



*FROM SHARED RESOURCES
TO JOINT SOLUTIONS*

**INTERREG V-A ITALY CROATIA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020
EVALUATION SERVICE**

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Operational Evaluation 2022

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Introduction

This document represents the second Operational Evaluation for the year 2022 of the Evaluation Service of the INTERREG V A ITALY CROATIA CBC Programme 2014-2020.

The Evaluation service includes three operational evaluation reports throughout the Evaluation service in order to assess the Programme's outputs and outcomes and the administrative capacities of its Programme bodies.

Each operational evaluation report focuses on specific elements. In particular, following the participatory approach which characterizes the Evaluation Service, the focus areas and the related Evaluation Questions answered in the present second operational evaluation report have been set in advance, thanks to the interaction with the Programme bodies, in order to answer to the evaluation questions related to the cross-border cooperation added value and networking in relation to the Standard+, Standard and Strategic Projects funded by the Programme¹. Moreover, the report presents an additional analysis of output indicators and its targets.

To offer a complete picture, it is useful to mention that the first operational evaluation conducted in 2021 provided a first snapshot of the implementation of the Programme and an analysis of some key elements including the management system and the result indicators system, while the third operation evaluation report, due at the beginning of year 2023, will include the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme's communication strategy and of the thematic and territorial impacts of Programme implementation as well as its contribution to macro-regional strategies and EU 2020 targets.

This timeframe is proposed because, in order to better appreciate these effects on the target areas of the Programme, it is necessary to have a larger number of completed projects.

Reverting to the present report, it aims to represent a tool capable of providing the decision-maker with useful suggestions in the definition and, subsequently, in the initiation of the new Programme.

The evaluation activity for drafting the report includes desk analysis, mainly through the analysis of progress data provided by the Monitoring System (SIU), direct consultations with the Programme bodies and with the beneficiaries through survey and in-depth interviews.

In particular, the Operational Evaluation Report 2022 is introduced by a **first chapter** dedicated to the description of the progress of the Programme as a whole and of the single Priority Axes, from the financial and procedural point of view. The **second chapter** presents the answers to the evaluation questions, including the description of the methodology used and the results of the desk analysis, while the **third chapter** provides conclusions of the analysis and recommendations that arise from them. Finally, the **fourth chapter** focuses on the output indicators and their target achievements.

¹ The cluster projects will be included in the next Operational Evaluation 2023.

1 Analysis of the implementation status of the Programme

The INTERREG VA ITALY CROATIA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020, adopted by the European Commission with the Decision C (2015) 9342 of 15 December 2015, has an overall budget of EUR 236.890.849, including EUR 201.357.220 (85%) from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EUR 35.533.629 (15%) from national co-financing.

With an area of more than 85.500 km² and a population of more than 12.4 million inhabitants, the eligible area of the Italy-Croatia Programme extends along the two shores of the Adriatic, including 33 statistical NUTS III territories (25 provinces in Italy and 8 counties in Croatia), as showed in figure 2.

Figure 2: Italy-Croatia cooperation area 14-20

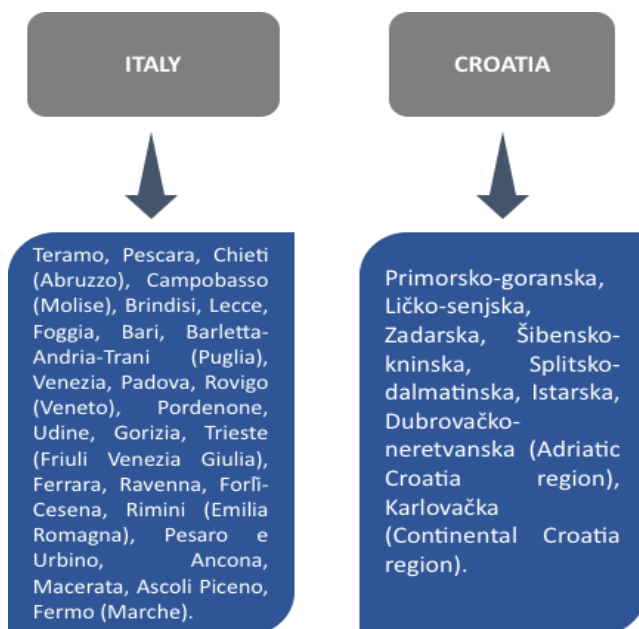
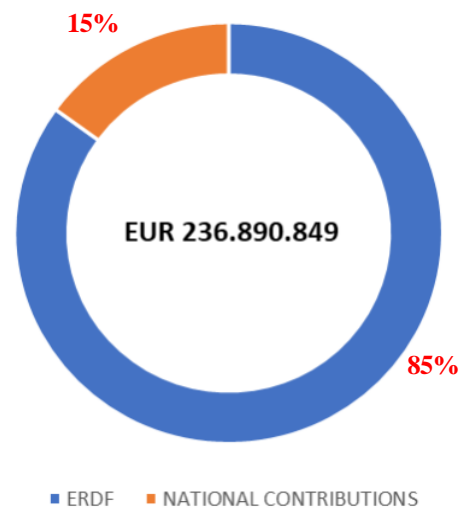


Figure 1: Programme's budget



In order to achieve the overall objective linked to the increase of the prosperity and of the blue growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes, the Programme is structured in **four Priority Axes (PA)**, focusing on the blue economy in terms of innovation, maritime transportation, climate change, adaptation, environmental security and sustainability, and on the natural and cultural heritage as a driving force for sustainable and more balanced

territorial development by integrating rural areas and ensuring a better spatial distribution of visitor flows; plus a fifth Priority Axes for Technical Assistance. Under each PA, the Programme is articulated in 7 Specific Objectives (SOs): **SO 1.1** aims at improving the performance of the programme area in the field of innovation by establishing and developing mechanisms which contribute to a better exploitation of the existing potential; **SO 2.1** intends to improve the climate change monitoring and planning of measures for strengthening the adaptation capacity of the region while increasing the resilience of the territory including its natural environment; **SO 2.2** aims at improving the safety the programme area supporting the development of disaster management systems, furthering the capacity of recovery while minimising damages; **SO 3.1** seeks to reach a higher level of sustainable economic and territorial development by exploiting the potentials of the natural assets and cultural heritage while preserving them and increasing their value; **SO 3.2** aims at strengthening of the management and protection of ecosystems and the cooperation between public actors/ managers of the protected areas in order to increase environmental benefits and to provide economic and employment opportunities; **SO 3.3** aims at improving the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches; finally **SO 4.1** is intended to improve the quality, safety and

environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services. The full logical framework of the Programme is included in Annex 1.

The table below shows the financial plan of the Programme.

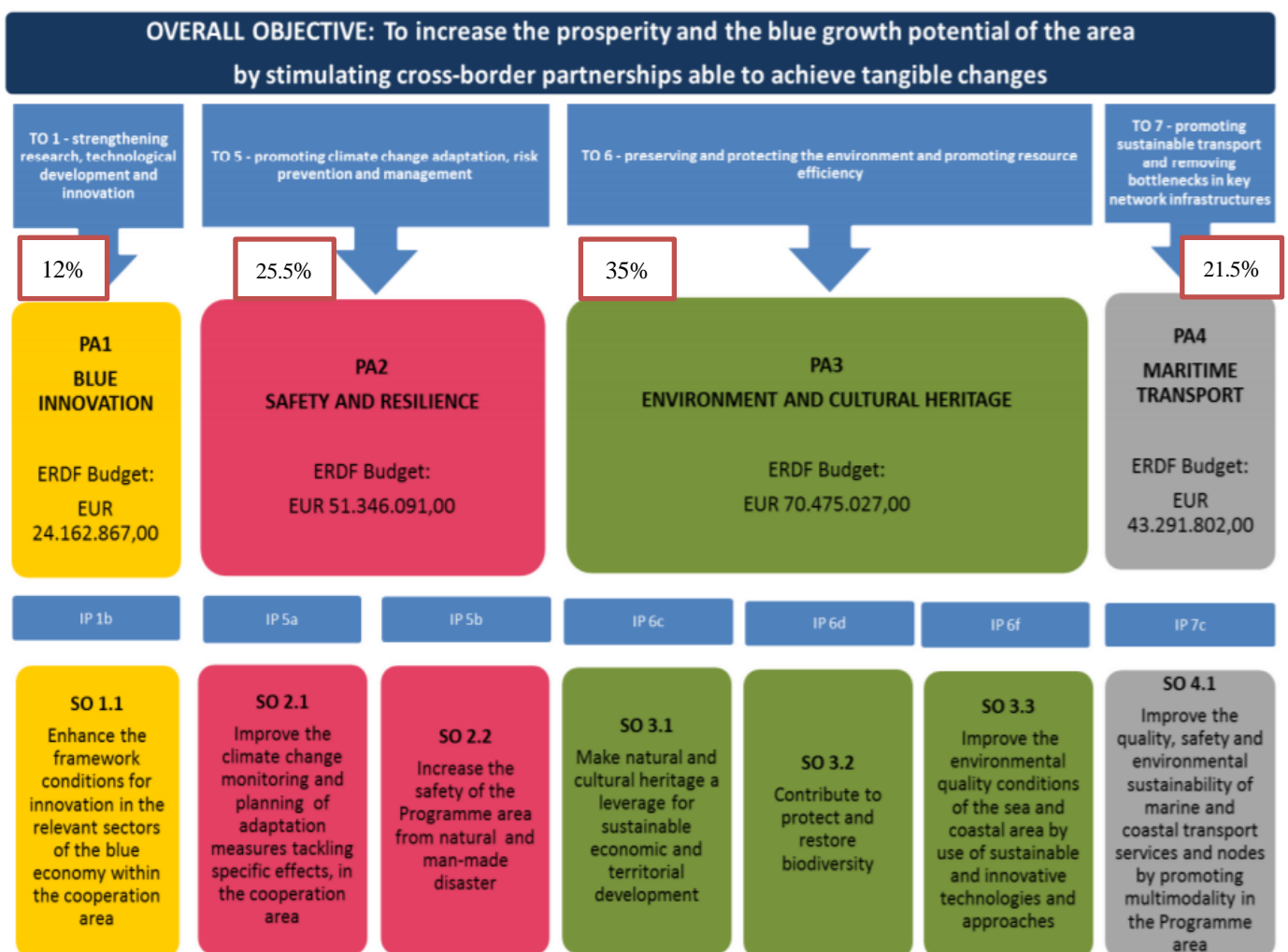
Table 1 : Programme’s Financial Plan

| | FINANCIAL PLAN | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | TOTAL | ERDF |
| Priority Axis 1 | 28.426.903,00 | 24.162.867,00 |
| Priority Axis 2 | 60.407.166,00 | 51.346.091,00 |
| Priority Axis 3 | 82.911.797,00 | 70.475.027,00 |
| Priority Axis 4 | 50.931.532,00 | 43.291.802,00 |
| Priority Axis 5 | 14.213.451,00 | 12.081.433,00 |
| TOTAL | 236.890.849,00 | 201.357.220,00 |

Source: Data from SIU

It follows that the funds allocated to Priority Axes 1, 2, 3 and 4 (corresponding to the selected Thematic Objectives 1, 5, 6 and 7) amount to 94% of the Programme’s financial resources, as showed by the figure below; while the remaining 6% is allocated to Technical Assistance. The figure below shows also that most of the funds (35%) have been allocated to PA3 “**Environmental and Cultural Heritage**”.

Figure 3: Programme’s intervention logic



Source: INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia CBC Programme

1.1 Programme's Calls for proposals

The Programme has launched until this moment **four calls for proposals, two of them in 2017, one in 2019 and the last one in 2021.**

In particular, in 2017 it has been published a first set of calls including 1 call for **Standard+** projects and 1 call **Standard** projects, targeting all Priority Axes; and 1 call for Technical Assistance (TA) in order to propose to the Monitoring Committee the approval of 5 TA projects. In 2019, a call for proposal for **Strategic projects** was launched and closed and, finally, on 20th October 2021, the Programme has launched a **Restricted Cluster Call for Proposals** dedicated to the funding of IT-HR cluster projects in 5 different thematic areas in order to maximize experiences and results achieved by the Programme through the implementation of Standard+ and Standard Projects. The call has been closed on 14th December 2021.

The calls for proposals for Standard+, Standard and Strategic projects were addressed to:

- National, regional and local public bodies and associations formed by one or several of such public bodies;
- Bodies governed by public law, and associations constituted by one or several bodies governed by public law;
- Private bodies, including private companies, having legal personality and being operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature, with some restrictions detailed in the different calls;
- International organisations acting under the Italian or Croatian national law and being operational from at least 2 fiscal years at the time of submission of the candidature.

Moreover, for Strategic projects in particular, a list of eligible categories of partners to be involved in the projects was defined for each strategic theme, on the basis of the institutional and technical competence and know-how.

The above-mentioned eligible categories had to be established under the national law of Italy or Croatia and had to have their official seat and their seat of operations in the part of the country included in the Programme area.

- The only exception to this rule concerns the **Assimilated partners**, which are institutions that are competent and relevant in their scope of action for all or part of the eligible area or are anyhow relevant due to specific and exclusive thematic competence for the eligible area but which are located outside of it. Assimilated partners have equal rights and obligations to applicants located within the Programme area.

In addition to the Assimilated partners, the Programme includes also the category of **Associated partners**, meaning those key stakeholders which are interested in the project results and which are relevant to be involved in the project for planning, developing and sustaining outputs and results but without financially contributing to it and without receiving ERDF funding. All requirements regarding project partners apply also to associated partners.

Applications for participating in the selection were submitted through the Electronic Management and Monitoring System (SIU) and the assessment of the applications was performed by the Joint Secretariat (JS) under the responsibility of the Managing Authority.

1.1.1 Standard+ call

The Standard+ call was open from March to May 2017 for a limited period of 45 days. It aimed at funding projects stemming from existing cooperation potentials of the area – capitalising the achievements of the previous programming period - by means of piloting, testing or implementing in the programme area solutions developed in a larger scale context and in the framework of a 2007 – 2013 ETC Programmes in which Italian and Croatian partners already worked together (Adriatic IPA CBC, SEE and MED).

Each “Standard+” project had to involve **at least three partners**, out of which at least one Croatian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project and at least one Italian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project.

The ERDF budget allocated to fund the Standard+ projects, which represents 85% of the call’s total budget, amounted originally to EUR 15.000.000, which were increased by 19% after the submission of the project applications to reach EUR 18.571.411,03, as showed in the table below, mostly due to the increase in the amount available for Priority Axis 3 (54%).

Table 2: Budget for the Standard+ procedure

| Call | ERDF Budget at call opening | Total budget at call opening | Final ERDF budget after refinancing | Final total budget after refinancing |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2017 Standard+ | 15.000.000,00 | 17.647.058,82 | 18.571.411,03 | 21.848.718,86 |
| Priority Axis 1 | 4.200.000,00 | 4.941.176,47 | 2.445.990,09 | 2.877.635,40 |
| Priority Axis 2 | 2.600.000,00 | 3.058.823,53 | 2.656.413,03 | 3.125.191,80 |
| Priority Axis 3 | 4.200.000,00 | 4.941.176,47 | 9.139.515,06 | 10.752.370,66 |
| Priority Axis 4 | 4.000.000,00 | 4.705.882,35 | 4.329.492,85 | 5.093.521,00 |

Source: Data from SIU

The above mentioned substantial increase of budget for Priority Axis 3 can be explained in terms of **interest showed by the beneficiaries for PA3**. Indeed, 24 proposals have been presented for the Standard+ call, 13 of them under PA3. Overall, all 24 proposals were admitted but only 22 proposals passed the quality assessment and have been eventually funded, according to the breakdown per priority axis showed below: under PA3, the Programme has funded 11 projects on the 13 applications received, while for the other Axis all the projects presented have been funded.

Table 3: Standard+ Projects funded

| Call | Proposals received | Requested budget | Admitted project proposals | Requested budget for approved project proposal | Approved budget | Average budget for approved projects | Average N° of partners for project |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Standard+ | 24 | 23.544.788,86 | 22 | 21.848.718,86 | 21.848.718,86 | 993.123,59 | 6,7 |
| PA1 | 3 | 2.877.635,40 | 3 | 2.877.635,40 | 2.877.635,40 | 959.211,83 | 6,3 |
| PA2 | 3 | 3.125.191,80 | 3 | 3.125.191,80 | 3.125.191,80 | 1.041.730,60 | 5,6 |
| PA3 | 13 | 12.448.440,66 | 11 | 10.752.370,66 | 10.752.370,66 | 977.488,24 | 7 |
| PA4 | 5 | 5.093.521,00 | 5 | 5.093.521,00 | 5.093.521,00 | 1.018.704,20 | 6,8 |

Source: Data from SIU

The table also shows the average budget of the funded projects which amounts to 993.123,59 EUR and the average number of partners which is equal to 6,7 for the Standard+ projects.

1.1.2 Standard call

The call for Standard projects was open from April to June 2017 for a longer period of 60 days with an original total allocation of EUR 63.200.000 from ERDF. After the selection of the projects, this overall amount has increased **by nearly 60%** to EUR 100.914.492,19, as showed in the following table, with an increase in all PA, especially in PA3. Moreover, in 2021, there have been some changes in projects budgets of PA2 and PA3 that have resulted in a slight decrease in the overall budget of the call, which is presently 100.846.176,76 EUR from the ERDF fund.

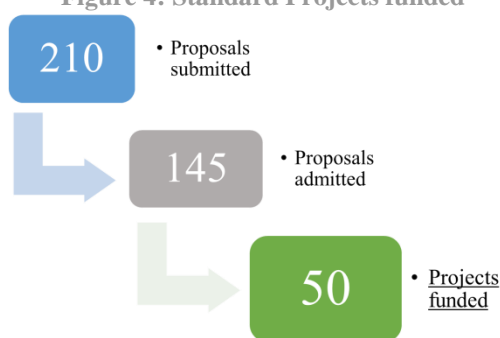
Table 4: Budget for the Standard procedure

| PA | Budget at call opening | Budget at call opening | Budget of the call after projects' selection | Budget of the call after projects' selection | Budget of the call after revision in 2021 | Budget of the call after revision in 2021 |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | ERDF | Total | ERDF | Total | ERDF | Total |
| 2017 Standard | 63.200.000,00 | 74.352.941,18 | 100.914.492,19 | 118.722.931,99 | 100.846.176,76 | 118.642.561,40 |
| Priority Axis 1 | 11.470.000,00 | 13.494.117,65 | 16.599.928,02 | 19.529.327,09 | 16.599.927,98 | 19.529.327,09 |
| Priority Axis 2 | 9.200.000,00 | 10.823.529,41 | 19.085.413,93 | 22.453.428,16 | 19.024.341,34 | 22.381.578,16 |
| Priority Axis 3 | 29.700.000,00 | 34.941.176,47 | 44.480.016,42 | 52.329.431,09 | 44.472.773,72 | 52.320.910,50 |
| Priority Axis 4 | 12.830.000,00 | 15.094.117,65 | 20.749.133,80 | 24.410.745,65 | 20.749.133,72 | 24.410.745,65 |

Source: Data from SIU

The call for standard projects received great attention from the beneficiaries, so much that at the closure of the procedure, 210 project proposals were received, 145 that reached the minimum threshold for funding and then 50 finally funded, namely 24% of the proposals received.

Figure 4: Standard Projects funded



Source: Data from SIU

The call has been conceived to fund projects that originated from the acknowledgement of a problem or a need and aiming at testing a potential solution. Each “Standard” project had to involve **at least four partners**, located in each of the two countries of the Programme area (at least one per country).

The breakdown by priority axis showed below highlights, also in this case, the great interest from beneficiaries for Priority Axis 3, which has attracted 59% of the total proposals received. Under PA3, 123 project proposals were submitted, 75 were admitted and then 22 projects were funded.

Table 5: Standard Projects funded

| Call | Proposals received | Requested budget | Admitted project proposals | Requested budget for admitted project proposal | Selected projects | Approved budget after projects selection | % selected on presented projects |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Standard | 210 | 431.916.843,84 | 145 | 308.887.237,14 | 50 | 118.722.931,99 | 25,3% |
| PA1 | 42 | 83.871.103,10 | 34 | 70.097.169,35 | 8 | 19.529.327,09 | 19,0% |
| PA2 | 30 | 62.740.859,71 | 23 | 49.624.706,66 | 10 | 22.453.428,16 | 34,5% |
| PA3 | 123 | 247.852.434,98 | 75 | 156.388.935,08 | 22 | 52.329.431,09 | 19,5% |
| PA4 | 15 | 37.452.446,05 | 13 | 32.776.426,05 | 10 | 24.410.745,65 | 71,4% |

Source: Data from SIU

To complement this analysis, the following table shows the average projects' budget and the average number of partners of Standard projects updated at end of 2021. It follows that Standard projects are larger than Standard+ projects in terms of budget (average budget 2.372.851,23 EUR compared to 993.123,59 EUR of Standard+ projects) and partnerships (9,5 average number of partners compared to 6,7).

Table 6: Standard projects average budget and N° of partners

| Call | Selected projects | Approved budget after selection of projects | Average budget for approved projects in 2021 | Average N° of partners for project |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Standard | 50 | 118.722.931,99 | 2.372.851,23 | 9,5 |
| PA1 | 8 | 19.529.327,09 | 2.441.165,89 | 10 |
| PA2 | 10 | 22.453.428,16 | 2.238.157,82 | 8,8 |
| PA3 | 22 | 52.329.431,09 | 2.378.223,20 | 9,4 |
| PA4 | 10 | 24.410.745,65 | 2.441.074,57 | 9,9 |

Source: Data from SIU

1.1.3 Strategic call

The call launched in 2019 by the Programme aimed at funding **Strategic Projects**. It was launched on 1st October 2019 for a period of 60 days until end of November 2019. With an initial financial allocation of EUR 82.015.294,11, it aimed at funding projects within 11 strategic themes covering the 4 Programme's Priority Axes, following an **institutional top-down approach**. Indeed, the call for Strategic Projects and the identification of the **11 strategic themes** was the result of a preparatory work conducted by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme, through the establishment of a dedicated Working Group and involving national authorities and relevant institutions in both Italy and Croatia. This preparatory work has included the recognition of the needs of strategic cross-border relevance stemming from the Programme area, the strategic nature of the identified themes and the importance of giving a common and cross-border solution to the identified needs emerged. Therefore, 11 strategic themes were identified as follows:

1.1.1) Blue technology; 2.1.1) Climate change adaptation; 2.2.1) Flood risk; 2.2.2) Oil spills and other marine hazards, fire and earthquake; 3.1.1) Coastal and inland tourism; 3.2.1) Marine environment; 3.2.2) Fisheries and aquaculture; 3.3.1) Marine Litter; 4.1.1) Maritime Transport; 4.1.2) Mobility of Passengers; 4.1.3) Nautical services.

Moreover, the strategic projects to be funded had to be characterised by:

- principle of wide-area partnerships, i.e.: the involvement of a higher number of beneficiaries than the minimum eligible partnership requirement as set in the Cooperation Programme;

- width of the involved territories to ensure that greater Programme area population benefits from the achieved results;
- higher financial allocations than those foreseen for standard projects;
- specific and targeted institutional and technical skills and know how to ensure deeper/long-lasting impacts and benefits for the whole cooperation area.

Each strategic project had to involve at least 3 Croatian and 3 Italian eligible partners. Furthermore, the call allowed the participation in the projects of **associated partners**, namely key stakeholders that could be involved in a project without financially contributing to it and without receiving ERDF funding.

As mentioned, for this call the **budget** was allocated **per strategic theme** as showed below, and it eventually reached the ERDF amount of EUR 69.068.096,72 after the selection of the projects.

Table 7: Allocation of funds for Strategic projects

| | Call | ERDF budget at call opening | Total Budget at call opening | ERDF Final budget of the call | Total final budget of the call |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| PA | 2019 Strategic | 69.713.000,00 | 82.015.294,11 | 69.068.096,72 | 81.256.584,49 |
| PA1 | Theme 1.1.1 | 5.116.000,00 | 6.018.823,53 | 4.722.392,10 | 5.555.755,45 |
| PA2 | Theme 2.1.1 | 7.500.000,00 | 8.823.529,41 | 7.499.902,75 | 8.823.415,00 |
| | Theme 2.2.1 | 8.000.000,00 | 9.411.764,71 | 7.999.909,13 | 9.411.657,83 |
| | Theme 2.2.2 | 14.029.000,00 | 16.504.705,88 | 14.018.879,65 | 16.492.799,60 |
| PA3 | Theme 3.1.1 | 3.200.000,00 | 3.764.705,88 | 3.199.991,33 | 3.764.695,71 |
| | Theme 3.2.1 | 4.945.000,00 | 5.817.647,06 | 4.944.914,95 | 5.817.547,00 |
| | Theme 3.2.2 | 4.945.000,00 | 5.817.647,06 | 4.866.381,75 | 5.725.155,00 |
| | Theme 3.3.1 | 3.765.000,00 | 4.429.411,76 | 3.608.017,10 | 4.244.726,00 |
| PA4 | Theme 4.1.1 | 6.071.000,00 | 7.142.352,94 | 6.070.700,00 | 7.142.000,00 |
| | Theme 4.1.2 | 6.071.000,00 | 7.142.352,94 | 6.069.000,00 | 7.140.000,00 |
| | Theme 4.1.3 | 6.071.000,00 | 7.142.352,94 | 6.068.007,96 | 7.138.832,90 |

Source: Data from SIU

The call announcement for strategic projects stated the expectation that 1 strategic project would have been funded for each theme, and this is what happened at the closure of the call. Indeed, 11 projects have been funded, one for each strategic theme, on 13 proposals received. This is because, as showed in the table below, for thematic objectives 3.2.1 and 3.3.1 two projects were received, but just one was approved and then funded.

Table 8: Strategic Projects funded

| | Call | Proposals received | Requested budget | Selected Projects | Requested budget for approved project proposals | Approved budget after selection of projects | Average budget for approved projects | Average N° of partners for project |
|------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| PA | Strategic Theme | 13 | 86.617.186,07 | 11 | 81.256.584,49 | 81.256.584,49 | 7.386.962,23 | 17,8 |
| PA1 | 1.1.1 | 1 | 5.555.755,45 | 1 | 5.555.755,45 | 5.555.755,45 | 5.555.755,45 | 14 |
| PA2 | 2.1.1 | 1 | 8.823.415,00 | 1 | 8.823.415,00 | 8.823.415,00 | 11.575.957,48 | 18,3 |
| | 2.2.1 | 1 | 9.411.657,83 | 1 | 9.411.657,83 | 9.411.657,83 | | |
| | 2.2.2 | 1 | 16.492.799,60 | 1 | 16.492.799,60 | 16.492.799,60 | | |
| PA3 | 3.1.1 | 1 | 3.764.695,71 | 1 | 3.764.695,71 | 3.764.695,71 | 4.888.030,93 | 15,5 |

| | Call | Proposals received | Requested budget | Selected Projects | Requested budget for approved project proposals | Approved budget after selection of projects | Average budget for approved projects | Average N° of partners for project |
|------------|-------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | 3.2.1 | 2 | 9.223.673,20 | 1 | 5.817.547,00 | 5.817.547,00 | | |
| | 3.2.2 | 1 | 5.725.155,00 | 1 | 5.725.155,00 | 5.725.155,00 | | |
| | 3.3.1 | 2 | 6.199.201,38 | 1 | 4.244.726,00 | 4.244.726,00 | | |
| PA4 | 4.1.1 | 1 | 7.142.000,00 | 1 | 7.142.000,00 | 7.142.000,00 | 7.140.277,63 | 16,2 |
| | 4.1.2 | 1 | 7.140.000,00 | 1 | 7.140.000,00 | 7.140.000,00 | | |
| | 4.1.3 | 1 | 7.138.832,90 | 1 | 7.138.832,90 | 7.138.832,90 | | |

Source: Data from SIU

1.1.4 Cluster call

The **Restricted Cluster Call for Proposals** of the Interreg V-A Italy-Croatia CBC Programme is dedicated to the funding of **IT-HR cluster** projects in 5 different thematic areas in order to maximize experiences and results achieved by the Programme through the implementation of **Standard+** and **Standard Projects**.

It has been opened from **20th October to 14th December 2021** and allocated **2.550.000,00 € from ERDF fund** to finance projects “**IT-HR Cluster projects**” in **5 different thematic areas** as illustrated in the following table:

| N° | Cluster | Maximum ERDF budget | Maximum budget for national co-financing | Maximum total budget |
|----|---|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | Connectivity from the sea: data driven solution in the sea economy | 510.000,00 | 90.000,00 | 600.000,00 |
| 2 | Joint development of thematic cultural routes | 510.000,00 | 90.000,00 | 600.000,00 |
| 3 | Marine monitoring as a tool in Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) | 510.000,00 | 90.000,00 | 600.000,00 |
| 4 | Improving quality, efficiency and environmental performance of Adriatic ports | 510.000,00 | 90.000,00 | 600.000,00 |
| 5 | Improving quality, efficiency and environmental performance of Adriatic ports | 510.000,00 | 90.000,00 | 600.000,00 |

In order to be an eligible partner/lead partner within each of the 5 Clusters, an organization had to be already LP or PP (also Assimilated) of one of the Standard+ or Standard projects listed in the call announcement identified on the basis of their contribution to and compliance with the specific theme of each cluster. The Call envisaged that 1 IT-HR cluster project had to be funded per each cluster theme.

In terms of partnership, the call announced that each project had to involve at least three partners, out of which at least one Croatian partner involved in Standard or Standard+ project and at least one Italian partner involved in Standard or Standard+ project. Moreover, the partnership involved had bring the know-how and experience

from at least 3 different projects belonging to the same IT-HR Cluster from the list indicated. The maximum number of partners per each cluster project was set at 8.

The proposals received have been assessed and the Monitoring Committee has approved the final ranking list to fund 5 projects with the available budget out of the 9 proposals received and, in this regard, it has given mandate to the JS to start the condition clearing phase of the 5 projects as soon as possible. Moreover, the MC has instructed the Managing Authority to look for additional savings from Standard projects in order to fund more proposals from the Cluster ranking list.

The table below presents the 5 funded cluster projects, as well those that have been excluded pending further funding.

Table 9: Cluster projects

| APPROVED PROJECTS | | | NOT APPROVED PROJECTS | | |
|-------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Axis 1 | TECHERA | 600.000,00 | Axis 1 | CLASS4.0 | 599.083,60 |
| Axis 2 | SeCure | 600.000,00 | Axis 2 | CREATE | 599.962,50 |
| Axis 3 | RESISTANCE | 599.675,00 | Axis 3 | AdriPromTour | 590.000,00 |
| | BOOTS5 | 597.325,00 | | HATCH | 566.621,00 |
| Axis 4 | DIGSEA | 599.430,00 | Total | | 2.355.667,10 |
| Total | | 2.996.430,00 | | | |

1.2 Overall funded projects

The following section presents an overview of the projects funded until 31 December 2021, while cluster projects funded in 2022 will be considered in the next operational evaluation.

In addition to 5 Technical Assistance projects, 83 projects (50 Standard, 22 Standard+ and 11 Strategic projects) for a total approved budget as of 31 December 2021 of **EUR 221.747.864,85**, following the allocation per priority axis showed below.

Table 10: Overall Funded Projects per PA

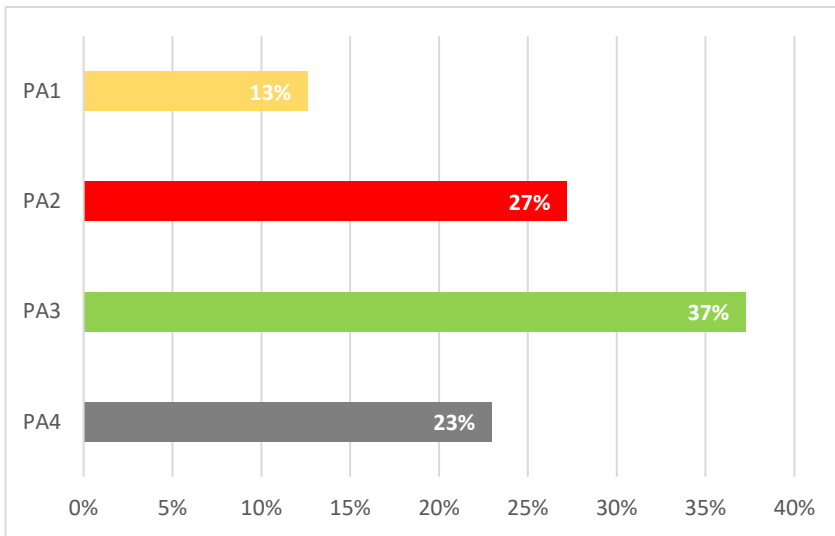
| Priority Axis | Standard+ | Standard | Strategic | Grand Total | Budget available | % per PA |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| PA1 | 2.877.635,40 | 19.529.327,09 | 5.555.755,45 | 27.962.718 | 28.426.903,00 | 13% |
| N° of projects | 3 | 8 | 1 | 12 | | |
| PA2 | 3.125.191,80 | 22.381.578,16 | 34.727.872,43 | 60.234.642,39 | 60.407.166,00 | 27% |
| N° of projects | 3 | 10 | 3 | 16 | | |
| PA3 | 10.752.370,66 | 52.320.910,50 | 19.552.123,71 | 82.625.404,87 | 82.911.797,00 | 37% |
| N° of projects | 11 | 22 | 4 | 37 | | |
| PA4 | 5.093.521,00 | 24.410.745,65 | 21.420.832,90 | 50.925.099,55 | 50.931.532,00 | 23% |
| N° of projects | 5 | 10 | 3 | 18 | | |
| Total N° of projects | 22 | 50 | 11 | 83 | | |
| Total per call | 21.848.718,86 | 118.642.561,40 | 81.256.584,49 | 221.747.864,85 | | |

| Priority Axis | Standard+ | Standard | Strategic | Grand Total | Budget available | % per PA |
|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|------------------|----------|
| % per call | 10% | 54% | 37% | | | |

Source: Data from SIU

37 projects have been funded under Priority Axis 3, which has thus taken the main part of the overall Programme’s budget, i.e., 37%, followed by PA2 to which has been allocated 27% of the total budget with 16 projects funded, and PA4 which counts for 23% of the overall budget with 18 funded projects. The table above also indicates the budget originally available for each PA and also Specific Objective in order to highlight that the amounts available at Programme level were consistently contracted.

Figure 5: Budget allocation per Priority Axis



1.3 Financial progress

The **22 Standard+ projects**, being also the first call to be launched, have followed the quickest path and all of the projects were **concluded** as of the end of the year 2019 with a final budget reported, validated and paid of **EUR 20.025.132,60**, as showed in the table below.

Table 11: Financial Progress of Standard+ projects

| Call and Priority Axis | Selected projects | Approved budget | Approved ERDF budget | Closed Projects as of December 2020 | Budget reported and certified | % certified on approved budget |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2017 Standard+ | 22 | 21.848.718,86 | 18.571.411,03 | 22 | 20.025.132,60 | 91,7% |
| 1 | 3 | 2.877.635,40 | 2.445.990,17 | 3 | 2.565.942,58 | 89,2% |
| 2 | 3 | 3.125.191,80 | 2.656.413,03 | 3 | 2.980.520,87 | 95,4% |
| 3 | 11 | 10.752.370,66 | 9.139.514,99 | 11 | 10.190.542,04 | 94,8% |
| 4 | 5 | 5.093.521,00 | 4.329.492,84 | 5 | 4.288.127,11 | 84,2% |

Source: Data from SIU

The table also highlights the overall very good performance of the Standard+ projects, considering that **91,7% of the approved budget has been eventually certified to the EC**. The best performance has been achieved by the projects funded under Priority Axis 3 with its 11 projects.

The **Standard projects** have started in late 2018 or beginning of 2019. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, requests for extension of project duration have been granted by the Programme to the beneficiaries: 22 Standard projects have been concluded at the end of this year 2021, while 28 of them will be concluded in year 2022.

The following table shows their financial progress as of December 2021, highlighting a percentage of 59% of certified ERDF budget to the EC on the overall ERDF budget, while 28 projects out of 50 are still not closed.

The Strategic projects have been launched in mid-2020 and their conclusion is planned for December 2022, and in one case in June 2023, therefore their financial progress is more limited and all projects are still ongoing. It has to be underlined that the activities of the strategic projects have been heavily affected by the COVID-pandemic. As of December 2021, 9.470.732,34 EUR from ERDF funds have been reported by the Beneficiaries, meaning 14% of the available ERDF budget and the percentage of ERDF certified amount is 13% of the available budget but 93% of the reported amount. It is worth mentioning the fact that there is an on-going effort at the Italian national level to reinforce the monitoring system regarding less performing projects. Specific meetings, involving National Authority and Italian project partners, took place.

Table 12: Financial Progress of Standard projects (validated amounts on 31st December 2021)

| Call and Priority Axis | Ongoing Projects | Closed projects | Approved Budget in 2021 | Approved ERDF budget in 2021 | Total reported amount | ERDF reported amount | Total FLC validated amount | ERDF FLC validated amount | Total EC certified amount | ERDF EC certified amount | % ERDF certified on ERDF budget |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2017 Standard | 28 | 22 | 118.642.561,40 | 100.846.176,76 | 73.378.118,39 | 62.371.391,20 | 73.378.191,13 | 62.371.453,03 | 69.764.833,91 | 59.300.099,65 | 59% |
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 19.529.327,09 | 16.599.927,98 | 12.997.030,40 | 11.047.474,14 | 12.997.030,40 | 11.047.474,14 | 12.533.000,90 | 10.653.049,12 | 64% |
| 2 | 6 | 4 | 22.381.578,16 | 19.024.341,34 | 14.500.903,05 | 12.325.765,84 | 14.500.903,05 | 12.325.765,84 | 13.844.105,36 | 11.767.487,83 | 62% |
| 3 | 12 | 10 | 52.320.910,50 | 44.472.773,72 | 32.496.115,70 | 27.621.694,21 | 32.496.188,44 | 27.621.756,04 | 30.229.843,87 | 25.695.363,36 | 58% |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 24.410.745,65 | 20.749.133,72 | 13.384.069,24 | 11.376.457,01 | 13.384.069,24 | 11.376.457,01 | 13.157.883,78 | 11.184.199,34 | 54% |

Source: Data from SIU

Table 13: Financial Progress of Strategic projects (validated amounts on 31st December 2021)

| Call and Priority Axis | Ongoing Projects | Approved Budget in 2021 | Approved ERDF budget in 2021 | Total reported amount | ERDF reported amount | Total FLC validated amount | ERDF FLC validated amount | Total EC certified amount | ERDF EC certified amount | % ERDF certified on ERDF budget |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2019 Strategic Call | 11 | 81.256.584,49 | 69.068.096,72 | 11.142.040,01 | 9.470.732,34 | 11.142.040,01 | 9.470.732,34 | 10.396.780,41 | 8.837.261,75 | 13% |
| 1 | 1 | 5.555.755,45 | 4.722.392,10 | 1.764.069,30 | 1.499.458,77 | 1.764.069,30 | 1.499.458,77 | 1.764.069,30 | 1.499.458,77 | 32% |
| 2 | 3 | 34.727.872,43 | 29.518.691,53 | 2.998.483,22 | 2.548.710,34 | 2.998.483,22 | 2.548.710,34 | 2.998.483,22 | 2.548.710,34 | 9% |
| 3 | 4 | 19.552.123,71 | 16.619.305,13 | 2.798.146,71 | 2.378.424,14 | 2.798.146,71 | 2.378.424,14 | 2.798.146,71 | 2.378.424,14 | 14% |
| 4 | 3 | 21.420.832,90 | 18.207.707,96 | 3.581.340,78 | 3.044.139,09 | 3.581.340,78 | 3.044.139,09 | 2.836.081,18 | 2.410.668,50 | 13% |

Source: Data from SIU

Finally, in order to offer a complete picture, table 14 below shows the overall financial progress of the Programme by Priority Axis, including the technical assistance projects, as of December 2021. The overall amount certified to the EC is equal to EUR 106.651.719,12, of which **90.653.948,08** from ERDF budget. **The Programme has thus successfully met and exceeded its ERDF financial targets for year 2021**, which amounted to EUR 85.084.937,36.

Table 14: Financial Targets

| TARGET N+3 | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 2017 | - |
| 2018 | 3.679.725,43 |
| 2019 | 18.716.243,36 |
| 2020 | 50.515.404,76 |
| 2021 | 85.084.937,36 |
| 2022 | 120.426.402,96 |
| 2023 | 201.357.220,00 |

Source: Data from SIU

Moreover, from the table below, it appears that the ERDF certified amount is 45% of the budget with a solid improvement from the year 2020 where the percentage was 26. However, the low level of expenditure of the Strategic Projects has a large impact on the performance of the overall Programme.

In any case, it has to be mentioned that there are **39 projects with activities still ongoing** (4 under PA1, 9 under PA2, 16 under PA3 and 10 under PA4), while other 22 projects have concluded their activities in June and December 2021 so they still have to report to the Programme on the last period of implementation.

Overall, it is confirmed the **very good performance of the Programme** that has reached **96% of ERDF certified amount on ERDF reported amount** by the beneficiaries.

Table 15: Programme's financial performance on 31 December 2021

| Priority Axis | Projects | Status ² | Total Budget | ERDF Budget | Total reported amount | ERDF reported amount | Total FLC validated amount | ERDF FLC validated amount | Total EC certified amount | ERDF EC certified amount | % ERDF certified on budget | % ERDF certified on reported amount |
|---------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Grand Total | 83 | 44 closed | 235.961.314,85 | 200.567.117,01 | 111.327.568,69 | 94.628.421,00 | 111.010.585,74 | 94.358.984,45 | 106.651.719,12 | 90.653.948,08 | 45% | 96% |
| | | 39 ongoing | | | | | | | | | | |
| PA 1 | 12 | 8 closed 4 ongoing | 27.962.718,04 | 23.768.310,25 | 17.331.664,39 | 14.731.912,74 | 17.327.042,28 | 14.727.983,85 | 16.863.012,78 | 14.333.558,83 | 60% | 97% |
| PA 2 | 16 | 7 closed 9 ongoing | 60.234.642,39 | 51.199.445,90 | 20.607.420,70 | 17.516.305,27 | 20.479.907,14 | 17.407.918,64 | 19.823.109,45 | 16.849.640,63 | 33% | 96% |
| PA 3 | 37 | 21 closed 16 ongoing | 82.625.404,87 | 70.231.593,84 | 45.576.469,62 | 38.739.993,79 | 45.484.877,19 | 38.662.139,70 | 43.218.282,62 | 36.735.534,49 | 52% | 95% |
| PA 4 | 18 | 8 closed 10 ongoing | 50.925.099,55 | 43.286.334,52 | 21.307.204,86 | 18.111.121,47 | 21.253.537,13 | 18.065.503,63 | 20.282.092,07 | 17.239.775,37 | 40% | 95% |
| PA 5 | - | - | 14.213.450,00 | 12.081.432,50 | 6.504.809,12 | 5.529.087,73 | 6.465.222,00 | 5.495.438,63 | 6.465.222,20 | 5.495.438,76 | 45% | 99% |

Source: Data from SIU

² The calculation refers to the projects with closed activities as of 31 December 2021.

2 Cross-border cooperation added value and networking

2.1 Methodology

The independent evaluator adopted a *hybrid approach*, combining techniques for quantitative, qualitative, participatory and visual (tables and graphics) analysis based on direct (primary) and secondary data. This approach is able to offer a **rich explanatory potential** and a high degree of reliability in providing evaluative responses to complex issues, as:

- the need to support decision-making processes which are implemented in the context of the territorial cooperation (which involves a plurality of actors, institutional levels, different territories and network of cities) both for the ongoing and the next programming period;
- the peculiar nature of the actions to be evaluated (integrated and multidimensional policies).

In particular, the evaluation of the **cross-border cooperation added value and networking** is carried out with reference to the following methodological approaches:

- *Theory-based models* – and in particular the realistic evaluation -, which guide the interpretation of causal mechanisms by referring to the theories of change underlying the Programme. These models are used in conjunction with quantitative techniques; they enhance the interpretative capacity of evaluative analysis, as they allow to focus on both contextual aspects and on the implementation process.
- *Participatory models*, which are particularly useful for the analysis of the partnership since they allow to enhance the different perspectives of the actors and the territories involved. They allow to interpret the cause-effect dynamics and the complex relationships which have been implemented in the frame of the Programme; at the same time, they trigger learning processes and develop visions and shared practices which may involve the management bodies, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The partnerships and stakeholder involvement determine largely the quality of projects and Programme outputs. Therefore, the evaluation of the partnerships is a key element of the operational evaluation.

The operational evaluation has benefited from the constant coordination with the MA staff which provided support to the Evaluator in order to identify the crucial information and contacts.

The Operational Evaluation is providing answers to the following **evaluation questions**.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Are created partnerships relevant and coherent with the Programme crossborder nature? |
| 2 | Are all relevant stakeholders at cross-border level duly represented? |
| 3 | Are created partnerships relevant according to Programme/projects objectives? |
| 4 | Are the partnerships, of the financed projects, balanced in terms of number of partners, represented areas, roles and budget? |
| 5 | Are promoted partnerships based on previous experiences and how do they ensure their sustainability in time? |

The methodological tools, involving a mix of different data gathering and analytical methods, include:

- **Desk analysis** of data extracted from the SIU, concerning the partnerships created with specific focus on type of bodies, legal seat country and implementing unit locations.
 - The desk analysis allows for the creation of graphs and tables to assess a) the geographical distribution of the partnerships, and of the lead partners in particular and b) the partnership composition. The information obtained thanks to the desk analysis have been used by the Evaluator to answer the evaluation questions.

- **Online Survey to Beneficiaries of the Programme**, both Lead Partners and Project Partners of the 83 funded projects. The survey consisted of 16 multiple-choice questions, have been sent by email to the addresses of all the beneficiaries and 202 people have answered the survey. It was launched on 22 February and remained open for two weeks until 6 March. The survey tool is included in Annex 1 and the results of the survey are included in Annex 5.
 - The survey generated quantitative data about the perceptions of the beneficiaries and some qualitative data thanks to the answer to the open questions that have been used by the Independent Evaluator to answer to the Evaluation Questions.

- **Semi-structured interviews with a sample of lead partners of projects**. In order to go more in-depth and further explore the results of the survey, semi-structured online interviews are conducted by the Evaluator. The interviews are preceded by the analysis of the application dossiers of the projects selected for the sample to deepen the levels of coherence and relevance of the project objectives with respect to the strategy of the Programme. The semi-structured interviews guideline is included in Annex 2. The table below present the 13 Standard and Standard+ projects that have been selected for the interview. It has been chosen to select the sample from those projects which have decided to apply also to the Cluster Call. Moreover, the selection has been done with respect to the distribution of the projects by Specific Objectives.
 - The interviews generated qualitative information from the perspective of the selected beneficiaries that have been used by the Evaluator to answer to the Evaluation Questions.

Table 16: Sample of projects for in-depth interviews

| S.O. | Call | Status | Project | Country of the LP |
|------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1.1 | Standard | activities closed | FAIRSEA | Italy |
| 1.1 | Standard | activities ongoing | ITACA | Italy |
| 2.1 | Standard+ | activities closed | iDEAL | Croatia |
| 2.1 | Standard | activities ongoing | MoST | Italy |
| 2.2 | Standard+ | activities closed | READINESS | Italy |
| 3.1 | Standard | activities closed | ARCA ADRIATICA | Croatia |
| 3.1 | Standard | activities ongoing | UnderwaterMuse | Italy |
| 3.2 | Standard | activities closed | ECOSS | Italy |
| 3.2 | Standard | activities closed | SOUNDSCAPE | Croatia |
| 3.3 | Standard | activities ongoing | ECOMAP | Croatia |
| 3.3 | Standard+ | activities closed | ML-REPAIR | Italy |
| 4.1 | Standard | activities closed | DigLogs | Croatia |
| 4.1 | Standard | activities ongoing | E-CHAIN | Italy |

- **A Focus Group discussion** with the project managers of the Joint Secretariat on the cross-border dimension of the Programme and on the quality of the partnerships created.
 - The focus group included the project managers of the JS, who engage daily with the beneficiaries of the Programme. They brought to the analysis their perspective as the body in charge of day-to-day implementation of the Programme and of providing guidance to project applicants and partners.

2.2 Desk analysis on partnerships

The following analysis show the extent of the partnerships activated by the projects funded by the Programme³. The projects considered are those that were approved in implementation of the first three calls for proposals: Standard+ projects, in March 2017; Standard projects, in April 2017; Strategic projects, September 2019.

The size of the partnership activated by the Programme is conditioned by the specific requests formulated in the calls for proposals. However, calls for proposals indicate only the minimum number of partners; restrictions concerning multiple participations are mainly aimed at limiting the accumulation of lead partnerships in one entity (although for regional and national institutions and for universities the organisational units are considered eligible):

- Call for Project Proposals for Standard+ projects (March 2017): Each “Standard+” project has to involve **at least 3 partners**, out of which: at least 1 Croatian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project; at least 1 Italian partner that was member of the partnership of the previously financed project. Specific restrictions only for “Standard+”: one institution cannot be lead applicant in more than one “Standard+” proposal.
- Call for Project Proposals for Standard projects (April 2017): Each “Standard” project has to involve **at least 4 partners**, located in each of the two countries of the Programme area (at least 1 per country). Specific restrictions only for “Standard”: one institution cannot be lead applicant in more than 2 proposals per each Programme Specific Objective.
- Call for Strategic Project proposals (September 2019): Each strategic project has to involve **at least 3 Croatian and 3 Italian eligible partners** (associated partners are not considered for the assessment of this requirement). Associated partners are key stakeholders that can be involved in a project without financially contributing to it and without receiving ERDF funding. For what concern the Lead applicant the Call introduce some other restrictions: “each institution shall be considered as a unique body, regardless its own organization. Therefore, no distinction between departments/technical unit/etc will be taken into account. Moreover, one body cannot be lead applicant in more than one strategic project proposal”.

The actual number of institutions involved in project implementation is 332, of which 60 participated as lead partners (LP). These organisations have generated a total of 803 participations in projects. The average number of participants per project is 9,7. Networks set up to participate in *Standards +* calls are the smallest (on average 6,6 bodies per partnership), while those of *Standard* calls are wider (9,2). *Strategic* calls mobilised the largest networks, in which 17,8 organisations participated on average.

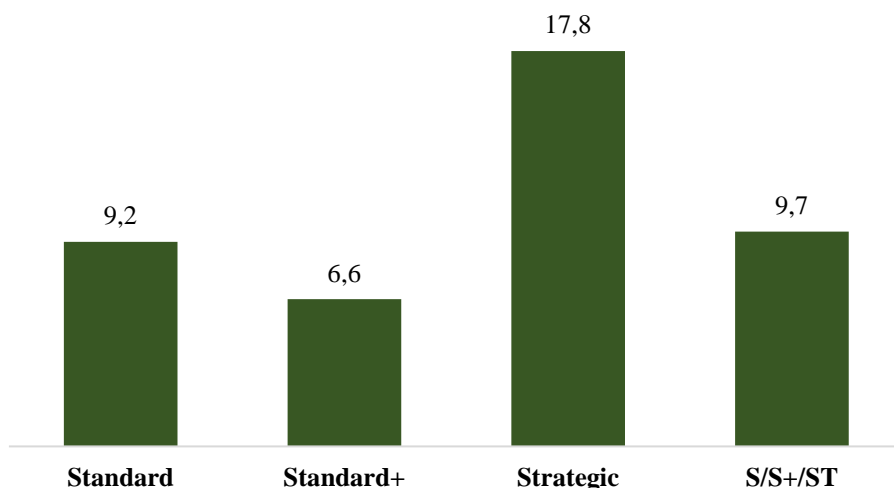
These figures show, on the one hand, the good capacity of activation of eligible bodies by the procedures promoted by the Programme, on the other hand, the significant importance of multiple participation in the activities promoted by the Programme.

The average number of partners involved in funded projects is well above the minimum requirements of the calls, especially for strategic projects (see also Tab. 8). These values can be considered as a first positive result in the direction of increasingly including the cross-border dimension in the activities of the public and private organisations involved in the Programme activities. On the other hand, it should also be considered that about 40% of the partners considered participate in more than one project. The significant level of multiple participations could be considered as evidence of the need to broaden participation in Programme activities. However, this phenomenon is linked to the number of participations of more complex organisations, such as

³ Technical assistance is not included in the analysis

regional administrations, development agencies, research organisations and universities, which are made up of many organisational units.

Figure 6: Average number of partners per call type



Source: Data from SIU

The highest proportion of the organisations participated in only one project (59%), 16.3% in two projects, 8.4% in three projects and 4.2% in four projects. Further 8% participated in between 5 and 9 projects. The remaining 3.3% (11 organisations) participated in a number of projects ranging from 10 to 24. In the latter group, the following institutions stand out for the high number of projects in which they have been involved:

- Javna Ustanova Rera S.D. za Koordinaciju i Razvoj Splitsko Dalmatinske Županije (24 Projects)
- Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (20)
- Regione Emilia Romagna (17)
- Regione Marche (17)
- Regione del Veneto (16)
- Institut za Oceanografiju i Ribarstvo (16)

Table 17: Distribution of project partner organisations per no. of implemented projects

| Number of implemented projects | Number of Organisations | % |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| 1 | 196 | 59,04% |
| 2 | 54 | 16,27% |
| 3 | 28 | 8,43% |
| 4 | 14 | 4,22% |
| 5 | 9 | 2,71% |
| 6 | 8 | 2,41% |
| 7 | 4 | 1,20% |
| 8 | 3 | 0,90% |
| 9 | 4 | 1,20% |
| 10 | 2 | 0,60% |
| 11 | 2 | 0,60% |
| 12 | 1 | 0,30% |
| 14 | 1 | 0,30% |
| 16 | 2 | 0,60% |
| 17 | 2 | 0,60% |
| 20 | 1 | 0,30% |
| 24 | 1 | 0,30% |

| Number of implemented projects | Number of Organisations | % |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Total | 332 | 100,0% |

Source: Data from SIU

Table 18: Project partner organizations participating in more than 5 projects (distribution by S.O)

| PROJECT PARTNER NAME | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | Total |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| Javna Ustanova Rera S.D. - za Koordinaciju i Razvoj Splitsko Dalmatinske Županije | 5 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 24 |
| Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 20 |
| Regione Marche | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 17 |
| Regione Emilia Romagna | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 17 |
| Regione Veneto | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 16 |
| Institut za Oceanografiju i Ribarstvo | 5 | 3 | | | 6 | 2 | | 16 |
| Dubrovačko - Neretvanska Županija | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 14 |
| Regione Puglia | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 13 |
| Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 5 | 11 |
| Regione Molise | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | | 1 | 11 |
| Istarska Županija | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Universita' Ca' Foscari Venezia | 2 | | | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Splitsko-Dalmatinska Županija | | 1 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| Università degli Studi di Trieste | 3 | | | | | 1 | 5 | 9 |
| Primorsko-Goranska Županija | 1 | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 2 | 9 |
| Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 9 |
| Sveučilište U Zadru | 1 | | 1 | 5 | | | 1 | 8 |
| Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale – OGS | 4 | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 8 |
| Sveučilište u Rijeci, Pomorski Fakultet u Rijeci | 1 | | | | | | 7 | 8 |
| Regione Abruzzo | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Centrale | | | | 1 | | | 6 | 7 |
| Agenzia Regionale per la Prevenzione l'ambiente e l'energia dell'Emilia-Romagna | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | | 7 |
| Sveučilište u Splitu - Fakultet Građevinarstva, Arhitekture i Geodezije | | 1 | 2 | | | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Settentrionale | 1 | | | 1 | | | 4 | 6 |
| Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Meridionale | | | | | | | 6 | 6 |
| Fondazione Istituto sui Trasporti e la Logistica | | | | | | | 6 | 6 |
| Unione Regionale Camere Commercio I.A.A. del Veneto | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Fondazione Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | 6 |
| Zadarska Županija | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | 6 |
| Istarska Razvojna Agencija | 2 | | | 1 | | | 3 | 6 |
| Institut Ruđer Bošković | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | | 6 |
| Agencija za Razvoj Zadarske Županije Zadra Nova | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | 6 |

Source: Data from SIU

The core group of partner organisations took on the role of project leader only once: 43 project partner organizations (72%). A total of 17 organisations have participated as lead partners in more than one project. In this group, two were lead partners of 3 projects and two of 4 projects.

Table 19: Participations in project as Lead Partner

| Participations in project as Lead Partner | Number of Organisations | % |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 43 | 71,7% |
| 2 | 13 | 21,7% |
| 3 | 2 | 3,3% |
| 4 | 2 | 3,3% |
| Total | 60 | 100,0% |

Source: Data from SIU

The highest number of projects has been reached by the Università Ca' Foscari Venezia and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (both are lead partners of 4 projects), follow with 3 projects Regione Marche and Regione Molise - which is the only partner leading two projects in the same Specific Objective, the 2.2.

Table 20: Lead partners participating in more than 2 projects (distribution by S.O)

| LP NAME | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | Total |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Università Ca' Foscari Venezia | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| Regione Marche | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| Regione Molise | | | 2 | 1 | | | | 3 |

Source: Data from SIU

The Figure 7 shows that specific objectives 4.1 and 3.1 have the highest number of partners (respectively equal to 24.2% and 23.3%). Another substantial share (13.8%) was addressed to S.O. 1.1., S O.s 2.1 and 3.2 follow, both with shares of around 10%. The remaining part is distributed in similar proportions between SO 2.2 (8.9%) and SO 3.3 (8.7%).

The comparison of the distribution of the percentage of partners per specific objective (Fig. 7) with the distribution of the budget (Fig. 8) shows that the relationship between these two aspects of Programme implementation is not always linear.

The specific objectives on which the largest percentage shares of the budget are concentrated are, also in this case, 4.1 and 3.1, showing a correspondence between the two distributions, even if with a different weight. The distribution of the budget by specific objective appears more gradual, while the distribution of the partner organisations shows the greater weight of the first two S.Os.

The main difference that emerges from the comparison of the distribution of the two variables concerns S.O. 2.2, which, despite having a relatively low percentage of concentration of partner organisations, shows a significant weight on the distribution of the budget - the third value among the S.O. with 15% of the total budget of the Programme. As far as the other S.O.s are concerned, a more regular pattern emerges: S.O. 3.3 absorbs the smallest share of the budget and partner organisations; the other S.O.s are in the mid-range in both cases.

Figure 7: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations per Specific Objective

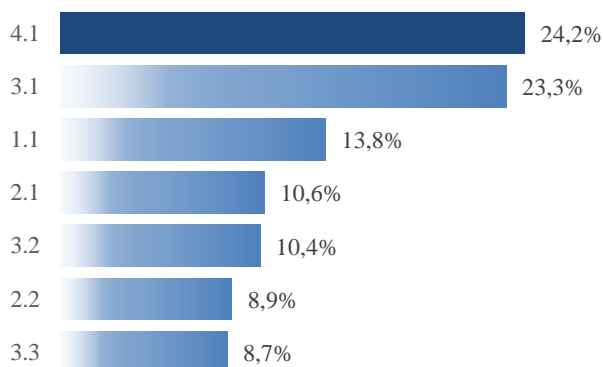
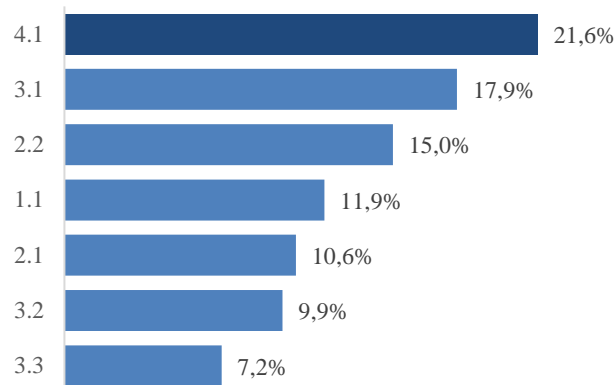


Figure 8: Distribution of Allocated Budget per Specific Objective

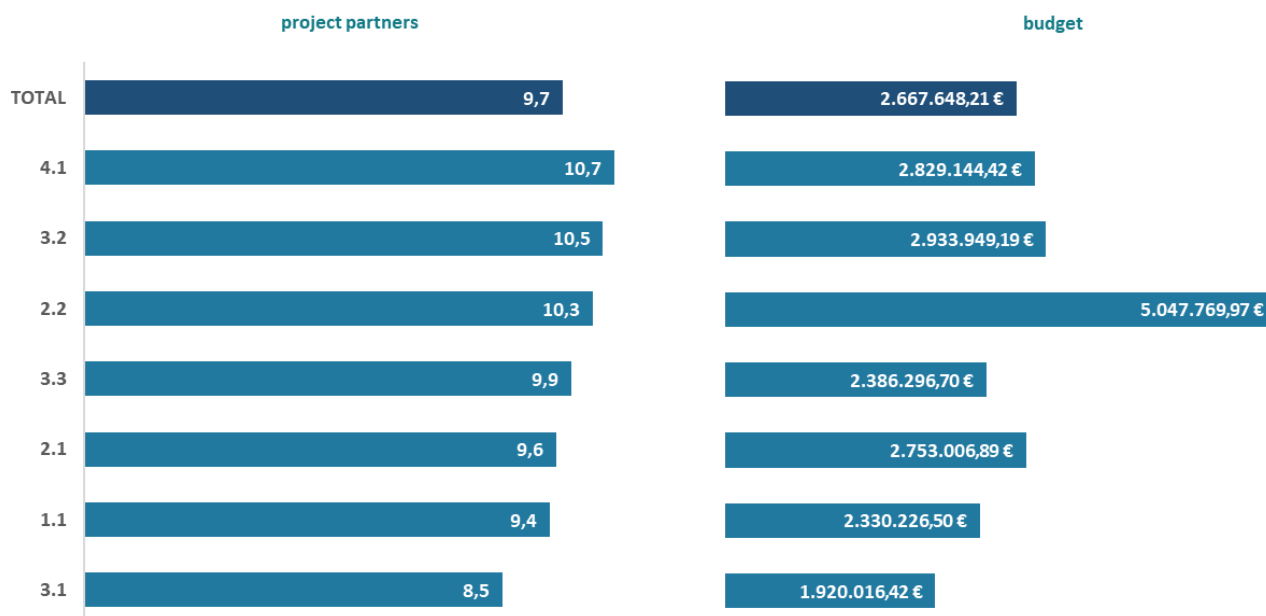


Source: Data from SIU

The projects belonging to the S.O. 2.2 are also those with an average financial size far above the Programme mean, and an average number of partners per project above the Programme mean (Fig. 9).

Basically, we can say that the financial weight of an S.O. does not necessarily determine its relevance in terms of the number of partners involved in the same S.O. The number of partners involved in the projects can be connected to the specific relevance of an S.O. for the territories involved in the implementation of each project or even to the strategic orientation pursued by the partners that promoted the projects. These elements emerge in the description of some of the projects reviewed in following paragraph 2.3.

Figure 9: Average number of Project Partner Organisations per project and S.O. (left) and average financial dimension of the projects per SO (right)



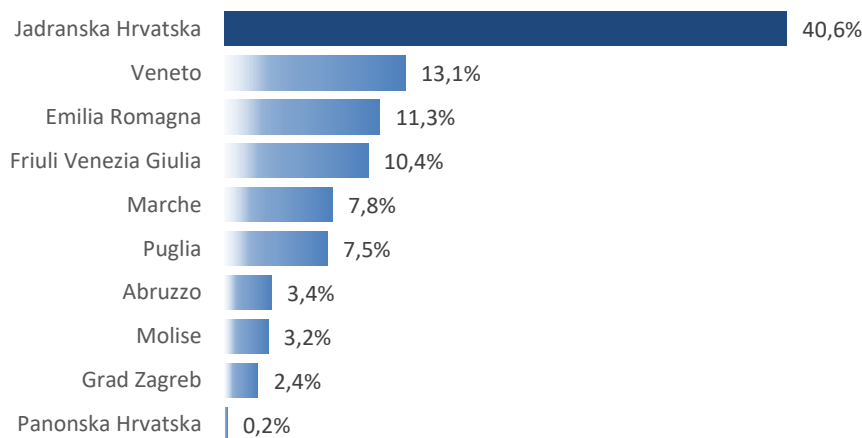
Source: Data from SIU

When analysing the distribution of the project partner organisations according to the different geographical units (NUTS), it emerges that out of the 803 partners involved in the implementation of the project, 56.5% are Italian organisations and 43.5% Croatian organisations, showing a balanced involvement of the two countries.

The comparison of the geographical units cannot be optimal, particularly in view of the different spatial extent and population size of the two States within the cooperation area. Also, as a consequence of this situation, the number of administrative units involved varies considerably between the two countries, e.g., at NUTS III level the Programme includes 25 provinces in Italy and 8 counties in Croatia. This situation leads to a greater concentration of Croatian partners in the counties involved in the implementation of the Programme than in the Italian provinces.

Considering the NUTS II level *implementing unit location* (IUL), it emerges the high incidence of the participants located in the region of Jadranska Hrvatska (40.6%) followed with much smaller quotas by the organisations of Veneto region (13%), Emilia Romagna and Friuli Venezia Giulia (both groups with a percentage of about 11%). Other substantial shares are recorded for the organisations of Marche (7.8%) and Puglia (7.5%). The bodies of Abruzzo and Molise account respectively for 3%, and for about 2.4 those of Grad Zagreb.

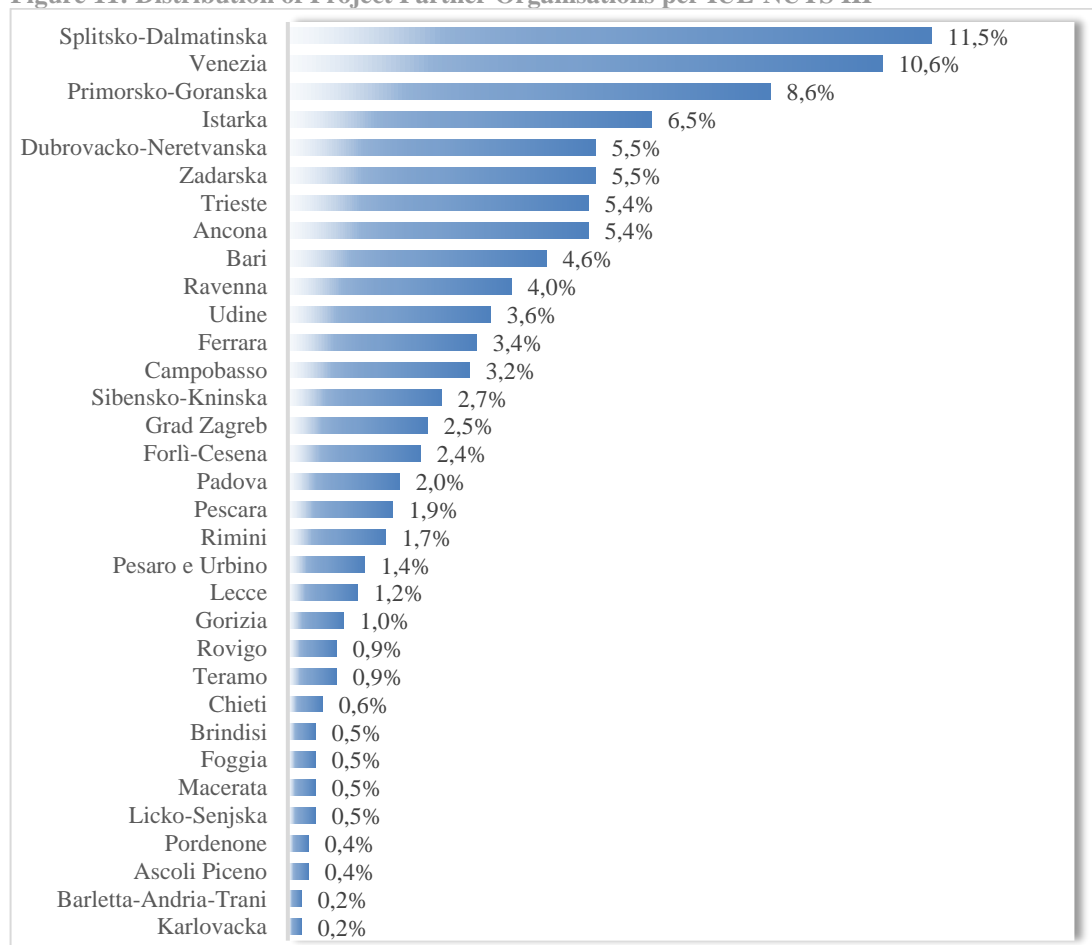
Figure 10: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations per IUL- NUTS II



Source: Data from SIU

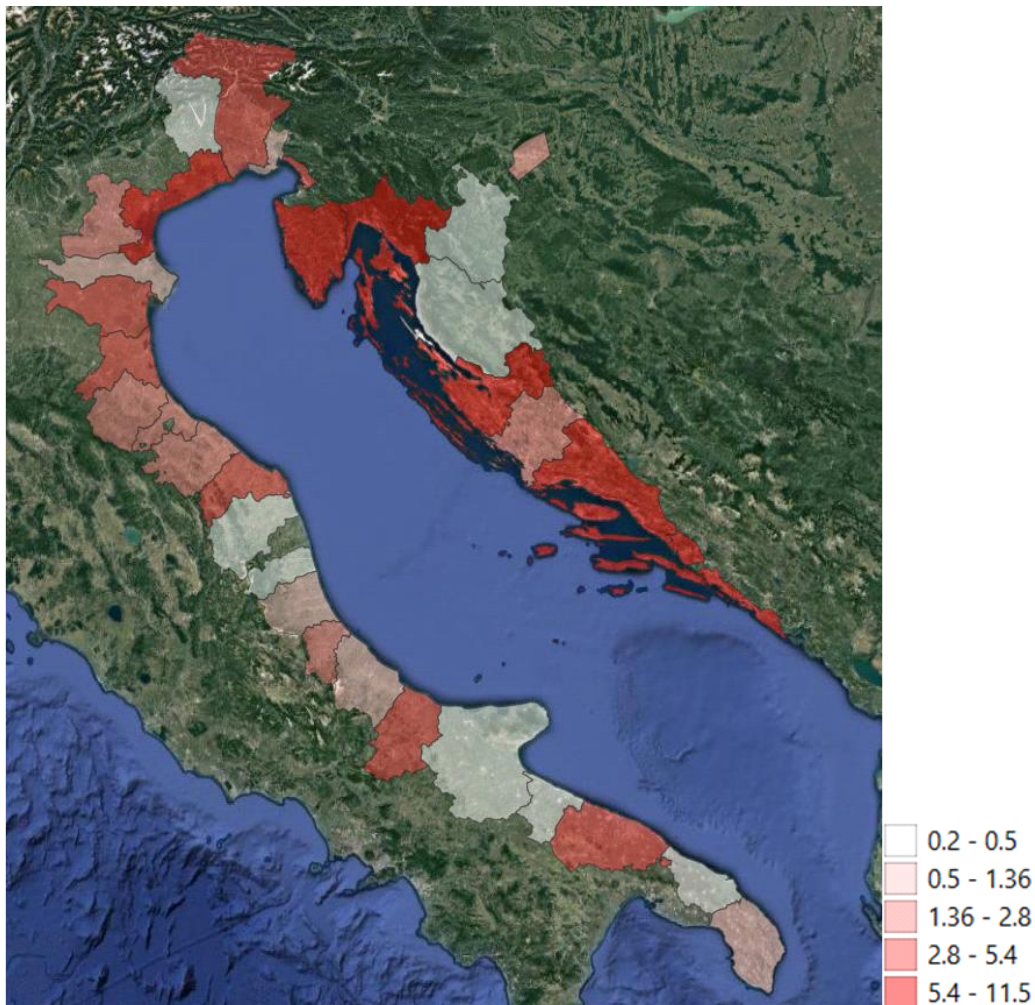
At the NUTS III level (Fig. 11 and Image 1), we can see that it is in fact the Croatian counties that are at the top of the list in terms of weight of administrative units by number of partner organisations active in projects financed by the Programme. The most represented group is constituted by organisations based in Splitsko-Dalmatinska (11.5%), in second place (with 10.6%) we find organisations operating in the province of Venice, followed by those based in Primorsko-Goranska (8.6%). Other significant concentrations are found at Istarska (6.5%), Zadarska, Dubrovacko-Neretvanska, Ancona, Trieste and Bari, all with a percentage around 5%.

Figure 11: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations per IUL-NUTS III



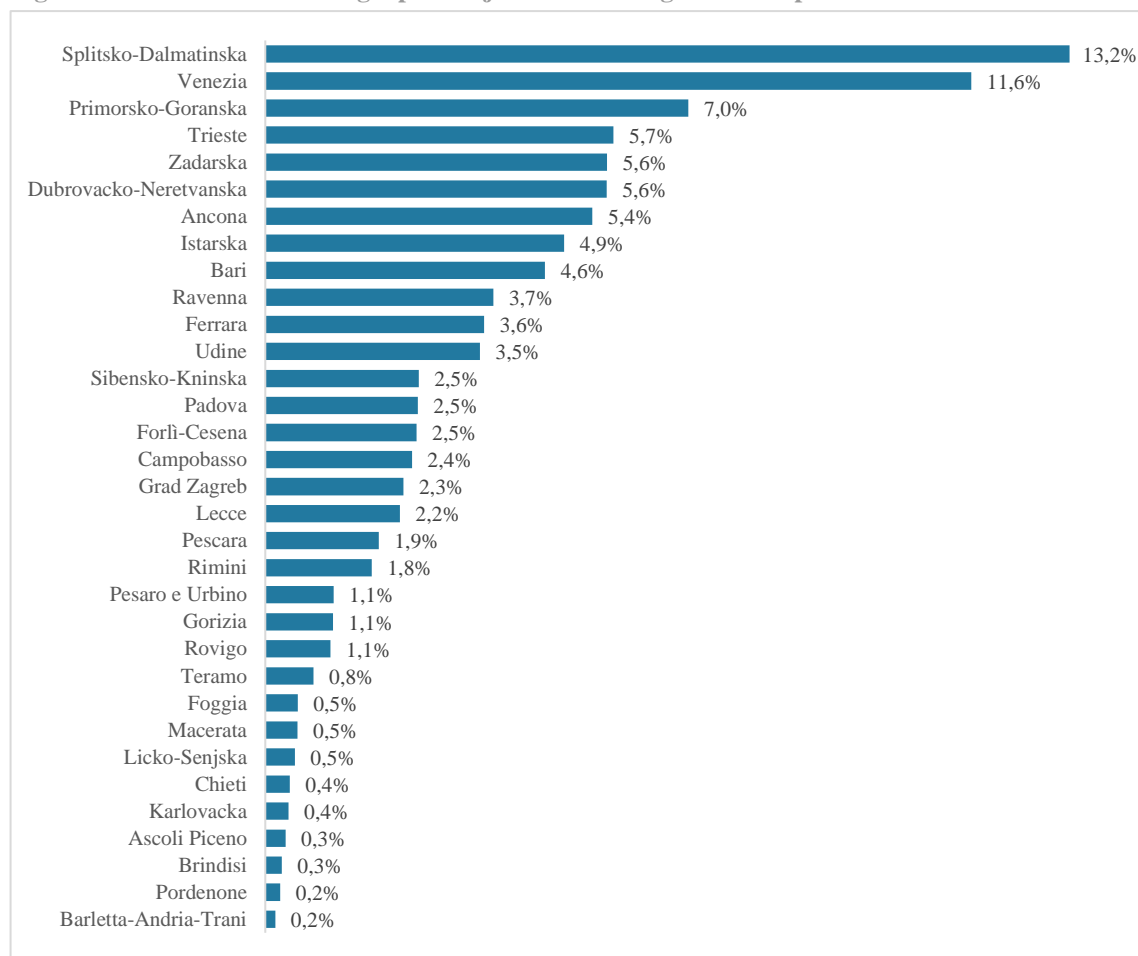
Source: Data from SIU

Map 1: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations per IUL-NUTS III



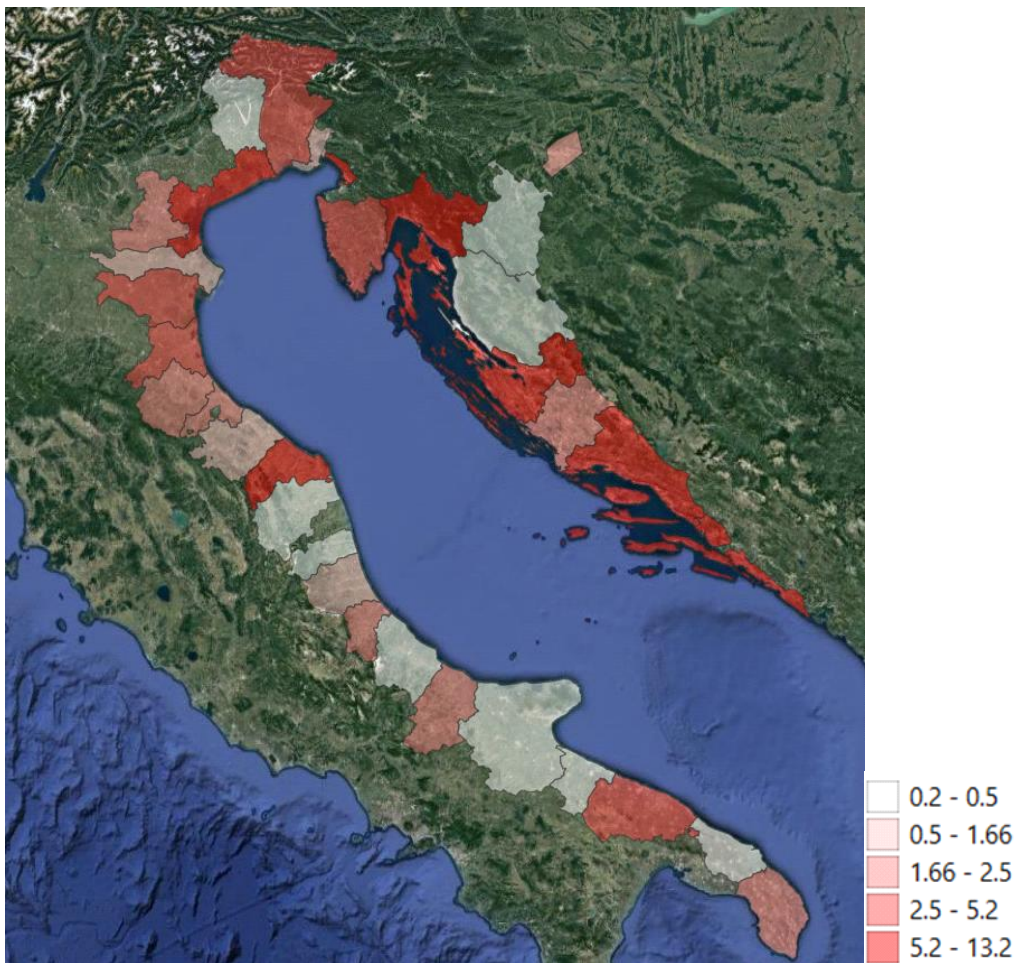
If we consider the distribution of the budget among the partner organisations according to their location in the NUTS III administrative units (Fig. 12 and Image 2), the picture that emerges is not very different from the previous one. The first ten territorial units are the same as those appearing in the previous elaborations on the distribution of the project partner organisations. The main difference concerns the higher concentration of financial resources that have been committed in favour of the partner organisations located in the first two administrative units, Splitsko-Dalmatinska (13,2%), Province of Venice (11,6), while the variations concerning the other administrative units do not show significant differences.

Figure 12: Distribution of Budget per Project Partner Organisations per IUL-NUTS III



Source: Data from SIU

Map 2: Distribution of Budget per Project Partner Organisations per IUL-NUTS III



The following tables show the distribution of partner organisations and allocated budget by S.O. and NUTS II. In both countries, Specific Objectives 3.1 and 4.1 attracted the highest share of participants and budget. This distribution concerns almost all NUTS II regions involved, although some differences emerge.

Specific Objective 1.1 concentrated a significant share of participants in Croatia - where the relative budget share is particularly significant in the Grad Zagreb region - as well as in the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions. In the latter region, the concentration of the budget is also relatively significant.

In Abruzzo, a significant share of partners (22.2%) and even more of the budget (32.5) was directed towards O.S. 2.2, which in this region ranks second after Objective 4.1. Also in Molise this specific objective has a relevant weight, especially as regards the value of the budget (second after O.S. 3.1). In Emilia Romagna, on the other hand, it is the specific objective 2.1 that has gathered a significant share of the budget (second after O.S. 4.1).

Table 21: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations per implementing unit location-NUTS II and Specific Objective

| IUL | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| CROATIA | 53 | 35 | 33 | 79 | 35 | 31 | 83 | 349 |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 49 | 32 | 31 | 77 | 33 | 30 | 75 | 327 |
| Grad Zagreb | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 20 |
| Panonska Hrvatska | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| ITALY | 60 | 51 | 39 | 111 | 49 | 38 | 110 | 454 |
| Veneto | 17 | 15 | 6 | 24 | 11 | 10 | 23 | 106 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Emilia Romagna | 8 | 13 | 9 | 31 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 91 |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 17 | 5 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 26 | 84 |
| Marche | 9 | 8 | 4 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 14 | 63 |
| Puglia | 8 | 6 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 2 | 15 | 57 |
| Abruzzo | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 27 |
| Molise | | 2 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 26 |
| Total | 113 | 86 | 72 | 186 | 84 | 69 | 193 | 803 |

Source: Data from SIU

Table 22: Distribution of Project Partner Organisations and budget per implementing unit location-NUTS II and Specific Objective (%)

| IUL | 1.1 | | 2.1 | | 2.2 | | 3.1 | | 3.2 | | 3.3 | | 4.1 | | TOT |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | PPO | € | PPO | € | PPO | € | PPO | € | PPO | € | PPO | € | PPO | € | |
| CROATIA | 15,2 | 12,7 | 10,0 | 8,3 | 9,5 | 23,2 | 22,6 | 18,2 | 10,0 | 9,4 | 8,9 | 6,3 | 23,8 | 21,9 | 100,0 |
| Grad Zagreb | 20,0 | 46,9 | 15,0 | 9,6 | 5,0 | 0,0 | 5,0 | 3,0 | 10,0 | 1,9 | 5,0 | 2,8 | 40,0 | 35,8 | 100,0 |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 15,0 | 10,8 | 9,8 | 8,3 | 9,5 | 24,1 | 23,5 | 19,0 | 10,1 | 9,9 | 9,2 | 6,6 | 22,9 | 21,3 | 100,0 |
| Panonska Hrvatska | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 50,0 | 76,6 | 50,0 | 23,4 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 100,0 |
| ITALY | 13,2 | 12,6 | 11,2 | 13,3 | 8,6 | 10,7 | 23,6 | 19,7 | 10,8 | 11,5 | 8,4 | 8,4 | 24,2 | 23,8 | 100,0 |
| Abruzzo | 3,7 | 3,4 | 7,4 | 8,6 | 22,2 | 32,5 | 14,8 | 10,9 | 7,4 | 2,8 | 11,1 | 9,1 | 33,3 | 32,8 | 100,0 |
| Emilia Romagna | 8,8 | 8,6 | 14,3 | 18,3 | 9,9 | 9,1 | 34,1 | 29,8 | 7,7 | 10,0 | 7,7 | 7,9 | 17,6 | 16,3 | 100,0 |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 20,2 | 17,6 | 6,0 | 6,0 | 4,8 | 5,3 | 15,5 | 11,9 | 11,9 | 11,1 | 10,7 | 11,1 | 31,0 | 36,9 | 100,0 |
| Marche | 14,3 | 13,5 | 12,7 | 11,3 | 6,3 | 12,3 | 20,6 | 19,9 | 14,3 | 12,6 | 9,5 | 9,2 | 22,2 | 21,2 | 100,0 |
| Molise | 0,0 | 0,0 | 7,7 | 10,3 | 15,4 | 26,6 | 34,6 | 33,2 | 11,5 | 11,3 | 3,8 | 5,2 | 26,9 | 13,3 | 100,0 |
| Puglia | 14,0 | 10,7 | 10,5 | 16,2 | 10,5 | 11,4 | 22,8 | 17,0 | 12,3 | 16,1 | 3,5 | 4,8 | 26,3 | 23,9 | 100,0 |
| Veneto | 16,0 | 16,5 | 14,2 | 15,5 | 5,7 | 7,5 | 22,6 | 18,6 | 10,4 | 11,7 | 9,4 | 8,9 | 21,7 | 21,3 | 100,0 |
| TOTAL | 14,1 | 12,6 | 10,7 | 11,2 | 9,0 | 16,0 | 23,2 | 19,1 | 10,5 | 10,6 | 8,6 | 7,5 | 24,0 | 23,0 | 100,0 |

Source: Data from SIU

The following tables show the distribution of lead partners by specific objective and NUTS II. In comparison with the general distribution of project partner organisations the distribution of lead partners appears to be less balanced between the two countries: 77.4% of the lead partners are based in one of the Italian regions.

Only 19 lead partners (out of 84) are based in Croatia. The latter appear to be particularly active in O.S. 3.1.

On the Italian side, the lead partners are particularly concentrated in three regions: Veneto (especially in O.S. 1.1 and 4.1), Friuli Venezia Giulia (in O.S. 4.1) and Emilia Romagna (where O.S. 3.1 prevails).

Despite the scarce presence of Croatian organisations among the project leaders, 21.4% of all the leaders have the headquarters of their implementation unit in the region Jadranska Hrvatska, the second highest score, preceded by Veneto (22.6%); followed by the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia (17.9%) and Emilia Romagna (16.7%). The regions with the lowest number of lead partners are Abruzzo (1) and Molise (3).

Table 23: Distribution of Lead Partner organisations per implementing unit location-NUTS II and Specific Objective

| IUL | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| CROATIA | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 19 |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 18 |
| Grad Zagreb | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| ITALY | 10 | 8 | 4 | 15 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 64 |
| Veneto | 5 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 18 |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 15 |
| Emilia Romagna | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14 |
| Marche | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Puglia | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 6 |
| Molise | | | 2 | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Abruzzo | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Total | 12 | 9 | 7 | 25 | 8 | 7 | 18 | 83 |

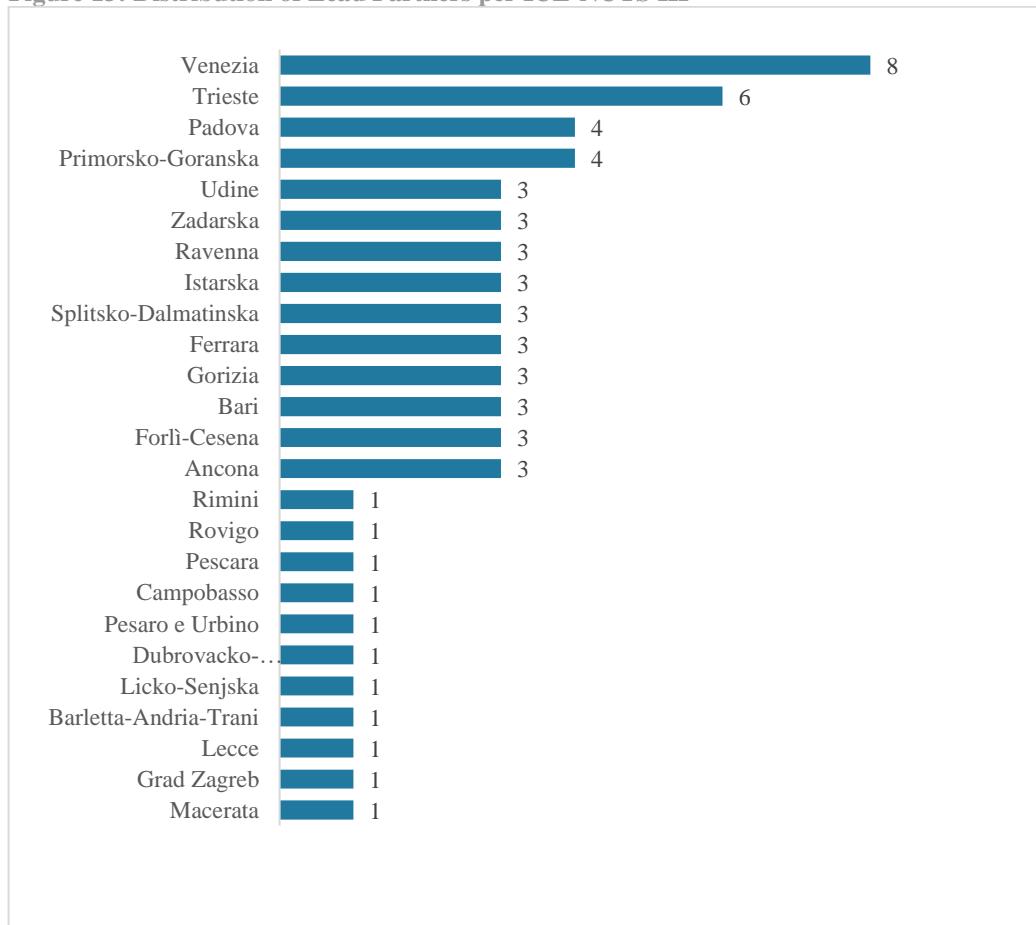
Source: Data from SIU

Table 24: Distribution of Lead Partner organisations per implementing unit location-NUTS II and Specific Objective (%)

| IUL | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| CROATIA | 16,7% | 11,1% | 42,9% | 28,0% | 12,5% | 28,6% | 16,7% | 22,6% |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 8,3% | 11,1% | 42,9% | 28,0% | 12,5% | 28,6% | 16,7% | 21,4% |
| Grad Zagreb | 8,3% | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,2% |
| ITALY | 83,3% | 88,9% | 57,1% | 60,0% | 87,5% | 71,4% | 83,3% | 77,4% |
| Veneto | 41,7% | 22,2% | - | 8,0% | 25,0% | 42,9% | 22,2% | 22,6% |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 25,0% | 11,1% | - | 24,0% | 25,0% | 14,3% | 33,3% | 17,9% |
| Emilia Romagna | 16,7% | 22,2% | 14,3% | 8,0% | 12,5% | 14,3% | 5,6% | 16,7% |
| Marche | - | 22,2% | - | 8,0% | 12,5% | - | 11,1% | 8,3% |
| Puglia | - | 11,1% | - | 8,0% | 12,5% | - | 11,1% | 7,1% |
| Molise | - | - | 28,6% | 4,0% | - | - | - | 3,6% |
| Abruzzo | - | - | 14,3% | - | - | - | - | 1,2% |
| Total | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% |

Source: Data from SI Figure 13 shows the distribution of lead partners by the level of NUTS III territorial units. This graph makes it possible to show a more precise representation of the territorial distribution of the lead partners. The role of the provinces of Venice, with 8 lead partners organizations, and that of Trieste with 6 lead partners organizations is highlighted. This is followed by a group of 12 territorial units which concentrate between 3 and 4 lead organizations. Of these, 4 are Croatian and 8 are Italian. The list concludes with 11 territorial units with one lead organization each. In the Croatian territory the county with the highest number of lead organizations is Primorsko-Goranska, with 4 lead organizations, followed by the counties of Splitsko-Dalmatinska, Istarska, Zadarska, with 3 lead organizations.

Figure 13: Distribution of Lead Partners per IUL-NUTS III



Source: Data from SIU

The following tables (Tab 24 and 25) show the distribution of partners classified according to type of organisation and their geographical location (NUTS II). The tables take into account multiple participations of partners in funded projects. The classification of partner organisations by “Legal form type” is not always uniform in the database and some corrections were necessary. However, the picture that emerges shows a rather similar distribution between the two countries. The main difference concerns the number of regional public organisations, which are prevalent in the Italian case. Other types of public organisations show slight differences, as in the case of the categories "General public" and "Local Public Authority", which are much more present in the Croatian case.

Table 25: Distribution of Partners Organisations participating to the projects per type of partner and implementing unit location-NUTS II

| | General public | Higher education and research | Local public authority | National public authority | Regional public authority | Sectoral agency | SME | Other | Total |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| CROATIA | 103 | 63 | 113 | 13 | 11 | | 41 | 5 | 349 |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 95 | 62 | 112 | 5 | 11 | | 38 | 4 | 327 |
| Grad Zagreb | 7 | 1 | | 8 | | | 3 | 1 | 20 |
| Panonska Hrvatska | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | 2 |
| ITALY | 82 | 93 | 100 | | 98 | 2 | 55 | 24 | 454 |
| Veneto | 11 | 32 | 17 | | 19 | | 16 | 11 | 106 |
| Emilia Romagna | 16 | 19 | 24 | | 20 | | 9 | 3 | 91 |

| | General public | Higher education and research | Local public authority | National public authority | Regional public authority | Sectoral agency | SME | Other | Total |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 17 | 23 | 15 | | 11 | | 12 | 6 | 84 |
| Marche | 3 | 14 | 22 | | 18 | | 6 | | 63 |
| Puglia | 22 | 4 | 11 | | 13 | | 5 | 2 | 57 |
| Abruzzo | 12 | | 4 | | 6 | | 4 | 1 | 27 |
| Molise | 1 | 1 | 7 | | 11 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 26 |
| TOTAL | 185 | 156 | 213 | 13 | 109 | 2 | 96 | 29 | 803 |

Source: Data from SIU

Table 26: Distribution of Project Partners organisations per type of partner (%) and implementing unit location-NUTS II

| | General public | Higher education and research | Local public authority | National public authority | Regional public authority | Sectoral agency | SME | Other | Total |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| CROATIA | 29,5% | 18,1% | 32,4% | 3,7% | 3,2% | - | 11,7% | 1,4% | 100,0% |
| Jadranska Hrvatska | 29,1% | 19,0% | 34,3% | 1,5% | 3,4% | - | 11,6% | 1,2% | 100,0% |
| Grad Zagreb | 35,0% | 5,0% | - | 40,0% | - | - | 15,0% | 5,0% | 100,0% |
| Panonska Hrvatska | 50,0% | - | 50,0% | - | - | - | - | - | 100,0% |
| ITALY | 18,1% | 20,5% | 22,0% | - | 21,6% | 0,4% | 12,1% | 5,3% | 100,0% |
| Veneto | 10,4% | 30,2% | 16,0% | - | 17,9% | - | 15,1% | 10,4% | 100,0% |
| Emilia Romagna | 17,6% | 20,9% | 26,4% | - | 22,0% | - | 9,9% | 3,3% | 100,0% |
| Friuli Venezia Giulia | 20,2% | 27,4% | 17,9% | - | 13,1% | - | 14,3% | 7,1% | 100,0% |
| Marche | 4,8% | 22,2% | 34,9% | - | 28,6% | - | 9,5% | - | 100,0% |
| Puglia | 38,6% | 7,0% | 19,3% | - | 22,8% | - | 8,8% | 3,5% | 100,0% |
| Abruzzo | 44,4% | - | 14,8% | - | 22,2% | - | 14,8% | 3,7% | 100,0% |
| Molise | 3,8% | 3,8% | 26,9% | - | 42,3% | 7,7% | 11,5% | 3,8% | 100,0% |
| TOTAL | 23,0% | 19,4% | 26,5% | 1,6% | 13,6% | 0,2% | 12,0% | 3,6% | 100,0% |

Source: Data from SIU

2.3 The evaluation questions on the added value of the cross-border cooperation

Evaluation question n. 1: *Are created partnerships relevant and coherent with the Programme cross-border nature?*

The selection and evaluation criteria that were used during the implementation of the Programme's calls for proposals were crucial in influencing the relevance and coherence of the funded projects' partnerships. Indeed, in light of the evaluation activities carried out at this stage, it can be affirmed that, despite some issues, which will be highlighted below, the process of selecting and assessing the proposals has largely enabled the identification of projects and partnerships relevant to the strategy and with a good potential impact.

While the mechanisms of selection and assessment of the project proposals have been able to promote balanced partnerships from the territorial point of view and to involve partners with technical, professional and scientific specializations functional to the success of the projects, they have not been equally effective in limiting the *cases of over-participation* by a group of partners (see § 2.2). Despite the fact that these are generally structured organizations, capable of effectively supporting participation in multiple projects, obstacles may arise in relation to the availability of adequate human and financial resources within the organizations which are active in a large number of projects. In addition, it should be considered that *the program should encourage broad participation*, especially by those actors which are less used to participate to this kind of Programmes, primarily non-profit organizations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In this regard, it should be noted that these types of partner organizations are precisely the ones that do not show a significant level of multiple participation (see Table 26 and Figure 15 below). The presence of the SMEs, for example, turns out to be significant within the number of partner organizations involved in the program, but their weight in the light of the effective participation in the project partnerships - thus considering the multiple participations - is reduced in a consistent manner precisely in relation to the fact that, in the majority of cases, they participate in only one project.

The relative low level of involvement of less structured partners in the projects analysed, in particular SMEs or non-profit organization, brought to light some obstacles that limit their capacity to participate effectively. The main point that was highlighted by the interviews concerns the *anticipation of expenses* for the implementation of the planned activities and the considerable time lag that elapses before expenses are reimbursed by the program. The delay in the transfer of contributions constitutes a problem for smaller partners, as associations and non-profit organizations, which operate mainly in the valorization of the cultural or natural heritage, and SMEs, as their limited capacity to advance expenses related to the implementation of projects can lead them to have liquidity problems. These obstacles may have the effect of reducing the relevance of the Programme which operates in territorial contexts where SMEs are the main form of organisations of the economic activities.

From a cross-border perspective, almost all participants in the online survey (96%) consider that the geographical distribution of the partners between Italy and Croatia is appropriate⁴. In this regard, it should also be mentioned that the number of participations of the Italian partners in the projects financed by the Programme are higher than those realized by the Croatian partners: 463 participations of the Italian partners (57%) against 354 of the Croatian partners (43%). However, as we have previously highlighted, the distribution of the partner organizations within the financed projects turns out to be, on the whole, balanced between the two countries. In this perspective, it must also be considered that the Italian part of the cooperation area is larger than the Croatian part and is much more populated. Consequently, as emerges from the desk analysis of the partnerships and also in the interviews with the lead partners, it happens that in some cases the projects involve more territories of the Italian part than of the Croatian part. In this way, even if the partnerships of the projects turn out to be relevant

⁴ There is a slight difference between the opinion of the Italian partners (98%) and those of the Croatian (93%) project partners.

with respect to the territorial context of the cooperation area, there can be cases (projects) in which there are more pilot actions or simple participations implemented along the Italian part of the Adriatic basin.

The largest part of the participants in the online survey (89%) considers that also the partnership diversity, in terms of the specialization and the economic activity of the partners, is appropriate - the Italian and Croatian responses were equal. According to 87% of the respondents, the funded projects have successfully stimulated the cross-border partnerships in relation to their professional activities. In this case, the Croatian partners are more confident about the positive effects of the projects in strengthening the cross-border partnerships for their professional improvements (94% in the Croatian subgroup, 81% in the Italian subgroup). Moreover the 90% of the respondents consider that the Programme is having positive effects in the sector in which their funded projects operate.

During the interviews with the lead partners of a large part of the sample of projects involved, the role of the JS and in particular of the project managers in facilitating the development of cross-border cooperation was highlighted. In the following chapter are reported some examples discussed during the focus group with JS project managers of what have been the most effective ways to promote effective cross-border cooperation during the implementation of funded projects.

The **Fairsea** standard project is an interesting example of how a balanced partnership, including representatives of organisations operating on different territorial levels in both countries involved in the cooperation, not only presents high levels of relevance, but is also effective in promoting the development of scientific knowledge applied to a specific environmental and economic problem.

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|---|
| 1.1 | FAIRSEA (Standard Project) | National Institute of Oceanography and Experimental Geophysics - OGS Trieste | 2.060.000,00 | <p>Italy: National Research Council - Institute for Biological Resources and Marine Biotechnologies (CNR-IRBIM); Assam - Agency for Agrofood Sector Services of Marche Region; Coispa Research & Technology - Bari; Italian Interuniversity Consortium for Marine Sciences - CoNISMA; Lag Eastern Venice – VEGAL.</p> <p>Croatia: Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries - IOF Split; Ministry of Agriculture - Department for Professional Support to the Development of Agriculture and Fisheries - Croatia; Public Institution RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia County; Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development SUNCE - Croatia; University of Split - University Department of Marine Studies.</p> |
| Objective | | The FAIRSEA project aims at enhancing transnational capacity and cooperation in the field of an ecosystem approach to fisheries in the Adriatic region by exchanging knowledge and sharing good practices among partners. The complementary expertise of the partners is shared, interlinked and integrated, considering also challenges and opportunities identified by stakeholders. The efforts are embedded in a spatially explicit management platform that will allow to share expertise, create a common pool of knowledge, boost the operational application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries, enhance the competence in complex system dynamics, and foster a consensus on the state of the environment and fisheries in the region. The process developed in FAIRSEA will provide an opportunity to describe best practices and define guidelines for a sustainable fishery management. | | |

The Fairsea project, as well as other projects, highlights how a cooperation Programme can enhance the collaboration networks that are active at various levels in the territory, starting with those formerly established between research organisations. The interview provided an insight into the dynamics that can facilitate effective cross-border cooperation. The importance of the multi-level dimension of the partnership emerged, but also that

of the involvement of other actors in project activities and how they can bring benefits to the implementation of activities.

“The partnership was a strong point of the project, very balanced between the two countries; there was an important presence of research organisations, perhaps it was unbalanced in this sense, but the interesting thing was the composition of the partnership that covered all territorial levels: from national or Adriatic basin partners, regional level partners down to local level partners, such as FLAGs. The project also involved an international organisation based in Rome (Medac - Mediterranean Advisory Council - c/o Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali). [...] Fisheries management in the Adriatic requires great attention to the balance of participation - precisely because it is a closed basin, with two major entities, Italy and Croatia. The participation of economic actors has been possible by using several channels, from the involvement of the international partner, to technical meetings on a local scale.”. (Interview: March 9, 2022)

Medac's involvement in the project activities was particularly useful in view of the fact that this organisation includes a large component of fishermen's co-operatives from several Mediterranean countries, including Italy and Croatia. This allowed the project to establish good relations with local economic actors and to involve them in monitoring and research activities. This characteristic of “scalarity” of the partnership has improved the project's ability to move from the general level of research to pilot actions at the local level and to involve an important category of stakeholders - the fisheries of the Adriatic basin - in the implementation of the project. The involvement of an international organisation has also helped to spread the knowledge about the project's activities, creating the basis for further activities in other areas of territorial cooperation.

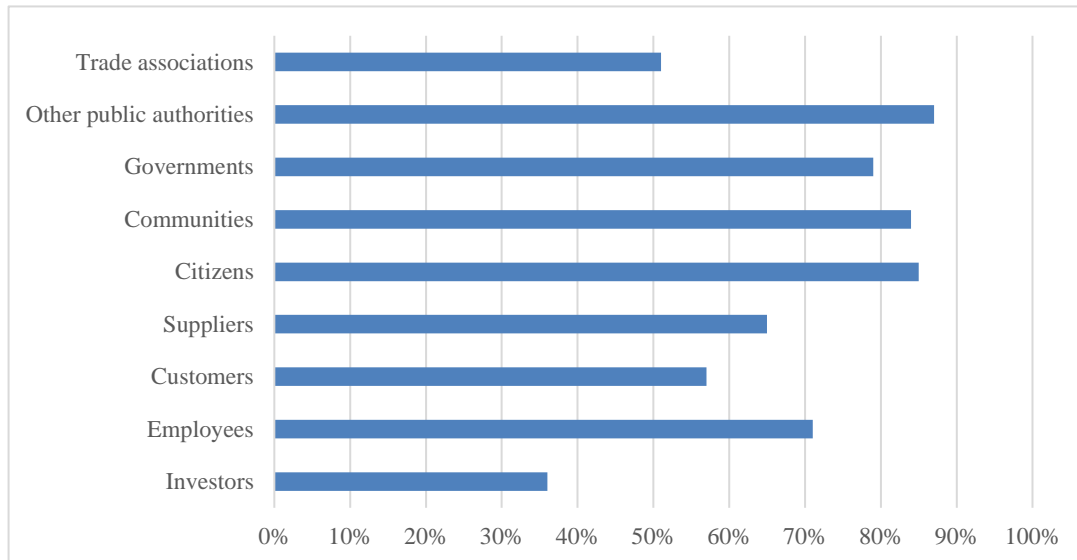
Another important achievement of the project - which shows the ability to realise the aims of cross-border cooperation - is that on the basis of mutual trust it has been possible to build up a shared database available to partners in both countries which enhances the information collected by the individual agencies.

“The trust built up between the partners during the implementation of the project has made it possible to achieve important results. An interesting example is the possibility we had to overcome the difficulties related to the fact that each state (Italy and Croatia in our case) manages information on the movements of fishing vessels in their waters independently. For research purposes, this condition constitutes a problem. Fishing vessels, at least the larger ones, have a positioning system (VMS) that is managed by the national harbour masters' offices and each one does its own analysis. For the first time since this tool has existed, we have been able to make analyses of the movements of fishing vessels in an integrated way, overcoming difficulties that were related to lack of trust or other obstacles. In our case, the national authorities decided to share the information.” (Interview: March 9, 2022)

Evaluation question n. 2: Are all relevant stakeholders at cross-border level duly represented?

According to the partners, the Programme was more successful in involving citizens, local communities, local and central authorities, while it was less effective in involving investors, businesses and trade associations (Figure No. 11). The organisations which are working in the framework of projects financed under the Priority Axis 1 and 3 result to be the most satisfied with the involvement of citizens and local communities.

Figure 14: “In your opinion, are territorial stakeholders successfully involved in the project activities?” (Scores: agree + strongly agree)



Source: Survey

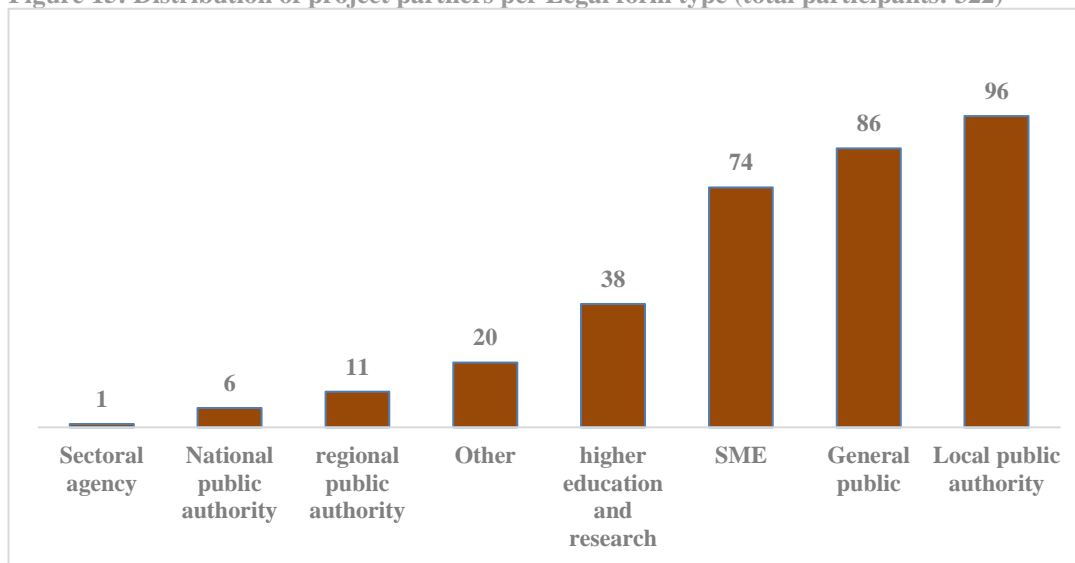
The analysis of the data contained in the Programme monitoring database reveals a number of interesting information about the partnership involved in the funded projects⁵. This kind of analysis makes it possible to highlight the presence of organisations acting as stakeholders, e.g., representing the interests of particular economic or social categories in their territories. The database allows to highlight only the role that SMEs and the Research organizations can play as stakeholders - which is however relevant - while other categories of stakeholders are probably included in the category "Other".

The total number of organisations involved in the Programme is 332 (Figure 15). Most of these are public authorities: 199 organisations representing 62% of the total; of these about half are local authorities (96), 11 are regional authorities, 6 are national authorities, while 20 (6%) are other types of public bodies. SMEs are the third most represented group with 74 cases, about 23% of the total, while research and higher education institutions are represented by 38 organisations (12%).

Compared to the data analysed in the section 2.2 - which consider the total number of *participations* of the partners in the projects funded by the Programme (Tab. 24 and 25 in § 2.2) – the Figure 15 consider only the partners which participate to the implemented projects. However, it should be borne in mind that regional public authorities and research organisations include those organisations which participate in several projects, whereas SMEs, in the vast majority of cases, participate in only one project. With regard to the partners activated by the Programme we can argue that SMEs have been involved in a significant number.

⁵ The classification of project partner organisations by legal form type is not always uniform in the database and some corrections were necessary.

Figure 15: Distribution of project partners per Legal form type (total participants: 322)



Source: Data from SIU

If we compare (see Tab. 26) the distribution of the project partner organizations per types of partners in the (single) with that emerging from the total participation to the Programme (multiple) the weight of the SMEs is significantly reduced (-10,9%), while the presence of the Regional public authorities increases significantly (+10,2%) as that of the Higher education and research organisations (+7,6%). This variation is the result, on the one hand, of the Programme's orientation towards intervention in the consolidation of collective goods and the creation of real services – which are usually pursued by public bodies -, and, on the other hand, of the higher propensity of regional public authorities and research organisations to take part in public programmes compared to that of the SMEs.

Table 27: Distribution of the types of Project Partner Organizations (%): single and multiple participation

| | Single | Multiple | Difference |
|---|--------|----------|------------|
| Local public authority | 29,80% | 26,50% | -3,30% |
| General public | 26,70% | 23,00% | -3,70% |
| SME | 22,90% | 12,00% | -10,90% |
| Higher education and research organisations | 11,80% | 19,40% | 7,60% |
| Regional public authority | 3,40% | 13,60% | 10,20% |
| National public authority | 1,80% | 1,60% | -0,20% |
| Sectoral agency | 0,03% | 0,20% | 0,17% |
| Other | 6,20% | 3,60% | -2,60% |

An important feature of territorial cooperation projects is to include the stakeholders not only within the projects' partnerships, but often to involve them in the course of the activities. This approach makes it possible to limit the number of partners in a project and at the same time to activate stakeholders exclusively in relation to their areas of interest, thus maximizing the efficiency of project management and the effectiveness of project activities. Below are some examples that were collected during the evaluation activities.

The involvement of international bodies, external to the formal partnership, has allowed the **FairSea** project to reach, as previously highlighted, an important category of stakeholders; but this has not been the only method used by the project to get in touch with local level stakeholders. The characteristic “scularity” of the partnership,

which involves subjects operating at all territorial levels, has made it possible to establish solid relations with fishermen's cooperatives already in contact with FLAGS or local NGOs. In this way, starting from a solid partnership, a second level network was involved, allowing the project's impact to be broadened and consolidated.

"We have tried from the beginning to involve the partners in a focused and inclusive way so as to allow a balanced development of the project aims in both countries. On the Croatian side, institutional relations are very straightforward; the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture employs the Split Oceanographic Institute as its operational arm with regard to fishing. Also in the Italian case, we have involved bodies that are a technical reference for the Ministry's activities. [...] at this stage, after the conclusion of the project, some of the applications created during the project activities continue to be used by the stakeholders." (Interview: March 9, 2022)

Stakeholder involvement is not limited to the project partnership but can also be carried out during the project activities in order to broaden and consolidate the project aims and results. The **Underwatermuse** project is an exemplary case of involvement of particular categories of local stakeholders in the promotion, accessibility and valorisation of underwater archaeological sites.

"Stakeholder involvement is central to the project [...] in the case of Friuli Venezia Giulia we had to hold a conference of services to start a complex operation such as the pilot action (Grado 2) in order to involve divers' associations, tourism bodies, superintendencies, harbour masters' offices, and other local and regional actors. The promotion of the excavation, restoration and valorisation activities of the wrecks was carried out through the involvement of local actors in order to allow the continuity of the accessibility to the archaeological sites even after the conclusion of the project [...] Thanks to budget leftovers, ERPAC has decided to promote a training action aimed at regional diving associations, which is completed by a visit to the wrecks and meeting with archaeologists; this has been done in order to involve the private associations in the future management and control of the sites". (Interview: March 21, 2022)

Cooperation with stakeholders does not always proceed without obstacles. In cases where projects promote the development of scientific knowledge applied to common goods, such as cultural heritage or the natural environment of a region, the cooperation proceeds more easily. When, on the other hand, the content of the projects concerns certain areas in which market and competition dynamics are more relevant, cooperation with stakeholders may reveal obstacles that may affect the outcome of the projects. An interesting example in this context concerns the difficulties encountered in the development of a product realised as part of the **ITACA** standard project activities.

The main outcome of ITACA is to build a model to analyse historical series of data on the prices of anchovy and sardines and, on the basis of this model realizing a web app in order to provide the operators in the "bluefish" sector with information enabling them to make market choices on where and when to sell their catches.

The project encountered some obstacles with regard to the reluctance of operators to share daily information on their catches. The conditions of competition between the operators from the two countries, the Italian and the Croatian, hindered the sharing of these data, so the model could only be applied on a small scale, while at the level of the Upper Adriatic basin the only information available to all was the monthly data on the fish catches - which did not allow the development of a particularly accurate model.

"On the one hand, we have the scientific component to build the model, and on the other, we have the operational component that - through the involvement of development agencies and trade associations - allows us to involve economic operators. In principles the partnership appears to be well designed, but

in practice, cooperation, especially with regard to information that has value in the economic field, has encountered difficulties". (Interview: March 25, 2022)

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| 1.1 | ITACA (Standard Project) | Agenzia Veneta per l'innovazione nel Settore Primario - Veneto Agricoltura | 1.744.467,00 | Italy: Istituto Agronomico Mediterraneo di Bari; Istituto per le Risorse Biologiche e le Biotecnologie Marine (Cnr-Irbim) – Headquarter of Ancona; Confcooperative Regional Union of the Veneto. Croatia: Javna Ustanova Rera S.D. Za Koordinaciju i Razvoj Splitsko Dalmatinske Županije; Azri– Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. Pazin; Institute Of Oceanography And Fisheries – Split. |
| Objective | | ITACA tackles the competitiveness of Adriatic fisheries sector, fostering the introduction of blue innovation and improving the sustainability of catching activities. ITACA focuses on small pelagic (SP) fisheries [...]: anchovy and sardine that represent a significant share of income for the sector in the Adriatic. ITACA project contributes factually to the growth of the SP fisheries sector setting up, testing in 7 pilot regions and fostering the large-scale application of innovative SMEs oriented tools to increase the competitiveness of SP fisheries, together with establishing a cluster for a sustainable co-management of Adriatic ichthyic resources. | | |

In order to facilitate the construction of a climate favorable to the sharing of the information the lead partner involved the international organization Medac - which includes a large component of a fishing cooperative throughout the Mediterranean basin. The contents of the project were presented in the context of an event promoted by Medac raising the attention from the representatives of the Spanish fishing cooperatives who showed the interest of applying the model in their area, but no progress was obtained in the area of the cooperation.

The case of the standard project **Soundscape** highlights some difficulties that have hindered the active involvement of stakeholders. Similarly to the case of ITACA the difficulties that emerged mainly concerned the potential economic impact of the Soundscape project on the tourist activities, and in particular on the traffic of motor boats which is particularly intense during the summer months.

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|---|--|--------------|---|
| 3.2 | SOUNDSCAPE (Standard Project) | Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (IOF) - Split | 2.146.040,50 | Italy: National Research Council – Institute of Marine Sciences (Cnr-Ismar); Environmental Protection Agency of Friuli Venezia Giulia - ARPA; Cetacea Foundation - Riccione; Marche Region - Service for Care, Management and Territorial Planning. Croatia: Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation - Rijeka; Croatian Ministry of Environment and Energy; Teaching Institute of Public Health of Primorsko-Goranska County. |
| Objective | | The main objective of the project is to create a cross-border technical, scientific and institutional cooperation to face together the challenge of assessing the impact of underwater environmental noise on the marine fauna. [...] The objectives of the project are to be pursued in three ways: Implementing a shared monitoring network for a coordinated regional and transnational assessment of the underwater noise, evaluating the noise impact on marine biological resources, developing and implementing a planning tool for straightforward management. | | |

The main objective of the project is to promote, through cross-border scientific and institutional cooperation, the measurement and assessment of the impact of underwater environmental noise. The project promoted three types of activities: implementing a shared monitoring network for underwater noise assessment, assessing the impact of noise pollution on marine biological resources, develop and implement a planning tool for the management of the noise pollution.

“Stakeholder involvement was essential to the project; the involvement of marina operators was important in order to raise awareness among operators and tourists about the impact of private maritime tourism traffic on the marine ecosystem. But stakeholders were also involved in data collection. Smaller means of transport that are used for tourism purposes use engines that produce a lot of noise, radically changing the underwater acoustic environment. Stakeholders are a very important target group for raising awareness among tourists and operators about this problem. Raising the awareness of national and regional governments is also important in order to create the conditions for noise-reducing regulations to be adopted. Unfortunately, we did not succeed with this project in involving also economic operators, such as fishermen's organisations, but this is a goal we want to achieve in the future also thanks to the success of this project in collecting a good database”. (Interview: March 9, 2022)

Evaluation question n. 3: Are created partnerships relevant according to Programme/projects objectives?

With regard to the number of partners involved in the projects funded by the program, the most relevant specific objectives are, for both countries, the 3.1 "Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development" and the 4.1 "Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area", which, together, group almost half of all the partners involved in the program: S.O. 3.1 with 23% of the total partners involved, and S.O. 4.1 with 24% of the total partners involved by the projects. The strong concentration of the partners in those two specific objectives shows how the connectivity of the cross-border area and the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage are points of greatest attention for the organizations and the public bodies rooted in the territories of the cooperation area. They are followed by the group of partners involved in the activities of the specific objective 1.1 "Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area", about 14% of the organisations activated by the Programme; right after, the other specific objectives, with shares varying between 9 and 11% (Figure 7 in § 2.2). Below are some examples that were collected during the evaluation activities.

The standard project **Underwater Muse** operates in the framework of the specific objective 3.1 in the enhancement of underwater archaeological sites through the use of various technologies that allow to increase both the knowledge and the accessibility of the archaeological areas. The partnership includes the lead partner Regional Institute for the Cultural Heritage of Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (ERPAC), and on the Italian side the Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory of the Apulia Region as well as Ca' Foscari University of Venice; on the Croatian side RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia County; City of Kaštela.

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|--|--|--------------|--|
| 3.1 | Underwater Muse (Standard Project) | Regional Institute for the Cultural Heritage of Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (ERPAC) | 1.586.930,25 | Italia: Apulia Region - Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory; Ca' Foscari University of Venice; Croatia: RERA S.D. for coordination and development of Split-Dalmatia County; City of Kaštela; |
| Objective | “The project aims at applying on sample areas (maritime landscapes of Torre Santa Sabina, Grado, Resnik/Siculi, Caorle) a methodological and technological protocol based on research/ knowledge and development/communication of an underwater archeological site that is complex and multi-stratified, characterized by strong diversity. The project’s objective is therefore to transform the site into an | | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| | underwater archaeological park (or eco-museum) through innovative and/or experimental methodologies and techniques in order to try to reduce the loss of important cultural heritages as well as to guarantee an economic spin-off deriving directly from the creation of a sector linked to the tourist-cultural promotion of the context of reference.” |
|--|---|

Although the partnership shows a prevalence of Italian partners, the project made a careful choice of the archaeological sites on which to develop the activities, and the local authorities, managing to effectively contribute to the objectives of the Programme. The Underwater Muse project highlights another case in which the Programme succeeds in exploiting the competences and relationships of some individual experts and institutions based in the cooperation area in order to establish the foundations for a more balanced territorial development within the strategic framework of the specific objective 3.1.

The interview made it possible to highlight how the cooperation between the partners was achieved. The added value of cooperation in this case goes beyond the deepening of specific knowledge or the exchange of good practices ("it was not a unilateral cooperation") but prefigures the construction of a common platform that in the future will be able to enhance the network of relations between the institutions involved which has been consolidated during the project.

“The added value of cross-border collaboration was realized through the comparison of the techniques used to protect the underwater wrecks, which are different in every single excavation across the area of the cooperation. In addition, the fruitful exchange also concerned valorization, documentation and cataloguing using digitization, which on the Croatian side was more advanced, while on the Italian side it was the field-work on the specific sites which was more enhanced. Archaeological protection is also highly developed in Croatia. It was not a unilateral cooperation. In addition to that there was a strong institutional collaboration between all the entities involved, starting with an academic network that facilitated the process of cooperation because at that level the relationships between the partners were already established. We also established relationships with schools and educational institutions in both countries”. (Interview: March 21, 2022)

The projects that manage to build partnerships that combine in a balanced way the different competences of the various partners succeed more effectively in achieving their objectives. This condition is highlighted in many of the project which have been interviewed. The Standard project **MoST** is particularly interesting. The main objective of MoST is the monitoring of the seawater intrusion in specific regions of the in northern Adriatic coasts of Italy and Croatia in order to assess its relevance, and suggest/test appropriate countermeasures. In addition, the project expects to improve the capacity in transnationally tackling saltwater contamination vulnerability and the preservation of strategic fresh water resources in coastal areas.

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| 2.1 | MoST (Standard+ project) | UNIVERSITY OF PADUA - Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering | 2.598.608,61 | Italy: National Research Council – Institute of Geosciences and Earth Resources (CNR-IGG); Land Reclamation Authority Adige Euganeo; Veneto Region - Soil Defence Regional Directorate; Croatia: Croatian Waters; University of Split - Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodes; Regional Development Agency of Dubrovnik Neretva Region - DUNEA. |
| Objective | | The main objective of MoST is the monitoring of the seawater intrusion in specific regions of the in northern Adriatic coasts of Italy and Croatia to assess its relevance, and suggest/test appropriate countermeasures. In addition, the project expects to improve the capacity in transnationally tackling saltwater contamination vulnerability and the preservation of fresh water resources in coastal areas. | | |

The project leader pointed out that the project has developed a solid cooperation between both Italian and Croatian partners with a specific mention for the University of Split which has acted as the coordinator of the Croatian partners. Each partner contributed to the project without particular problems, the coordination worked well and each partner was autonomous in its activities and administration.

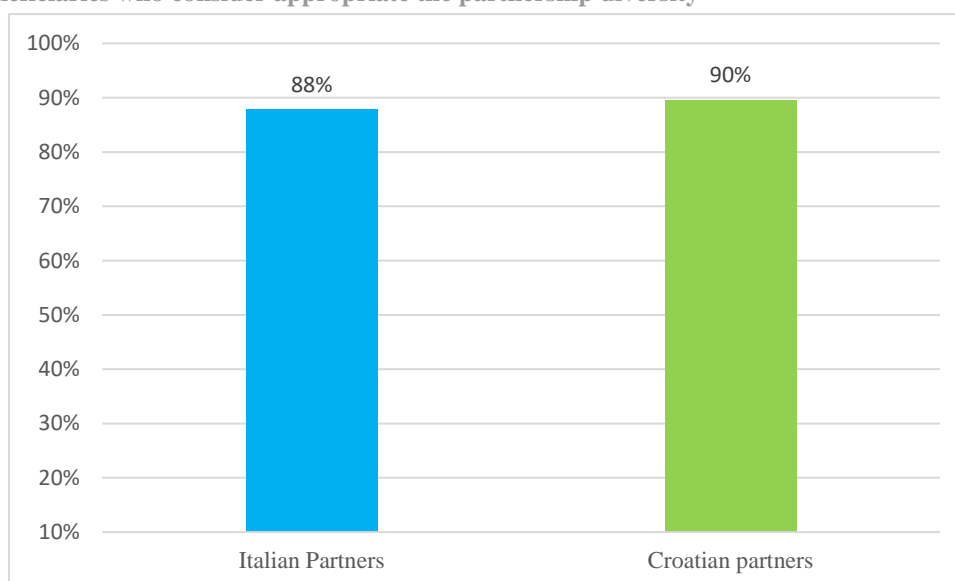
"There is a strong complementarity between the Italian and Croatian partners. The Italian partners have particularly deepened the scientific aspects, while the Croatian partners have been very good at communicating the project. There are no private partners in this partnership, also because the topics (water management) are typically of public interest. Small and medium-sized enterprises are used as subcontractors but not as research partners." (Interview: March 14, 2022)

The added value of cross-border cooperation is defined as the improvement of the understanding of how problems differ in relation to the diverse contexts; an understanding that is increased by observing and investigating the different techniques that are adopted and consequently by changing or improving the conventional perspective with which a problem is usually approached.

Evaluation question n. 4: Are the partnerships, of the financed projects, balanced in terms of number of partners, represented areas, roles and budget?

As extensively argued in the paragraphs above, the partnerships in place are considered appropriate and well balanced. The Programme deals with large partnerships - the average number of participants per projects is 9.8. Partnerships of Standards + calls are the smallest (on average 6.7 bodies per partnership), while those of Standard calls are wider (9.5). Strategic calls mobilised the largest partnerships, in which 17.8 organisations participated on average which are considered appropriate and balanced in order to achieve the projects' objectives. This is also confirmed by the results of the interviews and survey: in terms of partnership diversity, 89% of the respondents find that the diversity of the type of partners involved, in terms of different background and areas of intervention, is appropriate and both Italian and Croatian beneficiaries agree on this aspect.

Figure 16: % beneficiaries who consider appropriate the partnership diversity



Nevertheless, the beneficiaries of projects including such a wide array of partners are also confronted to some obstacles, which include mainly the internal regulations of each entity. In particular, Project Partners from

private sector have sometimes faced more difficulties because of the different rules for public and private partners when it comes to pre-financing.

The suitability of the partnerships is confirmed also in terms of roles and budget. It is found that, most of the times, there has been a general clarity on the allocation of tasks among the partnership since the beginning of the projects, which has smoothed the implementation of the activities and also the use of financial resources. Most of the lead partners have dealt with autonomous project partners who have carried out their activities in an appropriate manner, with no need of specific support.

Indeed, the division of roles among partners is considered appropriate by 83% of the respondents and the available budget has been considered adequate to conduct the activities by 84% of the respondents.

The issue of the represented areas is already addressed above in the present Report in terms of added value related to the cross-border cooperation. It is useful to add that, overall, 96% of the respondents consider that the geographical distribution of the partners between Italy and Croatia is appropriate.

Evaluation question n. 5: *Are promoted partnerships based on previous experiences and how do they ensure their sustainability in time?*

The importance of previous cooperation experiences between the partners is of particular importance for many of the projects that have been involved in the evaluation activities. Some of the projects interviewed, not only those that were financed with the call for Standard + projects - which concerned the capitalization of the results of projects financed in other cooperation programs, such as Adriatic IPA CBC, SEE and MED -, highlighted the importance to develop the contents that emerged during the previous cooperation.

An exemplary case is that of the Arca Adriatica standard project. In this case, the partnership was created from the previous cooperation experiences developed by the County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar on the one hand and the Municipality of Cervia on the other. These two partners have extended participation to other organisations in their countries. The previous cooperation experience developed by the Croatian partners was important for the definition of the project contents. The project that formed the basis for the construction of Arca Adriatica was called "Mala Barka" and was financed under the Slovenia-Croatia CBC Interreg Programme.

| S.O. | Project | Lead Partner | Budget | Partners |
|------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------|---|
| 3.1 | Arca Adriatica (Standard project) | Primorje-Gorski Kotar County | 3.168.790,00 | Croatia: Municipality of Malinska-Dubasnica; Kvarner County Tourist Board; Association and Ecomuseum "House of Batana"; Municipality of Tkon Italy: Municipality of Cervia; Municipality of Cesenatico; International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari; Municipality of San Benedetto del Tronto; Ca' Foscari University of Venice. |
| Objective | The main aim of the project is the development of a common tourism product, based on the principles of social and ecological sustainability which, at the same time, valorises, preserves, protects and promotes the rich maritime heritage of the border area present in small-medium cities with local ports. In the coastal part of the border area, the project will protect the existing material and intangible maritime heritage (research and cataloguing of the maritime heritage and elaboration of the virtual museum) and exploit it through a series of measures (adaptation of interpretation centres, organisation of educational-demonstrative manifestations, promotional campaign, etc.), in order to develop and revive a common tourism product. | | | |

In some cases, the previous experiences were also important in the case of some partners which, in the context of the CBC Italy Croatia Programme, moved on to take the role of lead partner, while in the previous cooperation experience they had participated as a partner. This is the case, for example of the projects FairSea and MLRepair. The case of the FairSea project is particularly interesting since the previous cooperation was developed outside of the Programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation. The lead partner, the National Institute of Oceanography and Experimental Geophysics (OGS) of Trieste had the opportunity to cooperate together with the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (IOF) of Split in the frame of the FAO Adriamed “Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea” (<https://www.faoadriamed.org/>). This experience not only set the foundations for a further step in the transnational research work in the frame of the CBC Italy Croatia Programme, but the positive collaboration between the two partners has pushed OGS to take the responsibility of lead partners in the new project.

In other cases, the positive experience of cooperation within the CBC Italy Croatia programme has consolidated the cooperation relations between the partners who have expressed the strong motivation to continue cooperation in the future (as, for example, in the case of MoST).

“This is a new partnership (they didn't know each other before this project) but they will continue to cooperate certainly in the cluster call but maybe also in other activities and research projects. The project has contributed to the strengthening the cross-border cooperation.” (Interview: March 18, 2022)

The MLRepair Standard+ project has developed the experiences of a previous project that had been promoted within the IPA Adriatic program: DeFishGear. The previous cooperation had concerned the Italian and Croatian scientific partners and had performed good results. For this reason, Ca' Foscari University of Venice has decided to assume the responsibility of lead partner, a role that in the past experience had been played by a Slovenian partner.

3 Final considerations and recommendations

It can be concluded that the added value of participating in the Italy-Croatia Programme, as compared to projects that are funded in regional or national programmes, lies in the deepening of knowledge about practices and/or techniques adopted to address a specific problem or valorize a common asset, which is relevant in both territories. In fact, the implementation process of the projects that the Evaluator has examined was largely characterized by an increasing knowledge about the operational, organizational and in several cases technological implications that partners have encountered/experienced during the implementation of pilot actions in their respective territories, or during workshops for the presentation of good practices.

This is an important result that, through the exchange of practices and especially through common work, allows not only to improve the awareness of the partners about the methods that can be adopted to intervene in a specific context, but, in particular, to test common solutions and, in some cases, real services that operate across borders.

The focus group with the Project Managers of the JS revealed some important elements that enable a deeper understanding of the dynamics in place during the implementation of the projects. We have previously highlighted a number of cases in which project partnerships have showed the ability to develop effective/strategic cooperation with a clear cross-border dimension, which emerged in an effective and coordinated division of labor between the partners. Nevertheless, there have been also other cases where the projects are implementing the pilot actions which do not have much of a cross-border dimension, as activities are carried out separately and do not always adequately exploit the results within a common framework of cooperation.

“Less complex projects develop activities more easily together. Sometime a lack of vision of the objectives of territorial cooperation emerges. Beneficiaries do not really understand what it means to be part of a territorial cooperation project. There is a need to better promote what cross-border cooperation is. The Programme should emphasize that we are in the framework of maritime cross-border cooperation and avoid mirror projects that promote the same activity in different places without exploiting the capacity of improving the practices through mutual knowledge and joint work.” (Focus group with Project Managers of the JS, March 23, 2022)

Another issue that has also emerged clearly is the multiple participation of some partners, as well as the under-representation of certain categories of partners. For example, the fact that different organisational units of the same public administration can apply to the Programme has to be taken into account when assessing the over-representation of some partners, in particular regional administrations or universities. It is also clear that the strong participation of public authorities highlights the lower presence of other organisations with specific technical expertise, e.g., SMEs.

“The Programme did not place any limit to the number of participations of a partner in the Programme; even if in project proposals a justification on the capacity of the partners to manage multiple projects was requested. More technical and sectoral expertise should be expected in the project partnership. The participation of these actors should be encouraged and promoted in the next Programme.” (Focus group with Project Managers of the JS, March 23, 2022)

While the mechanisms of selection and assessment of the project proposals have been generally able to promote balanced partnerships from the territorial point of view and to involve partners with technical, professional and scientific specializations functional to the success of the projects, they have not been equally effective in limiting the cases of over-participation by some partners. As we have seen, the average number of partners involved in

funded projects is well above the minimum requirements of the calls for proposals, especially for strategic projects. These values can be considered as a first positive result in the direction of increasingly including the cross-border dimension in the activities of public and private organisations operating within the cooperation area. In the 2021-27 programming period a further step in this direction could be to reduce the amount of multiple participation by partner organisations. This objective should be pursued taking into account the different size and complexity of the organisations involved, trying to favour the participation of less complex subjects (such as SMEs or non-profit organisations).

- **Recommendation:** The possibility of introducing a limit to the number of participations in funded projects by a single partner - or an organisational unit of larger partners such as regional public authorities or major research organisations - should be explored.

Partnerships that have been built from the existing networks activated by scientific institutions or organizations specialized in areas of technical specialization are usually able to cooperate effectively and to involve local stakeholders in the respective territories. Some examples are described in the previous section with reference to the answers to the evaluation questions.

- **Recommendation:** It is necessary to increase the involvement of partners (public, semi-public, or private) with a clear technical-scientific and/or operational specialization by introducing rules or incentives aimed at facilitating their participation.

The presence of stakeholders in the project's partnerships is not the only way to include them in the Programme activities. In many cases, we have seen how projects have acted on a double level, that of the partnership and a second level which promote the participation in the activities preliminary to the implementation of the actions foreseen or in the dissemination of project results. In each case, stakeholders have played an important role in facilitating or hindering project implementation.

- **Recommendation:** Preparatory activities should be implemented in order to inform the relevant stakeholders on the opportunity of the next cooperation strategy. The activities should be organized according to the diverse areas of intervention of the Programme in each territorial level involved. It is important to promote the stakeholders understanding of the methods of cooperation and support to the projects that will be funded during Programme implementation.

As we have seen, national and international organizations have also played a role that has been decisive in the implementation of some projects. National authorities could act in a similar way towards the national and international stakeholders to encourage their greater integration in the implementation of the CBC strategy.

4 Update on achievement of output indicators targets

The Cooperation Programme ‘14-‘20 has adopted a full set of **common and Programme specific output indicators** that reflect the specific products to be delivered by Specific Objective.

As already observed in the Operational Evaluation 2021, most of the Programme targets for output indicators were reached and exceeded already in 2020, despite the fact that the majority of Standard projects were still ongoing and Strategic projects started their activities only in 2020.

As the Cooperation Programme was new, it can be appreciated that the quantification of the targets has not been an easy exercise for the Programme bodies during the programming phase that could not anticipate the capacity of potential beneficiaries.

The table 16 below provides the updated snapshot, in December 2021, of the achievement of output indicators, broken down by type of projects. **The table** shows the targets set at project level and declared in the proposals funded by the Programme and **compares the level of achievement to the declared project targets**.

The monitoring on the meeting of the set targets is regularly done through the reports delivered by the beneficiaries of the funded projects compared to what indicated in the approved applications.

It follows that:

- ✓ **The 22 Standard+ projects**, that have been concluded at the end of the 2020, show a very good rate of performance with 17 out of 19 indicators that have fully meet their projects targets in all the Priority Axis. Only in two cases under Priority Axis 4, the indicators related to “4.1O1. Improved multimodal transport services” and “4.1O3. Harmonized services for passengers put in place” have not reached their declared projects targets.
- ✓ Concerning the **50 standard projects**, it has to be considered that 22 projects have closed their activities in 2021 but 18 of them are still in the reporting phase, which is due to be closed in April 2022, while the remaining 28 will be concluded in 2022. Nevertheless, it is worth appreciating that the level of achievement of the project targets is quite high with 9 indicators that have already exceeded 60% of their target.
- ✓ As mentioned above, the **11 Strategic Projects**, launched in mid-2020, still present a low level of implementation, therefore an analysis of achievement of targets is still premature.
- ✓ **At the overall programme level**, half of the indicators have achieved more than 50% of their target values already at 31/12/2021.

In addition to the overall picture presented in Table 24, we present in the following pages a comparison, by Strategic Objective, between achieved values and Programme Targets, enhanced by ERDF financial allocations, ERDF budget and ERDF reported amounts by SO.

Table 28: Achievement of output indicators

| | | Programme | Standard+ | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | TOTAL | | |
|---------------|--|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|-------------------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Target | Project target | Achieved value | | % achieved on project targets | Project target | | Achieved value | % achieved on project targets | Project target | Achieved value | Project target |
| Axis 1 | Blue innovation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | 36 | 113 | 113 | 100% | 488 | 371 | 76% | 350 | 350 | 951 | 834 | 88% |
| CO02 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants | 6 | | | | 4 | 4 | 100% | 2 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 67% |
| CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | 30 | 113 | 113 | 100% | 484 | 367 | 76% | 298 | 298 | 895 | 778 | 87% |
| CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 10 | 17 | 17 | 100% | 64 | 64 | 100% | 6 | - | 87 | 81 | 93% |
| CO44 | Labour market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training | 120 | 293 | 293 | 100% | 1.104 | 947 | 86% | | | 1.397 | 1.240 | 89% |
| Axis 2 | Safety and resilience | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1O1 | Climate change monitoring systems put in operation | 5 | 1 | 1 | 100% | 12 | 2 | 17% | 8 | | 21 | 3 | 14% |
| 2.1O2 | Plans of adaptation measures put in place | 5 | 5 | 5 | 100% | 36 | 22 | 61% | 5 | | 46 | 27 | 59% |
| 2.2 | Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|---------|----------|------|-----------|--------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| 2.204 | Population benefiting from oil spills and other marine hazards protection measures | 1.200.000 | | | | 450.000 | 10.082 | 2% | 2.427.896 | | 2.877.896 | 10.082 | 0,4% |
| 2.202 | People reached by initiatives for increasing awareness | 100.000 | 9.000 | 9.000,00 | 100% | 83382 | 77.417 | 93% | 3.748.496 | 3.744.996 | 3.840.878 | 3.841.413 | 100% |
| CO20 | Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures | 1.500.000 | 201.000 | 201.000 | 100% | 1.102.000 | 24.045 | 2% | 1.080.000 | | 2.383.000 | 225.045 | 9% |
| CO21 | Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from forest fire protection | 1.000.000 | 898.000 | 898.000 | 100% | 500.000 | - | - | 150.000 | | 1.548.000 | 898.000 | 58% |
| Axis 3 Environment and cultural heritage | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.102 | Actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage (including typical products, joint branding and tourism) | 40 | 699 | 699 | 100% | 1.630 | 1.212 | 74% | 120 | | 2.449 | 1.911 | 78% |
| 3.103 | Natural and cultural heritage destinations with improved accessibilities (e.g.: to disabled tourists, virtual tourists etc.) in place | 10 | 97 | 97 | 100% | 119 | 10 | 8% | 7 | | 223 | 107 | 48% |
| 3.104 | Beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification | 10 | | | | | | | 10 | | 10,00 | - | |
| 3.105 | Cultural and natural heritage (tangible and intangible) promoted | 20 | 111 | 111 | 100% | 187 | 122 | 65% | 10 | | 308 | 223 | 76% |
| 3.2 | Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.201 | Natural ecosystems supported in order to attain a better conservation status | 6 | 10,00 | 10 | 100% | 35 | 28 | 80% | 6 | | 51 | 38 | 75% |
| 3.202 | Monitoring systems and data collections for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems put in place | 4,00 | 2,00 | 2 | 100% | 9 | 4 | 44% | 10 | | 21,00 | 6 | 29% |
| 3.203 | Restoration actions supporting endangered species | 4 | | | | 2 | 1 | 50% | 10 | 2 | 12 | 3 | 25% |
| 3.204 | Integrated management systems (sea, coastal and river environment) put in place. | 4 | 2 | 2 | 100% | 10 | 3 | 30% | 19 | | 31 | 5 | 16% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------|---|---|------|---------|---------|-----|---------|---|-----------|---------|------|
| 3.3 | Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.301 | Environmental friendly technological solutions (and approaches) implemented | 2 | 3 | 3 | 100% | 13 | 8 | 62% | 10 | | 26 | 11 | 42% |
| 3.303 | Microplastic waste collected in marine areas | 1.000.000 | | | | 810.000 | 704.350 | 87% | 250.000 | | 1.060.000 | 704.350 | 66% |
| Axis 4 | Maritime transport | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.101 | Improved multimodal transport services | 5,00 | 6 | 4 | 67% | 45 | 12 | 27% | 29 | | 80 | 16 | 20% |
| 4.102 | New links established | 2,00 | 1 | 1 | 100% | 1 | - | - | | | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 4.103 | Harmonized services for passengers put in place | 4,00 | 3 | 2 | 67% | 15 | 11 | 73% | 14 | 4 | 32 | 17 | 53% |
| Axis 5 | Technical assistance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TA1 | Calls for proposals successfully launched and closed | 3,00 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| TA2 | Operations financed following calls for proposals | 75,00 | | | | | | | | | 83 | 83 | 100% |
| TA3 | Programme communication strategy developed and implemented | 1,00 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| TA4 | Independent on-going programme evaluation implemented | 1,00 | | | | | | | | 1 | | - | |
| TA5 | Programme e-Monitoring System established | 1,00 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| TA6 | Workshop and events held | 8,00 | | | | | | | | | 18 | 18 | 100% |
| TA7 | Number of employees (Full-time equivalents) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance | 24,00 | | | | | | | | | 32 | 32 | 100% |

SO 1.1 Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area

| Axis 1 | Blue Innovation | S.O. | Standard+ (CLOSED) | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|--|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|
| | | | ERDF Budget | EC ERDF certified amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 1.1 | Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area | | 2,445,990.17 | 2,181,050.94 | 89% | 16,599,927.98 | 11,047,474.14 | 67% | 4,722,392.10 | 1,499,458.77 | 32% | 23,768,310.25 | 14,731,912.74 | 62% | 24,162,867.00 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | | |
| CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | 36 | 113 | 314% | 371 | 1031% | 350 | 972% | 834 | 2317% | | | | | |
| CO02 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants | 6 | | | 4 | 67% | - | 0% | 4 | 67% | | | | | |
| CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | 30 | 113 | 377% | 367 | 1223% | 298 | 993% | 778 | 2593% | | | | | |
| CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 10 | 17 | 170% | 64 | 640% | - | | 81 | 810% | | | | | |
| CO44 | Labour market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training | 120 | 293 | 244% | 947 | 789% | - | | 1,240 | 1033% | | | | | |

The indicators for the Specific Objective 1.1 refer to the number of enterprises receiving financial and non-financial supports from the Programme, the number of participating research institutions and the number of participants in trainings and local employment initiatives. With an original financial allocation of EUR 24.162.867, it's clear that there has been a marked underestimation of the numbers of enterprises and research institutes benefiting from the Programme.

S.O 2.1 Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area

| Axis 2 | Safety and resilience | | Standard+ (CLOSED) | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|--|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| | S.O. | | ERDF Budget | EC ERDF certified amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | ERDF Budget | Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 2.1 | Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area | | 679,313.03 | 650,490.39 | 96% | 12,985,998.88 | 9,448,808.14 | 73% | 7,499,902.75 | 1,195,328.45 | 16% | 21,165,214.66 | 11,306,342.87 | 53% | 25,673,045.50 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | |
| 2.101 | Climate change monitoring systems put in operation | 5 | 1 | 20% | | 2 | 40% | | - | | | 3 | 60% | | |
| 2.102 | Plans of adaptation measures put in place | 5 | 5 | 100% | | 22 | 440% | | - | | | 27 | 540% | | |

The indicators of Specific Objective 2.1 measure the number of climate change monitoring systems in operation and of plans of adaptation measures in place. In this case, while the number of plans of adaptation measures in place has been calculated too cautiously, the indicator related to the climate change monitoring systems in place is at 60% of its target. However, in this case, the fact that strategic projects are still far behind in their implementation and that many standard projects are still ongoing weighs heavily on the achievement of indicator 2.101. Indeed, at the end of programme, it is foreseen that also this indicator will go far beyond the programme target.

SO 2.2 Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster

| Axis 2 | Safety and resilience | | Standard+ (CLOSED) | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|--|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| | S.O. | | Budget | EC ERDF certified amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Allocation |
| 2.2 | Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster | | 1,977,100.00 | 1,882,952.07 | 95% | 6,038,342.46 | 2,876,957.70 | 48% | 22,018,788.78 | 1,353,381.89 | 6% | 30,034,231.24 | 6,209,962.40 | 21% | 25,673,045.50 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | | % Achieved on CP Target | |
| 2.204 | Population benefiting from oil spills and other marine hazards protection measures | 1,200,000 | | | | | 10,082 | 0.84% | | | | | 10,082 | 0.84% | |
| 2.202 | People reached by initiatives for increasing awareness | 100,000 | | 9,000 | 9% | | 77,417 | 77% | | 3,744,996 | 3745% | | 3,841,413 | 3841% | |
| CO20 | Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures | 1,500,000 | | 201,000 | 13% | | 24,045 | 2% | | | | | 225,045 | 15% | |
| CO21 | Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from forest fire protection | 1,000,000 | | 898,000 | 90% | | - | | | | | | 898,000 | 90% | |

The three indicators for Specific Objective 2.2 measure the population of the Programme area benefiting from increase safety in terms of oil spills, marine hazards, flood, forest fire. In this case, it can be seen that the programme budget has been increased compared to the original financial allocation (25.673.045 euro was the original allocation in the financial plan eventually increased to 30.034.231), while in terms of expenditures only 21% of the budget has been reported by the beneficiaries as of 31/12/2021.

Also in this case, the still ongoing projects weight on the reported financial amounts and on the achievement of the output targets. Nevertheless, it stands out the indicator 2.202 that measures the number of people reached by initiatives for increasing awareness, indeed it is clear that many more people have been and will be reached by the Programmes compared to what considered when setting the targets.

SO 3.1 Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development

| Axis 3 | Environment and cultural heritage | S.O. | Standard+ (CLOSED) | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|---|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|
| | | | Budget 2021 | EC ERDF certified amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 3.1 | Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development | | 7,489,241.54 | 7,078,666.35 | 95% | 25,215,074.13 | 13,883,031.97 | 55% | 3,199,991.33 | 249,609.14 | 8% | 35,904,307.00 | 21,286,158.27 | 59% | 36,647,014.04 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | | |
| 3.102 | Actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage (including typical products, joint branding and tourism) | 40 | 699 | 1748% | 1,212 | 3030% | - | | 1,911 | 4778% | | | | | |
| 3.103 | Natural and cultural heritage destinations with improved accessibilities (e.g.: to disabled tourists, virtual tourists etc.) in place | 10 | 97 | 970% | 10 | 100% | - | | 107 | 1070% | | | | | |
| 3.104 | Beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification | 10 | | | | | - | | - | 0% | | | | | |
| 3.105 | Cultural and natural heritage (tangible and intangible) promoted | 20 | 111 | 555% | 122 | 610% | - | | 223 | 1115% | | | | | |

Concerning Specific Objective 3.1, despite the fact that Strategic Projects have reported only 8% of their budget, the level of achievement of the output indicators is far beyond their targets, with the number of actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage largely underestimated.

The indicator with beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification depends on the implementation of the strategic projects so it is still behind.

SO 3.2 Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity

| Axis 3 | Environment and cultural heritage | S.O. | Standard+ (CLOSED) | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|---|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|
| | | | Budget 2021 | EC ERDF certified amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 3.2 | Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity | | 794,244.25 | 746,627.00 | 94% | 9,345,313.51 | 6,943,857.62 | 74% | 9,811,296.70 | 1,639,473.91 | 17% | 19,950,854.46 | 9,330,547.99 | 47% | 22,552,008.64 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | Achieved value | % Achieved on CP Target | | | |
| 3.201 | Natural ecosystems supported in order to attain a better conservation status | 6 | 10 | 167% | 28 | 467% | - | | 38 | 633% | | | | | |
| 3.202 | Monitoring systems and data collections for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems put in place | 4 | 2 | 50% | 4 | 100% | - | | 6 | 150% | | | | | |
| 3.203 | Restoration actions supporting endangered species | 4 | | | 1 | 25% | - | | 3 | 75% | | | | | |
| 3.204 | Restoration actions supporting endangered species | 4 | 2 | 50% | 3 | 75% | - | | 5 | 125% | | | | | |

Concerning Specific Objective 3.2, 47% of the budget has been reported by the beneficiaries and two of the indicators are already far beyond the programme targets. Considering that Strategic Projects have reported only 17% of their budgets, their achieved values are not yet included.

SO 3.3 Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches

| Axis 3 | Environment and cultural heritage | S.O. | Standard+ | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|--------|---|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| | | | Budget 2021 | EC ERDF certified amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 3.3 | Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches | | 856,029.20 | 836,666.16 | 98% | 9,912,386.08 | 6,794,804.62 | 69% | 3,608,017.10 | 489,341.09 | 14% | 14,376,432.38 | 8,123,287.53 | 57% | 11,276,004.32 |
| | Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | |
| 3.301 | Environmental friendly technological solutions (and approaches) implemented | 2 | 3.00 | | 150% | 8.00 | | 400% | - | | | 11.00 | | 550% | |
| 3.303 | Microplastic waste collected in marine areas | 1000000 | | | | 701,867.00 | | 70% | - | | | 701,867.00 | | 70% | |

Coming to Specific Objective 3.3, the overall budget has been increased compared to the original financial plan and, in terms of indicators, it appears that much more environmentally friendly technological solutions have been and will be implemented than estimated. Also the microplastic waste collected in marine areas will be more than the target values, considering also the envisaged contribution that will be brought by the Strategic Projects, still very low in implementation also in relation to this SO.

SO 4.1 Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area

| Axis 4 | Maritime transport | Standard+ | | | Standard | | | Strategic | | | TOTAL | | | FINANCIAL PLAN |
|-------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----|----------------|----------------------|-----|-------------------|
| S.O. | | Budget 2021 | EC ERDF certified amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | Budget 2021 | Reported amount | % | ERDF Budget | ERDF Reported amount | % | Allocation (ERDF) |
| 4.1 | Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area | 4,329,492.84 | 3,644,907.53 | 84% | 20,749,133.72 | 11,376,457.01 | 55% | 18,207,707.96 | 3,044,139.09 | 17% | 43,286,334.52 | 18,111,121.47 | 42% | 43,291,802.00 |
| Output indicators | Target | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | Achieved value | | % | |
| 4.101 | Improved multimodal transport services | 5 | 4 | 80% | 12 | 240% | - | 16 | 320% | | | | | |
| 4.102 | New links established | 2 | 1 | 50% | - | | - | 1 | 50% | | | | | |
| 4.103 | Harmonized services for passengers put in place | 4 | 2 | 50% | 11 | 275% | - | 17 | 425% | | | | | |

The same situation already described above occurs also for the three indicators of the Specific Objective 4.1 related to multimodal transport services, new links established and harmonizes services for passengers. Also in this case there is not correspondence between financial progress and achievement of the outputs because of the underestimation of the Programme targets.

5 Annexes



Annex 1: Programme's logical framework


| PA | Specific objective | Expected result | Needs | Types of actions | Result indicator | Output indicators | Target Groups |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1 "BLUE INNOVATION" | 1.1: Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area | To improve the performance of the programme area in the field of innovation by establishing and developing mechanisms which contribute to a better exploitation of the existing potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a need to increase the level of competitiveness on international markets of SMEs by fostering sound mechanisms of innovation and creating a critical mass; - The cooperation between the innovation players in fields of relevant sectors of the blue economy shall be enhanced; - There is a need to secure availability of high-skilled human resources in key economic sectors to strengthen development patterns; - There is a need to facilitate involvement of SMEs in international networks for research -Support "brain circulation" amongst research institutes/academies and companies as a condition for developing cooperation in the field of blue technologies; - Potential for an increase of the specialization of the workforce in specific sectors of the blue economy in which the area has competitive advantage - Concentrate efforts for raising employment rate of the cooperation area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint projects and actions aimed at creating platforms, networks and at supporting exchange of good practices in order to enhance the knowledge transfer and capitalization of achieved results in the field of blue economy; • Actions aimed at cluster cooperation, joint pilot initiatives in order to boost the creation of marketable innovative processes and products, in the field of blue economy | 1.1: Number of EPO applications | <p>CO01 Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support</p> <p>CO02 Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants</p> <p>CO04 Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support</p> <p>CO42 Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects</p> <p>CO44 Labour market and Training: Number of participants in joint local employment initiatives and joint training</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public; • local, regional and national public authorities; • regional and local development agencies, chambers of commerce and other business support organisations; • SMEs; • universities, technology transfer institutions, research institutions; • centers of R&D excellence; • NGOs, associations, innovation agencies, business incubators, cluster management bodies and networks; • education and training organisations as well as social partners and labor-market institutions. |
| 2 "SAFETY AND RESILIENCE" | 2.1: Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area | To improve the climate change monitoring and planning of measures for strengthening the adaptation capacity of the region while increasing the resilience of the territory including its natural environment. The main expected effects of climate change for which this SO aims to develop the area's adaptation capacity are sea level rise, flooding (in both coastal and hinterland areas), accelerated coastal erosion, subsidence, increasing water temperatures, acidification of the marine waters, saltwater intrusion into freshwater systems, increased occurrence of heavy rainfall and severe droughts and fires | - Adaptive capacity shall be improved due to the higher impact of climate change, especially in the vulnerable marine and coastal parts of the cooperation area | Actions aimed at improving the knowledge base, data and monitoring systems supporting adaptation capacity; | 2.1: Inhabitants benefiting from planning of adaptation measures | <p>2.101 - Climate change monitoring systems put in operation</p> <p>2.102 - Plans of adaptation measures put in place</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public; • local, regional and national public authorities; • regional and local development agencies, chambers of commerce and other business support organisations; • NGOs; • education and training centers; • universities and research institutes. |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>2.2: Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster</p> | <p>To improve the safety the programme area supporting the development of disaster management systems, furthering the capacity of recovery while minimising damages. The main natural and man-made disasters this SO aims to tackle are floods, fire, oil spill and other marine hazards</p> | <p>- Adriatic basin calls for cross border actions in the field of risk prevention and management</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions aimed at improving monitoring of risks • Activities aimed at increasing the management capacity of / prompt response to disasters | <p>2.2: Inhabitants benefiting from risk management coordinated measures</p> | <p>2.202 - People reached by initiatives for increasing awareness</p> <p>2.204 Population benefiting from oil spills and other marine hazards protection measures</p> <p>CO20 Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from flood protection measures</p> <p>CO21 Risk prevention and management: Population benefiting from forest fire protection measure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public; • local, regional and national public authorities and related entities; • Emergency services and coast guard centres; • NGOs; • education and training centers; • universities and research institutes. |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">3 “ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE”</p> | <p>3.1: Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development</p> | <p>aims at reaching a higher level of sustainable economic and territorial development by exploiting the potentials of the natural assets and cultural heritage while preserving them and increasing their value</p> | <p>- Common characteristics of cultural heritage and shared marine natural resources can support a higher quality tourism if tackled in a sustainable way;</p> <p>- Specific training to human resources employed in the tourism sector can increase the quality of services offered raising awareness of the added value of a sustainable approach;</p> <p>- The cooperation between the innovation players in fields relevant sectors of the blue economy shall be enhanced;</p> <p>- Concentrate efforts for raising employment rate of the cooperation area.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions aimed at increasing the value of natural and cultural heritage by developing and implementing protection and promotion measures; • Actions aimed at fostering economic development by sustainable tourism or other activities based upon natural and cultural heritage protection and promotion; • Actions aimed at decreasing the human pressure to natural and cultural heritage sites. | <p>3.1: Seasonality in tourism in the programme area</p> | <p>3.102 - Actors involved in actions aimed at promoting natural and cultural heritage (including typical products, joint branding and tourism)</p> <p>3.103 - Natural and cultural heritage destinations with improved accessibilities (e.g.: to disabled tourists, virtual tourists etc.) in place</p> <p>3.104 - Beneficiaries with ecolabel/green certification</p> <p>3.105 - Cultural and natural heritage sites (tangible and intangible) promoted</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public; • local, regional and national public authorities; • public service providers; • cultural and natural heritage management bodies; • regional and local development agencies, enterprises (in particular SMEs within the cultural and creative industry as well as the environmental and tourism sector); • NGOs; associations, regional innovation agencies; • education and training organisations as well as universities and research institute. |
| | <p>3.2: Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity</p> | <p>For the SO 3.2, the main change sought is a strengthening of the management and protection of ecosystems and the cooperation between public actors/managers of the protected areas in order to increase environmental benefits and to provide economic and employment opportunities</p> | <p>- Coastal and marine resources represent assets that shall be tackled by joint actions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions aimed at improving the knowledge base, data and monitoring systems for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems; • Actions aimed at supporting the restoring of biodiversity. | <p>3.2: Excellent conservation status of habitat types and species of Natura 2000 sites in the programme area</p> | <p>3.201 - Natural ecosystems supported in order to attain a better conservation status;</p> <p>3.202 - Monitoring systems and data collections for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems put in place;</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general public; • local, regional and national public authorities; • protected areas/ natural heritage management bodies; • regional and local development agencies • associations; • NGOs; • education and training |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | | | | 3.2O3 - Restoration actions supporting endangered species; 3.2O4 - Integrated management systems (sea, coastal and river environment) put in place. | organizations as well as universities and research institutes. |
| | 3.3: Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches | To improve the quality of the water of the sea by using innovative technologies in waste management and treatment, as well as new integrated approaches in facing several problems, including the emerging issue of marine litter | - Coastal and marine resources represent assets that shall be tackled by joint actions; - Concentrate efforts for raising employment rate of the cooperation area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing, demonstrating and implementing small-scale innovative environmental friendly technology actions and approaches; Innovative actions aimed at improving the knowledge on the environmental quality. | 3.3: Quality level of coastal bathing waters (according to the dir. 2006/7/CE) | 3.3O1 - Environmental friendly technological solutions (and approaches) implemented; 3.3O3 - Knowledge systems put in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> general public; local, regional and national public authorities; regional and local development agencies; SMEs and business supporting organizations; associations, innovation and environmental agencies; NGOs; education and training organisations as well as universities and research institute. |
| 4 "MARITIME TRANSPORT" | 4.1: Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area | To improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services. In order to achieve this change, the programme will support actions developing new traffic modalities directed towards the use of vessels using compatible energy sources (such as methane), the adoption of ICT systems to perform embarking and disembarking of passengers in vessel traffic management and implementation of e-ticket (electronic ticketing) systems and electronic traffic management to ensure a more efficient development of traffic in the area. Efforts for enhancing the quality and the environmental sustainability of services and node will contribute to a reduction of the CO2 emissions for transport purposes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential for more systemic, integrated and efficient maritime connections from/to the eligible territories and between them; There is potential for additional cooperation between ports ensuring integrated information (ICT) and ticketing (passengers transport); There is need to decrease road traffic congestion in urban areas especially along the coast, pressured by seasonal tourism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support coordination/ harmonization/ monitoring of data and systems for enhancing multimodality; Piloting tools/ solutions for improving connectivity in the transport systems. | 4.1: Goods transported by maritime mode | 4.1O1 - Improved multimodal transport services; 4.1O2 - New links established; 4.1O3 -Harmonized services for passengers put in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> general public; local, regional and national public authorities; regional development and innovation agencies; enterprises, transport operators including operators of multimodal logistics hubs, infrastructure providers; transport associations; NGOs; education and training organisations as well as universities and research institute. |

Annex 2: Survey Tool for beneficiaries





Evaluation of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20

Welcome to our Survey!

The survey is conducted by the consortium led by Lattanzio KIBS SpA as Independent Evaluator of the INTERREG V A ITALY CROATIA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020.

The survey has the purpose of collecting your opinions about the partnership aspect of the projects funded by the INTERREG V A ITALY CROATIA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020 and its results will contribute to the Operational Evaluation 2022 prepared by the Evaluators.

All answers, even if partial, will be considered by the Evaluators.

Please be informed that the survey is anonymous.

Thank you for your participation.

1. Please specify if you are:

- An Italian Entity
- A Croatian Entity

2. Please specify if you are:

- A Lead Partner of a project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20
- A Project Partner of a project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20

3. Please specify if your project is:

- Standard+
- Standard
- Strategic

4. Please select the Priority Axis of your project:

- PA 1 Blue Innovation
- PA 2 Safety and Resilience
- PA 3 Environment and Cultural Heritage
- PA 4 Maritime Transport

5. Please select the Specific Objective of your project:

- SO 1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area
- SO 2.1 - Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area
- SO 2.2 - Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster
- SO 3.1 - Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development
- SO 3.2 - Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity
- SO 3.3 - Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches
- SO 4.1 - Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area

6. The activities of your project are:

- Closed
- Ongoing

7. In your opinion, is the partnership of your project appropriate in relation to:

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Geographical distribution between Italy and Croatia | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Diversity of the type of partners involved (different background and areas of intervention) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

8. In your opinion, the funded project has successfully stimulated the cross-border partnerships in relation to:

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Your professional activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The sector in which the project has intervened | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

9. In your opinion, are territorial stakeholders successfully involved in the project activities? (please answer only in relation to the stakeholders relevant for your project):

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Investors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employees | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Customers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Suppliers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Citizens | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Governments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other public authorities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trade associations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

10. In your opinion, is your project's partnership still relevant?

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

11. Have there been any changes in the partnership composition since the start of the project?

- Yes
 No

If Yes, please describe

12. In your opinion, has the partnership successfully contributed to the achievement of project's objectives?

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

13. Specifically, have the following project features been effective in achieving the objectives of the project?

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Number of the partners | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Geographic representativeness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Division of roles among partners | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Available budget | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

14. Does your entity have previous experience in the context of European territorial cooperation projects?

Yes

No

If Yes, please describe

15. Did your organisation already work in the past with the partners of the project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20?

Yes

No

If Yes, please describe

16. In your opinion, will the project partners collaborate again after the closure of the project?

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please write here any comments you may have

Annex 3: Guidelines for KII to beneficiaries

1.1 Does the project partnership meet the initial expectations of the project?

1.2 Have there been significant changes in the partnership since the start of the project?

1.3 How do you evaluate the composition of the partnership in relation to its geographic distribution?

2.1 How do you consider the composition of the partnership with respect to the type of partners?

2.2 Has the presence of stakeholders within the partnership facilitated the achievement of project objectives? Or, on the contrary, has it created any form of obstacle?

2.3 How are stakeholders from the territories/economic sectors, etc. involved (if relevant) in the project activities (if not in the partnership itself)?

3.1 How did the cross-border dimension allow the project objectives to be approached differently from a project consisting of partners from the same country?

3.2 Have any unforeseen obstacles or opportunities arise during project implementation?

3.3 Do you think that the project has had variable impacts on the areas involved? if so, can you explain the reasons for this variability? was it foreseen by the project or is it the consequence of some unforeseen variable?

3.4 Do you think that the project (e.g., the relationships established between the partners and the territories during its implementation) helped to build relationships relevant to strengthening a cross-border dimension of the area?

4.1 Based on your experience, to what extent have the following project features been important in achieving the objectives of the project or, on the contrary, in creating obstacles in the process of implementation: numerosity of the partnership; Geographic representativeness; Division of roles among partners; Available budget?

5.1 What are the past experiences (*before the implementation of this project*) that the project partners have gained in the context of European territorial cooperation or in other types of cooperation projects between different countries and in particular in the area of operation of the OP Italy-Croatia? Have there been previous significant experiences that you can describe?

Annex 4: Guidelines for Focus Group discussion with Joint Secretariat

We present below the questions that have guided the focus group discussion with the Joint Secretariat managers:

1. What are your main tasks in assisting the beneficiaries in implementing their projects?
2. What are the main challenges of your work in assisting the beneficiaries?
3. Do you think that, overall, the partnerships in place have enabled the achievement of the Programme's objectives?
4. What is your opinion about: a) the geographic composition of the partnerships; b) the type of legal entity included
5. What do you think about the collaboration among Croatian and Italian partners to achieve the projects' objectives?
6. Have the beneficiaries been able to involve the local stakeholders from the territories?
7. Did the beneficiaries contribute to increase the awareness of the cooperation in place between the two countries?
8. According to your experience, how did the projects that best strengthened the cross-border dimension in the area managed to do so? / What are the more effective actions that helped to strengthen the cross-border dimension in the area ?

Annex 5: Results of the online survey

Question 1: Please specify if you are

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----|
| An Italian Entity | 51.26% | 102 |
| A Croatian Entity | 48.74% | 97 |

Question 2: Please specify if you are

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
| A Lead Partner of a project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20 | 18.50% | 37 |
| A Project Partner of a project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20 | 81.50% | 163 |

Question 3: Please specify if your project is

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|-----|
| Standard+ | 21.29% | 43 |
| Standard | 60.40% | 122 |
| Strategic | 18.32% | 37 |

Question 4: Please select the Priority Axis of your project

| | | |
|--|--------|----|
| PA 1 Blue Innovation | 15.35% | 31 |
| PA 2 Safety and Resilience | 22.28% | 45 |
| PA 3 Environment and Cultural Heritage | 43.07% | 87 |
| PA 4 Maritime Transport | 19.31% | 39 |

Question 5: Please select the Specific Objective of your project

| | | |
|---|---------------|----|
| SO 1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area | 12.87% | 26 |
| SO 2.1 - Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area | 17.82% | 36 |
| SO 2.2 - Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster | 3.96% | 8 |
| SO 3.1 - Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development | 26.73% | 54 |
| SO 3.2 - Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity | 6.44% | 13 |
| SO 3.3 - Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches | 10.89% | 22 |
| SO 4.1 - Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area | 21.29% | 43 |

Question 6: The activities of your project are

| | | |
|---------|---------------|-----|
| Closed | 48.26% | 97 |
| Ongoing | 51.74% | 104 |

Question 7: In your opinion, is the partnership of your project appropriate in relation to

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|---|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|-----|----------------|----|
| Geographical distribution between Italy and Croatia | 0.50% | 1 | 0.50% | 1 | 3.48% | 7 | 60.70% | 122 | 34.83% | 70 |
| Diversity of the type of partners involved (different background and areas of intervention) | 0.51% | 1 | 2.03% | 4 | 8.63% | 17 | 53.81% | 106 | 35.03% | 69 |

Question 8: In your opinion, the funded project has successfully stimulated the cross-border partnerships in relation to

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|--|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|-----|----------------|----|
| Your professional activities | 0.00% | 0 | 2.54% | 5 | 10.15% | 20 | 55.84% | 110 | 31.47% | 62 |
| The sector in which the project has intervened | 0.00% | 0 | 2.54% | 5 | 7.11% | 14 | 54.82% | 108 | 35.53% | 70 |

Question 9: In your opinion, are territorial stakeholders successfully involved in the project activities?

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Investors | 3% | 22% | 39% | 31% | 5% |
| Employees | 1% | 8% | 20% | 58% | 13% |
| Customers | 3% | 7% | 34% | 46% | 11% |
| Suppliers | 1% | 7% | 26% | 52% | 13% |
| Citizens | 0% | 4% | 11% | 62% | 23% |
| Communities | 0% | 2% | 14% | 59% | 25% |
| Governments | 0% | 4% | 16% | 54% | 25% |
| Other public authorities | 0% | 1% | 12% | 60% | 27% |
| Trade associations | 2% | 11% | 36% | 42% | 9% |

Question 10: In your opinion, is your project's partnership still relevant?

| Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|-----|----------------|----|
| 0.00% | 0 | 0.99% | 2 | 9.41% | 19 | 54.95% | 111 | 34.65% | 70 |

Question 11: Have there been any changes in the partnership composition since the start of the project?

| | | |
|-----|---------------|-----|
| Yes | 13.50% | 27 |
| No | 86.50% | 173 |

Question 12: In your opinion, has the partnership successfully contributed to the achievement of project's objectives?

| Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|----|----------------|----|
| 0.00% | 0 | 2.49% | 5 | 9.95% | 20 | 48.76% | 98 | 38.81% | 78 |

Question 13: Specifically, have the following project features been effective in achieving the objectives of the project?

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|-----|----------------|----|
| Number of the partners | 0.00% | 0 | 4.04% | 8 | 14.14% | 28 | 58.08% | 115 | 23.74% | 47 |
| Geographic representativeness | 0.00% | 0 | 1.50% | 3 | 8.00% | 16 | 59.00% | 118 | 31.50% | 63 |
| Division of roles among partners | 0.50% | 1 | 4.02% | 8 | 12.56% | 25 | 54.77% | 109 | 28.14% | 56 |
| Available budget | 1.02% | 2 | 2.54% | 5 | 12.69% | 25 | 58.88% | 116 | 24.87% | 49 |

Question 14: Does your entity have previous experience in the context of European territorial cooperation projects?

| | | |
|-----|---------------|-----|
| Yes | 85.57% | 172 |
| No | 14.43% | 29 |

Question 15: Did your organisation already work in the past with the partners of the project funded by Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 14-20?

| | | |
|-----|---------------|-----|
| Yes | 58.79% | 117 |
| No | 41.21% | 82 |

Question 16: In your opinion, will the project partners collaborate again after the closure of the project?

| Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neither agree or disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | |
|-------------------|---|----------|---|---------------------------|----|---------------|-----|----------------|----|
| 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 15.50% | 31 | 55.00% | 110 | 29.50% | 59 |