementarity is possible in the use of educational infrastructure acquired for cross-border educational activities, sharing teachers' experience and enhancing cooperation between schools and employers in the provision of formal and informal education (including internships). Educational activities may also create links that have a broader impact, including the possibility of finding work on the labour market across the border (i.e. the chance of securing a job on the market in a neighbouring country).

Through TO 11 projects, this CP establishes cooperation between public institutions and communities. Although IROP does not implement this thematic objective independently, there is a potential for complementarity and synergy in relation to a number of the specific objectives of IROP. Non-investment cooperative activities carried out in the cross-border cooperation operational programme may be linked to IROP investment activities, in the social and medical services, public administration, tourism infrastructure and other fields, through the creation of cooperation mechanisms using infrastructure acquired from IROP for the purposes of joint solutions. On the other hand, the development and investment requirements formulated in studies or concepts implemented as part of the cross-border cooperation operational programme may serve as the starting point for investments subsequently supported from IROP.

The most significant complementarity between the **Horizon 2020** programme and the Austria-Czech Republic programme is offered as part of the "Outstanding Science" priority – research infrastructure, one aim of which is to provide support for research infrastructure, while the Austria- Czech Republic programme supports the shared use of existing cross-border research capacity.

Synergy may also be expected to be generated by support for R&D in basic technology and innovation, which is the basis for competitiveness in a number of branches of industry (ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology, etc.) in the priority "Leading Position in Industry" if the results of the R&D supported are used in cross-border projects funded by the ETC programme, either as part of the support for basic research (IP 1a) or applied research (IP 1b). There is similar potential for synergy in the "Social Challenges" priority.

With the **LIFE+** programme only marginal synergy can be expected to result through the transfer and implementation of proven solutions and good practice.

Also with the “**Erasmus for All**” programme only marginal complementarity is expected in the field of the Specific Objective 1 for Erasmus, which is focused on improving key abilities and skills, particularly as regards their implication for the labour market or for language teaching.

SECTION 7 Reduction of Administrative Burden for Beneficiaries

A light set of rules and simple administrative procedures are a pre-condition for an effective programme to drive the expected changes in the programme area. This makes the reduction of the administrative burden a key target.

In general the implementation and realisation of a cross border programme is combined with a higher administrative effort than the realisation of national programs because in any cases partners of both countries are involved. Beside the very different administrative structures, traditions, legal frameworks and different processes have to be conciliated.

In the periode 2007-2013 the applicants and project partners were confronted with following problems:

- Different interpretations of the eligibility rule within the periode
The different interpretation of eligibility leads to uncertainty for the applicants and project partners relating to calculation and invoicing. To reduce this uncertainty a special working group was installed by the bilateral programming group for clear definition of eligibility. The result will be part of the handbooks for applicants and persons involved in the program management.
- Beside that making use of the new simplified cost options available for the 2014-2020 period (cf. Article 18(1) of the ETC Regulation) is planned – Elaboration of clear documented eligibility rules in coordination with national/regional controllers using the Guidelines „Simplified Cost Options and the INTERACT factsheet
- Delays in payment of ERDF funding:
Payment delays arised during the last period. Reasons for this problem can be identified on the applicants or the project partner side, so the FLC was not able to react in an appropriate way. With more and concreter information for the applicants and project partner the program management will contribute to a better understanding of processes and requirements. The mentioned handbook will give the necessary orientation.

Other actions planned to reduce administrative burden will primarily build on the implementation of a system for data exchange fully in line with the e-cohesion requirements and making use of the harmonised implementation tools (HIT) developed by INTERACT in cooperation with ETC programmes in order to simplify and streamline programme implementation.

Drawing on the conclusions from the experience gained in the previous programming period, it is clear that **sound manuals, handbooks, an up-dated programme website** as well as ample guidance are critical for the successful application and implementation as well as finalization of projects. Efforts will be intensified in order to widen the information base in all phases of the project lifecycle, and hence, avoid misunderstanding right from the start.

Moreover, Article 18(3) of the ETC Regulation determines a new hierarchy of eligibility rules, with programme rules specifying what is not defined at EU level and national rules specifying only what is not covered by EU or programme rules. In defining programme rules, special attention will be paid to “staff costs” as well as “office and administrative expenditure”, for which several simplification options are available. In order to minimise the administrative burden, the programme -- to the maximum possible extent -- is willing and prepared to make use of simplification options offered by the regulatory framework. Such simplification would be introduced from the very beginning of the programme implementation.

Furthermore – where possible – the “**Harmonised Implementation Tools**” (HIT) (e.g. application form, reports etc.) will be applied.

The INTERACT **e-Monitoring System (e-MS)** as described in Chapter 5 will be applied.

Full electronic communication and the exchange between programme authorities and beneficiaries will reduce the administrative burden for all parties, and hence, speed up the whole process making it more efficient. All actions planned to reduce administrative burden will primarily rely on the implementation of a system for data exchange fully in line with e-cohesion requirements.

Timeline for implementation

- Preparation of handbooks and guidance material for internal use and for the applicants til the start of the programme (July 2015)
- Organisation of regionale information meeting for applicants
- Actions for streamlining the progress monitoring of operations will be introduced from the very beginning of the programme implementation, possibly at the time of approving operations submitted within the first call for proposals.

SECTION 8 Horizontal Principles

8.1. Sustainable development

The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR, Art.8) states: “Member States and the Commission shall ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes”.

Important sources to systematically consider the sustainable development principle in the programme preparation phase are the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the ex-ante evaluation. The purpose of the SEA is to “provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.” The Ex-ante evaluation verifies the adequacy of planned measures in the programmes to promote sustainable development. Usually, the SEA process runs in parallel to the ex-ante evaluations, and main findings are incorporated into ex-ante reports.

At the operational level, the following aspects will be considered in programme implementation:

- Selection of investment projects in view of highest resource efficiency and sustainability
- Prevention of investments with considerable negative environmental and climate effects
- Develop a long-term perspective when comparing life cycle costs of various investment options
- Increased use of sustainable procurement (green public procurement).

When examining proposals, the guiding question – where appropriate –will be assessed: *Does the operation contribute to the promotion of sustainable development?* The assessment of the quality of the eligible project proposals should be based on a set of quality criteria which are common to all Priority Axes and Investment Priorities.

8.2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

The Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Art. 7) states: “Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes”.

Non-discrimination covers not only women (and men) but any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. While anti-discrimination legislation is an acquired aspect of EU legal systems, the practical implementation of anti-discrimination practices is lagging behind. In terms of equal access to ESI funding this could mean, for example, that ESI funded tourism projects are not accessible to people with disabilities (and that nobody checks whether they are) or that people of ethnic origin do not have equal access to e.g. business related funding because the information does not reach them. Equal access to information and controls on whether equality and non-discrimination requirements are being met are an issue.

The European Commission leaves the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the programming and implementation up to the Member States. As quoted above, the requirements of the CPR demand that Member States ensure that non-discrimination is taken into account in the preparation and implementation of programmes. In concrete terms, this means wearing non-discrimination 'spectacles' when drafting programmes and in their implementation.

Ensuring the adequate consideration of the equal opportunities and non-discrimination perspective was and will be done by adopting a **programming cycle approach** in which the equal opportunities and non-discrimination perspectives were included in all phases of the programming cycle.

8.3. Equality between men and women

The aim of equality between women and men belongs to the fundamental values of the European Union and is set out in the Treaty on the European Union. Article 3 states that the Union shall *"combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child"*. The elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men are also included in the consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. These fundamental values must be respected in the Regulations and implementation of the ESI Funds of the European Union as stated in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), Art. 7: *"Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is promoted in the preparation and implementation of programmes"* and that the *"Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes"*.

The same programme cycle approach proposed above for the issues of non-discrimination can be used to ensure equality between men and women with a focus on the gender issue.

SECTION 9 Separate Elements

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

Not relevant

9.2. Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 24: Performance framework (summary table) will be automatically generated

Priority axis	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
<9.2.1 type='S' input='G'>	<9.2.3 type='S' input='G'>	<9.2.4 type='S' input='G'>	<9.2.5 type='S' input='G'>	<9.2.6 type='S' input='G'>

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

Involved institutions - Czech Republic

Administration units

South Bohemia

- Odbor školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy
- Odbor regionálního rozvoje, územního plánování, stavebního řádu a investic
- Odbor sociálních věcí a zdravotnictví
- Odbor životního prostředí, zemědělství a lesnictví
- Odbor kultury a památkové péče
- Odbor dopravy a silničního hospodářství
- Odbor informatiky
- Odbor ekonomický

Vysocina

- Odbor regionálního rozvoje
- Odbor životního prostředí a zemědělství
- Odbor kultury, památkové péče a cestovního ruchu
- Odbor dopravy a silničního hospodářství
- Odbor informatiky
- Odbor zdravotnictví
- Odbor školství, mládeže a sportu
- Odbor sociálních věcí

South Moravia

- Odbor regionálního rozvoje
- Odbor územního plánování a stavebního řádu
- Odbor investic
- Odbor dopravy
- Odbor kultury a památkové péče
- Odbor životního prostředí
- Odbor školství
- Odbor zdravotnictví
- Odbor sociálních věcí
- Odbor vnějších vztahů
- Odbor kancelář hejtmana
- Odbor kancelář ředitelky
- Odbor informatiky
- Odbor ekonomický

Others

- Regionální hospodářská komora
- Krajská hospodářská komora jižní Moravy
- Okresní hospodářská komora Brno-venkov
- Okresní hospodářská komora Znojmo
- Okresní hospodářská komora Hodonín
- Okresní hospodářská komora Břeclav
- Okresní hospodářská komora Vyškov
- Okresní hospodářská komora Blansko
- Rakouské podnikatelské centrum
- Masarykova univerzita
- Mendelova univerzita
- Vysoké učení technické Brno
- Veterinární a farmaceutická univerzita Brno
- Ústav fyziky materiálů, Akademie věd ČR
- Výzkumný ústav veterinárního lékařství
- Jihomoravské centrum pro mezinárodní mobilitu
- Regionální rozvojová agentura jižní Moravy
- Sdružení obcí a měst jižní Moravy
- Jihomoravské informační centrum, zájmové sdružení právnických osob
- CEITEC – Středoevropský technologický institut
- BIC Brno
- Magistrát města Brna
- Správa a údržba silnic JMK, p.o.
- KORDIS JMK, a.s.
- Centrum dopravního výzkumu, v.v.i.
- Centrála cestovního ruchu JM
- Moravská galerie v Brně
- Regionální muzeum v Mikulově, p.o.
- Masarykovo muzeum Hodonín
- Biskupství Brněnské

- Muzeum města Brna
- Jihomoravské muzeum ve Znojmě
- Moravský zemský archiv Brno
- Povodí Moravy, s.p.
- Správa NP Podyjí
- Baťův kanál, o. p. s.
- Výzkumný ústav vodohospodářský T.G.Masaryka, v.v.i.
- Centrum výzkumu globální změny AV ČR, v.v.i.
- Spolek poradců v ekologickém zemědělství České republiky o.s. (EPOS)
- Středisko služeb školám a Zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků Brno
- Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání
- Centrum pro rodinu Brno
- Společně o.p.s.
- Nadace Partnerství
- Diecézní charita Brno
- Český červený kříž (Brno+pobočky)
- Krajské nemocnice JMK
- Fakultní nemocnice Brno
- Úrazová nemocnice Brno
- Úřad práce, krajská pobočka v Brně
- Centrum excellence Telč;
- Vysočina Education, školské zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků a středisko služeb školám, p. o.;
- ZERA – zemědělská a regionální agentura;
- Ústav teoretické a aplikované mechaniky AV ČR;
- Chaloupky o.p.s., školská zařízení pro zájmové a další vzdělávání; město Telč;
- Energetická agentura Vysočiny, z.s.p.o.;
- Muzeum Vysočiny Havlíčkův Brod, p.o.;
- Muzeum Vysočiny Třebíč, p.o.;
- Výzkumný ústav lesního hospodářství a myslivosti, v.v.i.;
- Vysoká škola polytechnická Jihlava;
- MAS Třeštsko;
- MAS Telčsko; Vysočina Tourism, p.o.;
- Diecézní charita Brno, oblastní charita Jihlava
- Jihočeská hospodářská komora
- Regionální rozvojová agentura jižních Čech, a.s.
- Regionální rozvojová agentura Šumava
- Euroregion Silva Nortica
- Euroregion Šumava
- Jihočeská univerzita
- Jihočeská agentura pro podporu inovačního podnikání (JAIP)
- Czechinvest
- Správa NP a CHKO Šumava
- Regionální muzeum v Mikulově, p.o.
- Masarykovo muzeum Hodonín
- Biskupství Brněnské
- Muzeum města Brna
- Jihomoravské muzeum ve Znojmě
- Moravský zemský archiv Brno

- Povodí Moravy, s.p.
- Správa NP Podyjí
- Baťův kanál, o. p. s.
- Výzkumný ústav vodohospodářský T.G.Masaryka, v.v.i.
- Centrum výzkumu globální změny AV ČR, v.v.i.
- Spolek poradců v ekologickém zemědělství České republiky o.s. (EPOS)
- Středisko služeb školám a Zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků Brno
- Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání
- Centrum pro rodinu Brno
- Společně o.p.s.
- Nadace Partnerství
- Diecézní charita Brno
- Český červený kříž (Brno+pobočky)
- Krajské nemocnice JMK
- Fakultní nemocnice Brno
- Úrazová nemocnice Brno
- Úřad práce, krajská pobočka v Brně
- JVTP,
- Energy Centre ČB
- KP Projekt s.r.o.,
- Svaz měst a obcí JČK
- MAS Blanský les – Netolicko,
- SŠ a jazyková škola Volyně,
- Zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků a Středisko služeb školám, České Budějovice
- Jihočeská rozvojová o.p.s.,
- Technologické centrum Písek s.r.o., Jihočeská společnost pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů, o.p.s. ,
- MAS Rozkvět zahrady jižních Čech

Cities and municipalities

Volyně, Český Krumlov, Chotoviny Cizkrajov, Čejkovice, Sedlec, Kubova Huť, Slavonice, Milevsko, Třeboň, Vyšší Brod, Doubravice, Kluky, Prachatice, Dačice, Vimperk, Písek

Involved institutions - Austria

Administration

- Geschäftsgruppe - Bildung, Jugend, Information und Sport
- Geschäftsgruppe - Finanzen, Wirtschaftspolitik und Wiener Stadtwerke
- Geschäftsgruppe - Gesundheit und Soziales Geschäftsgruppe - Integration, Frauenfragen, KonsumentInnenchutz und Personal
- Geschäftsgruppe - Gesundheit und Soziales
- Geschäftsgruppe - Kultur und Wissenschaft
- Geschäftsgruppe - Stadtentwicklung, Verkehr, Klimaschutz, Energieplanung und BürgerInnenbeteiligung
- Geschäftsgruppe - Umwelt
- Geschäftsgruppe - Wohnen, Wohnbau und Stadterneuerung

- Hafen Wien
- MA 18- Stadtentwicklung und Stadtplanung
- MA 19-Architektur und Stadtgestaltung
- MA 20-Energieplanung
- MA 22-Umweltschutz
- MA 23-Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Statistik
- MA 25-Stadterneuerung und Prüfstelle für Wohnhäuser
- MA 31-Wiener Wasser
- MA 42-Wiener Stadtgärten
- MA 45-Wiener Gewässer
- MA 48-Abfallwirtschaft, Strassenreinigung und Fuhrpark
- MA 49-Forstamt und Landwirtschaftsbetrieb der Stadt Wien
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion - Gruppe Planung
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion – Gruppe Umwelttechnik
- Magistratsdirektion Baudirektion - Strategische Energieangelegenheiten
- Stadtschulrat für Wien
- Büro Landesrat Mag. Schwarz
- Abteilung Landesamtsdirektion-Europareferat
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Umweltwirtschaft und Raumordnungsförderung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Naturschutz
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Gesamtverkehrsangelegenheiten
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Kunst und Kultur
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Wissenschaft und Forschung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Landesstraßenbau
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Wirtschaft, Tourismus und Technologie
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Landwirtschaftsförderung
- Agrarbezirksbehörde St. Pölten
- Land NÖ, Abteilung allgemeine Förderungen F3, Frauenreferat
- Land NÖ, Abteilung F3 Arbeitnehmerförderung
- Land NÖ, Abteilung Kindergärten und Schulen
- Land NÖ, Abteilung, Abteilung Wasserwirtschaft
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Direktion Präsidium – Zukunftsakademie
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Direktion Bildung und Gesellschaft
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Direktion Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Direktion Straßenbau und Verkehr
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Abt. Naturschutz
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Überörtliche Raumordnung, Koordinationsstelle für die EU-Regionalpolitik
- Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung, Landessportorganisation
- Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung, Landesforstdirektion
- Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung, Landeskulturdirektion
- Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung, Dorf- und Stadterneuerung - Weltkulturerbe
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Umweltschutz
- Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Abt. Wirtschaft
- Amt der OÖ. Landesregierung, Abt. Wirtschaft EU-Finanzkontrolle
- Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, Abt. IV/4
- Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Land- u. Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt u. Wasserwirtschaft

- Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie
- Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend

Other (public) institutions

- TINA VIENNA Urban Technologies & Strategies GmbH
- Wiener Linien Wiener Stadtwerke
- Wiener Wissenschafts-, Forschungs- und Technologiefonds
- Wirtschaftsagentur Wien – Cluster Wien ZIT Zentrum für Innovation und Technologie GmbH
- EUSDR PAC10 Geschäftsstelle departure-die Kreativagentur der Stadt Wien
- Fonds Soziales Wien Kulturvernetzung Niederösterreich
- Ecoplus – NÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH
- Berufsförderungsinstitut Wien
- NÖ Landesakademie
- Wirtschaftsakammer Niederösterreich
- NÖ Landesklinikholding
- Regionalmanagement Niederösterreich (Büro Waldviertel, Weinviertel, Industrieviertel)
- Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Weinviertel – Europaregion Weinviertel
- Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Industrieviertel
- Energie- und Umweltagentur Niederösterreich (ENU)
- Industriellenvereinigung Niederösterreich
- Arbeiterkammer OÖ, Büro f. Projekt u. Regionalentwicklung
- BFI - Berufsförderungsinstitut OÖ, Internationale Projekte
- Clusterland Oberösterreich
- Euregio Bayerischer Wald - Böhmerwald - Mühlviertel, Regionalmanagement OÖ
- Fachhochschule Oberösterreich, Steyr, Management Research Center
- Fachhochschule Oberösterreich, Steyr, Verkehrslogistik
- Fachhochschule Oberösterreich, Wels
- Inn-Salzach-Euregio (Regionalmanagement OÖ)
- Klimabündnis Oberösterreich
- Oberösterreich Tourismus
- OÖ. Technologie- und Marketinggesellschaft mbH
- Österreichische Bundesforste AG
- Regionalmanagement OÖ GmbH.
- Wirtschaftskammer OÖ, Klimaschutz u. Umweltberatung
- Ars Electronica Center – Museum der Zukunft
- Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich
- CATT Innovationsberatung GmbH.
- Europaregion Donau-Moldau
- Fachhochschule Gesundheitsberufe Oberösterreich, Linz
- Fachhochschule Hagenberg
- Johannes Kepler Universität Linz
- Klimabündnis Oberösterreich
- Landesschulrat für Oberösterreich
- Leader-Region LAG Donau-Böhmerwald
- Oberösterreichischer Energiesparverband
- Tourismusverband Mühlviertler Kernland

- Tourismusverband Mühlviertler Alm
- Naturschutzbund OÖ
- Upper Austrian Research (UAR)
- Upper Austrian Business Hightech Incubator Tech2b
- WIFI - Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Linz
- Wirtschaftskammer OÖ,
- Wood K plus Kompetenzzentrum für Holz
- Berufsförderungsinstitut Wien
- Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund
- Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst / Gegenwartskunst
- Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde
- Planungsgemeinschaft Ost
- Ressourcen Management Agentur
- umweltberatung wien
- umweltbildung wien
- VOR - Verkehrsverbund Ostregion
- Wien Energie GmbH
- Wirtschaftskammer Österreich

In accordance with Article 8(12) of the ETC Regulation, this information is not subject to the Commission decision approving the cooperation programme, but remains under the responsibility of the participating Member States

9.4 Applicable programme implementation conditions governing the financial management programming, monitoring, evaluation and control of the participating of third countries in transnational and interregional programmes through a contribution of ENI and IPA resources

Not relevant

ANNEXES (uploaded to electronic data exchange systems as separate files):

- Ex-ante evaluation, with an executive summary (mandatory)
- Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (mandatory)
- A citizens' summary of the cooperation programme (as appropriate)
- SWOT Analyses
- Bibliography for the analyses
- Questionnaire for public consultation
- Documentation Performance Framework incl. Methodological remarks
- Reactions on EU-Observation
- Intervention logic