

# **Improve Efficiency of the ESI Funds Absorption Processes in Slovenia (TSI ref. 23SI05 – ESIFunds-SI)**

## **D2.3 Results of “To Be” Workshop**

20.03.2025

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## List of abbreviations

aws	Austria Wirtschaftsservice (Austrian promotional bank)
CA	Certifying Authority
CCTA	Coordination Council for the Territorial Approach
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CLT	Community Land Trusts
CPF	Cohesion Policy Funds
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
DNSH	Do No Significant Harm Principle
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EGTC GO	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERDF/IJG	European Regional Development Fund/Investment for Jobs and Growth Programme
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
EV	Electric vehicle
FFG	Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (Austrian Research Promotion Agency)
FLC	First level control
FUA	Functional urban area
GDP	Gross domestic product
HBOR	Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IADP	Integrated Area Development Plan (Integrovaný plán rozvoje území, IPRÚ)

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IB	Intermediate body
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
JTF	Just Transition Fund
KPC	Kommunalkredit Public Consulting
LGU	Local governmental unit
MA	Managing Authority
MSME	Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	Operational Programme
OPKK	Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion
ÖREK	Österreichisches Raumentwicklungskonzept (Austrian Spatial Development Concept)
ÖROK	Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz (Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning)
PDS	Project development services
PIU	Project implementation unit
PSC	Project selection committee
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SO	Specific objective
TO	Thematic objective
WB	World Bank

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## 1. Executive summary

This report is based on several sources of information: It is compiled on the basis of the analysis of the ITI 2014-2020 and from 2021 onwards – resulting in challenges in ITI implementation (D2.1) , the findings and recommendations of the comparative study of the practices of other comparable EU Member States, the observations from the study visit to Vienna on best practices for the implementation of the ECP and the efficiency of the absorption of ESI funds (D2.2), and the results of discussions and exchanges in preparation and during the "To be" workshop (D2.3).

To support the process of improving the efficiency of ITI implementation in Slovenia in the period 2021-2027 and beyond – as the main aim of the TSI project, the Slovenian members of the ITI Core Group prepared a list of topics with the aim to collect good practices and project examples from other EU Member States and to learn from these examples. This list served as a basis for further discussion together with the Austrian experts (online workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024) to better understand the deeper meaning of the questions and further elaborate the concrete needs of practices to be collected which should serve as an example of efficient ITI processes and procedures in other EU Member States and possible direction of improving the ITI implementation in Slovenia.

The topics and questions addressed in the collection of practices and project examples building the framework of the current document include:

- **Organisational structure under multi-level governance:** Comparison of ITI structures in other countries - including in which programme or funding instrument ITI is integrated, etc.; examples of separate agencies, etc. Examples of Structural Funds implementation structures in Austria (responsible bodies for the ERDF programme "Investment for Jobs and Growth", for the ESF, coordination platform, division of tasks, responsibilities).
- **Efficiency of processes to decrease turn over times:** Procedures from application to co-financing contract to reduce the time to grant co-financing (also cross-border ITI 2021-27 example Italy<sup>1</sup>. Overview of process duration in Austria. Cross-border ITI Italy – financed by Interreg Italy-Slovenia, managed by EGTC GO. Further examples from other Member States
- **Co-financing of reimbursement claims:** Analysis of processes - are they analogue or partially/fully digital, which systems, which actors use the system. Link the expenditure verification systems to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://2014-2020.ita-slo.eu/en>

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national co-financing systems. Reminder for SI: topic to be definitely addressed in the eMA system/notification.

- **Good practice for multiple EU co-funding sources in one project:** Clarification on the typology of funding – grants, loans, etc. Blended funding: show examples (AT: aws (Förderbank des Bundes) - EIB instruments, not directly part of SF funding; EIB project examples). Examples from other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), e.g. EBRD, Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and even WB/IFC). Implementation of investments from national recovery and resilience plans will in many cases imply an obligation to apply new standards and procedures (e.g. compliance with DNSH criteria) - clarification needed. Reminder for SI: topic to be definitely addressed in the eMA system/report.
- **Use of over-commitment:** Clarification for a common understanding (definition) of the overcommitment and its framework. Further analysis based on this common understanding. Possible solutions: reserve lists, revolving calls for tender. Further solutions and examples.
- **Readiness of beneficiaries and projects:** Readiness also includes the willingness and available resources of applicants/beneficiaries. Analysis of failure as a beneficiary within ITI (and other programmes, with municipalities as applicants/beneficiaries). Analysis of support for applicants and beneficiaries with good examples of support structures (support should be provided throughout the project cycle, starting from the project planning stage).
- **Financial instruments:** Good practices of projects and implementation practices.
- **Good practices for integrated projects in degraded urban areas:** Content and funding approach (in comparable countries - new Member States such as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, etc.) As a basis for comparison, a list of ZMOS projects implemented under the ITI instrument in the 2014-2020 funding period (challenges/topics, project sizes, project areas) was considered. List of available funding instruments for integrated projects in (degraded) urban areas (e.g. Cohesion Fund Programmes - ERDF/ESF, ITI, Interreg, Urbact, UIA/EUI, CERV, RRF, Rural Development Programme). Identify and describe a number of projects for each funding instrument (indicators for comparability of projects e.g. similarity of themes, size of projects in relation to budget, project areas).

The presented materials were discussed and reviewed in common workshops between the Austrian and Slovene experts and will be further used in the following project phases, especially when elaborating the Deliverable D2.4 (ITI Implementation Strategy and Action Plan) and further strategic documents such as Deliverable D2.5 (Reform concept and guidelines to improve efficiency of the ESI Funds absorption process in Slovenia).



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Since the introduction of ITI as a dedicated instrument to cross-sectoral, integrated projects addressing various types of urban territories, huge amounts of funding were spent in the participating EU Member States and different experiences were made. Main identified challenges include:

- One of the most common experiences was the successful mobilization of local stakeholders by involving them in the process of implementing integrated investments and improving their administrative capacities. Although ITI should enable simplified implementation modalities by addressing different fundings, several challenges have been identified in this respect.
- In the field of regulatory framework, ITI was considered rather complex due to the necessity to follow different sets of implementation rules - applicable to several funding sources, such as ERDF and ESF, or even different Operational Programmes.
- Limitations regarding thematic concentration did not allow to address the specific needs of the respective geographic area in a flexible and creative way.
- One of the biggest challenges identified throughout the EU Members States implementing ITI was the lack of clear guidance and documents, paired with limited administrative capacity of the involved stakeholders (Programme bodies), resulting in delays in issuing funding contracts on the one hand and delayed payments of funds on the other hand. Integrated investments should initiate new interactions between stakeholders on different levels of governance. Coordination between the stakeholders needs to be horizontal and vertical. The higher the number of actors involved, the higher the governance related challenges.
- Main governance related challenges include complex decision-making processes (involving Intermediate Bodies and Managing Authorities), as well as several stages of project assessment and approval (implemented by different Programme Bodies) which seem to be very lengthy and not always fully transparent to applicants and beneficiaries. Last but not least, the capacities of applicants, beneficiaries as well as other stakeholders involved are not sufficient, as they require different knowledge and experience in comparison to other types of projects. This refers to technical capabilities to prepare and plan projects on a bigger scale, financial capabilities to handle the more complex investment documentations and financial needs, management skills to settle the financial resources.

The above-mentioned challenges, according to the analysis done in the framework of this document common in EU Member States, are also present in Slovenia. It is a valuable learning experience from the present collection of practices and examples that also other EU Member States struggle with similar or even the same issues in terms of regulatory requirements, governance, and capacities issues. On the other hand, this offers the possibility for exchange and common learning.

Various good examples addressing these challenges have been identified in the course of the elaboration of this document. During the workshop “To Be” (September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024) and following workshops the following

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practices have been selected as the most suitable and feasible to achieve a higher efficiency in ITI implementation in Slovenia:

- In view of the governance structure, the establishment of a permanent framework for cooperation such as the Permanent Conferences in the Czech Republic, facilitating discussion and coordination of issues related to implementation of the territorial dimension and the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and programmes co-financed by EU funds or the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning<sup>2</sup>.
- In addition, the establishment of dedicated thematic working groups, cross-institutional working groups or subgroups of the Monitoring Committee on the level of the overall national ERDF Programme was considered valuable for further development of the governance of ITI in Slovenia – in order to facilitate an exchange with stakeholders from other thematic initiatives.
- The establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba is unique when it comes to implementation of ITI. This structure is well comparable with ZMOS – representing all Slovenian urban municipalities and fulfilling the tasks of an Intermediate Body within ITI Slovenia, which allows the representation of ITI projects and the mechanism on the national and EU level.
- The recommendation of establishing a Coordination Council for the Territorial Approach (CCTA) as a formal inter-ministerial coordinator of the implementation of the integrated approach<sup>3</sup> would be welcomed in Slovenia, although rather in the form of a Directorate for urban development at the Managing Authority, as a Directorate for regional development is already established.
- It was also suggested, to establish an additional sub-body or working body established by the Monitoring Committee during the different phases of programme implementation.
- For addressing efficiency in implementation processes within ITI, the provision of harmonized sets of rules and procedures by the Programme Managing Authority – in cooperation with other Programme Bodies (Intermediate Bodies) has been highlighted by several countries as best practice. Experiences in developing and harmonizing the rules can be also drawn from initiatives other than ITI (e.g., Harmonized Implementation Rules developed by several Interreg Programmes).
- The use of ESF and other funds and initiatives to address urban development issues in an integrated way seems also feasible as the experiences of other EU Member States show. Examples of investment projects' funding from EU funded initiatives, Norwegian Funding Mechanism, European and international financial institutions are quoted which serve as inspiration to proceed with integrated investment projects in Slovenia as well.

<sup>2</sup> As a platform for discussion and coordination of issues related to spatial and regional development and as Managing Authority for the ERDF/Investment in Growth and Jobs were of high interest for ITI Slovenia

<sup>3</sup> As suggested in an analysis by the World Bank for Bulgaria. *An Analysis of the Possibilities to Implement Territorial Instruments: Program for Development of the Regions 2021-2027* (English). Washington, D.C.: WB Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/857861617098152281/An-Analysis-of-the-Possibilities-to-Implement-Territorial-Instruments-Program-for-Development-of-the-Regions-2021-2027>

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- Regarding the use of multiple EU-funding sources in one project in Slovenia, although knowledge about preparing investments design documentation and on how to split costs is available, problems arise in case of co-financing one project with funds from different mechanism of the CPF as different sets of rules apply (grant versus loan, grant versus grant) and imply different use.
- The topic overcommitment in ITI is to be seen especially in the direction of committing more than 100 % of the available ITI funding from national level at the early stages of programme implementation in order to achieve a 100 % spending in the end, a practice so far successfully used in Slovenia within the national regional development tool, but not including urban development and the respective ITI mechanism. Adoption of this practice for ITI would ease the implementation, spending of funds and efficiency of processes.
- When it comes to readiness of projects and beneficiaries, the processes of project preparation and application seem to take a long time to be finalized. This is not only due to lack of resources available on the level of the applicant and to missing knowledge and experience. At the beneficiary level there is relevant experience with complex projects and if the project is ready-to-go, then the readiness of project is not an issue. Further knowledge and experiences in European projects can be drawn in initiatives and programmes other than ITI, through cooperation with other bodies, organizations, and other countries, e.g. Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT, Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

The work done in the framework of D2.3 such as the collection of the different practices and examples from other Member States on topics most relevant for increasing efficiency of the ITI instrument in Slovenia has shown numerous possibilities and directions that have been discussed and evaluated by the Austrian and Slovenia project participants, laying a ground for concrete steps to be taken up in the formulation of the Action Plan (D2.4) and Reform Concept (D2.5) to arrive at a deeper collaboration of the ITI stakeholders towards more harmonized and commonly developed rules and procedures and smoother programme implementation.

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## 2. Territorial instruments - overview

**In the programming period 2014 – 2020, the CPR marked the inclusion of territorial instruments into the mainstream of EU development policy and the 2021 – 2027 perspective reinforces this direction.**

Territorial instruments became an obligatory and prominent part of investments supported by EU Cohesion Policy Funds (CPF). It was preceded by the introduction of *territorial cohesion* as one of the fundamental aims of the European Union (EU) in the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, which was followed by a major debate on reforming Cohesion policy heavily influenced by the 2009 Barca report<sup>4</sup> and the World Bank's World Development Report 2009<sup>5</sup>. Both these reports recommended introducing a more place-based approach to sectoral policies, which were perceived as too 'spatially blind', horizontal and standardized. Stronger focus on specific territory were to make these policies more impactful and capable of making a lasting positive difference for the development prospects.

The aim of the 'territorialization' of development policy instruments is to promote inclusive and sustainable growth of territories by tailored interventions that strengthen their individual endogenous potential and help solve challenges in their individual context. This marks a shift towards a policy response. The territorial approach to the intraregional policy, i.e., addressing intervention packages to particular types of territories, and diversifying activities depending on the features of particular areas has become one of the tasks of regional policy. The selection of areas aimed at concentrating interventions has become one of the challenges of EU countries, that are more sensitive and responsive to individual characteristics of territories and away from a one-size-fits-all approach. The integrated approach is also to stimulate more flexible and innovative policy governance approaches, and capacity building of broader range of involved stakeholders. Integrated instruments were to encourage multi-level governance, involve broader groups of stakeholders into planning, implementation and monitoring of territorial development instruments, and facilitate creation of new functionally based partnerships.

During the 2014 – 2020 programming period, the integrated territorial approach was implemented in the EU Member States mainly via two instruments: ITI for urban areas and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) for rural areas. In that period, the EU Member States were obliged to invest five percent of their

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<sup>4</sup> AN AGENDA FOR A REFORMED COHESION POLICY A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations. Independent Report prepared at the request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy by Fabrizio Barca. April 2009. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/regi/dv/barca\\_report\\_barca\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/regi/dv/barca_report_barca_report_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> An Analysis of the Possibilities to Implement Territorial Instruments : Program for Development of the Regions 2021 - 2027 (Bulgarian). Available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/632891617099840360/an-analysis-of-the-possibilities-to-implement-territorial-instruments-program-for-development-of-the-regions-2021-2027>

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funding from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), calculated at Member State level into integrated and sustainable urban development (SUD) to strengthen the development potential of urban areas as key drivers of growth across the EU. The aim was to increase resilience of urban areas against challenges they face (climate change and environmental risks, demography, social and economic inequalities etc.). To enhance the territorial dimension and give local actors more leverage, the cities and other sub-regional bodies were to be entrusted with the task of project selection.

The most prominent example of the new territorial approach embraced by the EU Cohesion policy was the instrument called Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI). ITI was designed to link thematic development objectives, with a specific territorial dimension. For instance, combining soft and hard measures to a greater degree than before, combining investments from different sectors, such as education, transport, energy efficiency. EU required three elements to allow tapping into funds dedicated to ITIs: i) an integrated territorial development strategy for a designated territory, ii) a package of actions or investments supported by funding from at least two different EU priority axes or operational programmes (OP) to ensure integrated, cross-sectoral approach and iii) adequate governance arrangements to effectively manage ITI implementation.

In its implementation in the last two programme periods 2014-2020 and 2021-2027, three territorial development approaches were applied: CLLD, Strategic Urban Development and ITI. While both ITI and CLLD are usable in the urban context, they have a broader application. ITI can target functional areas, such as rural, rural-urban, and cross-border areas, and territories with specific geographic features.

The ITI instrument supports functional urban areas (FUAs) in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic or Slovakia. In Great Britain, Belgium, or Germany, it is only applied in selected regions (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; provinces Limburg, Kempen, West Flanders; Baden-Wurttemberg, Schleswig-Holstein). In Finland, ITIs support the development of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Oulu, Tampere, Turku which implemented the 'Six City Strategy' (6Aika).

ITIs can be financed within thematic objectives (TO) 1–10 for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and have favourable rules of financing, including the combination of funding from the ERDF, ESF and CF (complemented with financial support from the EAFRD or the EMFF) under more than one priority axis of one or more OPs.

ITI explicitly allows EU Member States to integrate funds from different funding sources. During the 2014-2020 programming period, 20 EU countries adopted ITI as part of the integrated territorial approach, 12 used ITI outside Article 7. According to the financial data, the total allocated funding to ITI in 2014-2024 was 13,8 billion €, most of which (11,8 billion €) was funded through ERDF, with 12 % (1,7 billion €) funded

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through ESF and 0,3 billion from CF. Nine EU Member States (out of 20) used combined ERDF and ESF funding. Almost 80 % of ITI funding was concentrated in nine EU Member States. The country that benefited the most from ITI funding was Poland – 3,8 billion € out of total 13,8 billion €.

The financial dimension of the investments made for the period 2014-2020 was 44.305 million or 8,4 % of the total European budget for the relevant programme period. The share of the attracted resource varies, but not less than 3 % of the allocated European budget of each Member State for the period.

The territorial dimensions of integrated development are highest in the Czech Republic, The Netherlands and Germany, which apply all three territorial approaches to development (CLLD, SUD and ITI). The Czech Republic directs 27,6 % (25.775 million €) of its European funding towards integrated territorial development, contributing to the creation of higher added value, quality services, modern infrastructure, etc. The fact that the investments made for integrated territorial development amounted to 0,53 % of the created gross domestic product (GDP) in the Czech Republic the country for the relevant period is also indicative in this regard, with significantly lower values for the other countries. According to respective calculations, the only comparable values in this case are those of Cyprus and Bulgaria, which allocate respectively 0,78 % and 0,30 % of the created GDP in this direction. The latter two countries, however, did not use ITIs during the past programme period, which distinguishes them from the group of countries using the full potential of the instruments for integrated territorial development.

There are 12 EU Member States that successfully introduced the approach already at the beginning of the past programming period and resp. have managed to apply the full potential of the tools: Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, **Slovenia**, Slovakia and UK. Examining their budget parameters, it is found that 5 of the 6 EU funds provided their financial framework: EAFRD, ERDF, ESF, EMFF and CF.

Regarding ITIs, it can be concluded that depending on the type of economy being financed, different funds gain priority. ERDF participates in the financing of all countries of the analysed group, while ESF and EAFRD are present only in selected EU Member States. Fifteen EU Member States use the allocation of ITIs under the ERDF either entirely (e.g. Greece, Finland, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, United Kingdom) or partly (Czech Republic, France, Italy, Sweden), which represents around half of the total allocated budget (7,1 billion €).

Only in Romania ITIs are also financed through the EMFF, although other member countries have access to the fund.

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**The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) formulated key messages referring to the implementation of ITI mechanism:**

Urban ITI should not be privileged and take priority over other types of ITI at EU and national level: ITIs are a tool for all local area types. As authorized by the Regulation, some ITIs will be applied beyond areas strictly defined as urban but will also help the development of an integrated approach in functional areas and neighbourhoods, at regional or at local level.

***The ambition behind setting up ITIs are diverse, but one of the main purposes is to recognize the challenges posed in some specific territories and give them more power of decision over their development strategy.***

**First of all**, this new instrument is used to delegate greater decision-making to some local authorities. In the **Czech Republic** for instance, these instruments are designed for a place-based approach, and with this bottom-up principle, delegation of power to local authorities makes this mechanism closer to relevant actors. This is the main reason for the use of ITIs in the Czech Republic.

**A second reason** to use ITIs is to better integrate different EU funds. The **Czech Republic** approach to ITI for instance is quite ambitious and due to these conditions of having a place-based approach and the bottom-up principle, cities are able to combine operations from different OPs (from ERDF and from ESF) and make really integrated strategies based on specific needs of local actors. In **Romania**, this last argument is crucial as well: the advantage of using ITIs is that they allow the direct allocation of multiple funds from several OPs for the implementation of the proposed strategy. For example, a construction project can take place (ERDF) and builders can be trained (ESF) via a single project application.

**A third reason** is to recognize the specificities of an area which needs a particular territorial approach, like in **Romania** in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve; or in **England**, where the ambition in Cornwall was to have an OP for Cornwall as England's only 'less developed' region, as was the case in the 2007-2013 round. However, the Government decision was for Cornwall to remain part of the England-wide OP. Having an ITI was a last-minute decision to recognize the development challenges of Cornwall and that much local autonomy would have been lost without Cornwall having at least an ITI.

**ITI - Value added and lessons learned, based on the analysis of the World Bank (WB) Group:**

Analysis of experiences and added value of ITI show the following: ITIs were to promote cross-sectoral, multi-faceted, and integrated packages of interventions (projects) that would be tailored to the socio-economic and spatial characteristics of specific territories. Integrated planning and investments, in turn, were to unlock and strengthen development potentials of different urban territories, initiating more

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promising growth trajectories. The Commission expected ITIs to encourage the integrated use of available funding and thus overcome sectoral confines, which have limited the territorial impact of interventions so far. ITIs were also perceived as a useful tool for mobilizing local stakeholders, building their administrative capacity and networking by engaging them in the process of elaborating territorial strategies and implementing integrated investments. Last but not least, it was expected that ITIs would be a flexible tool for integrating different funding streams to simplify the implementation modalities and increase their overall development impact on selected territories.

The introduction of ITIs helped strengthen the strategic framework for implementing territorially impactful interventions and catalysed institutional changes in entities responsible for planning and implementation of regional/local development policies. ITIs contributed to building administrative capacity of participating local actors and encouraged novel configurations both territory-and stakeholder-wise. The selected key lessons learned include:

- Introduction of integrated governance arrangements has been conducive to reducing the ‘silo-like’ character of sectoral policies and promoting enhanced cooperation and better coordination at central, regional and local level.
- The ITI approach has the potential to stimulate a change of culture in territorial planning, build mutual trust between stakeholders, show benefits of continued cooperation as a way to create critical mass needed to overcome development challenges, and maximize growth potential of a given territory.
- The partnership principle of territorial instruments has the potential for mobilizing partners in three dimensions: horizontal (different types of partners from the same territory), vertical (partners from different levels of government); and territorial (partners from across different territories).
- Thanks to the early engagement of the public (and other key stakeholders) in the process of developing a territorial strategy and attractive incentives the ITIs could induce stronger ownership of and shared responsibility for development goals and investments among local stakeholders.

#### **Challenges of the ITI approach:**

The experience with implementing ITIs points out three areas that demand special attention if ITIs are to be successfully completed, they refer to capacity of stakeholders, regulatory framework and governance mechanisms. ITIs by their nature are more complex to plan and implement than single sector, ‘regular’ projects. That is because they require more coordination of various activities, combining knowledge from



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different sectors, fulfilling requirements of different funding envelopes, and involving broader spectrum of stakeholders etc. The key challenges related to ITIs' implementation are following:

➤ **Capacity challenges**

Planning and implementation of integrated investments requires higher capacity from stakeholders than in 'regular' projects. The capacity relates to:

- understanding a more complex integrated approach and learning how to use it to solve one's developmental problems,
- preparing, in a limited timeframe, high-quality territorial and local strategies that meet EU's prerequisites and underpin ITIs,
- technical knowledge and the ability to plan at a bigger scale and properly stage the process
- financial capacity to hire adequate human resources and prepare bigger and/or more complex technical documentation, and also to hire external experts to help fill in knowledge gaps,
- the ability to engage a bigger and more diverse group of actors (partners), and manage the long-term, cooperative and multi-stakeholder ITI implementation,
- the ability to coordinate and oversee parallel activities, often in different sectors,
- manage financial resources and settle accounts.

Higher capacity is required not only from beneficiaries that are to implement ITIs, but also from MAs and other entities that need to be able to assess ITI application, monitor their implementation and match specific results to specific programmes (indicators).

➤ **Key regulatory challenges**

ITIs are more complex than individual sectoral projects and require proper regulatory framework to thrive. A regulatory environment that establishes effective and efficient procedures that guide work of MAs and beneficiaries is key to the success of the integrated approach. Selected challenges in this field are following:

- complexity of ITIs, due to the necessity of following different sets of implementation rules that are applicable to different funding sources, e.g. ERDF and ESF, or different OPs,

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- limiting nature of requirements with regard to thematic concentration; more flexibility would facilitate stakeholders' creativity in addressing specific needs of territories,
- lack of sufficiently clear guidelines coupled with the limited administrative capacity of stakeholders required issuing additional guidance with regard to rules and regulations for institutions involved in the management of ITIs, as well as for implementing beneficiaries — that delayed the contracting and disbursement of funds,
- difficulties in effectively reconciling national sectoral planning frameworks with the territorial dimension.

➤ **Key governance challenges**

Integrated investments could stimulate new interactions between stakeholders and contribute to denser networking across territories and levels of governance. However, the management of integrated investments, which by nature involve a bigger number of actors, also poses challenges, such as:

- the need to strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination, providing an opportunity to connect local, regional, and national levels in policymaking to effectively plan and implement investments,
- complicated decision-making process, with multiple stages of project assessment and approval proved to be time-consuming and confusing for applicants, beneficiaries and managing authorities. This had the potential to generate tensions between stakeholders at different levels of the implementation framework, resulting in further delays. The complexity of the selection process often surpassed that associated with other ESIF operations, involving different stakeholders (MAs, Intermediate Bodies, local stakeholders etc.).
- putting in place an effective coordination mechanism between MAs to support multi-fund territorial instruments to ensure a streamlined implementation process proved to be a difficult task. It requires good, frequent, and regular communication and cooperation between different levels and different policy areas at the design stage and throughout the entire process of ITI implementation.

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### 3. Multi-level governance and organization structures

The objective of the following chapter is to provide a comparison of ITI structures in other countries - including the indication in which programme or funding instrument ITI is integrated, which programme bodies and functions, responsibilities, capacities are in place, coordination structure, decision making, setting the rules, thematic or administrative responsibilities, tasks along the project cycle.

#### 3.1 European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation GO

In 2014, the representatives of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba (EGTC GO), attending the task force of the Interreg V Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Programme proposed to combine the tools of the EGTC and the ITI, by offering the possibility to translate the strategies into actions and going beyond administrative borders.

In December 2015, the European Commission (EC) specifically recognized the ITI for the development of the cross-border territory of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, with a total grant of 10.000.000 € (85 % provided by ERDF and 15 % by national funding).

The EGTC GO was assigned the role of intermediate authority with the responsibility to implement the ITI in the territory of the three municipalities. The EGTC GO was assigned the authority to intervene on the territory of both states to implement common projects.

The area could be defined as a common cross-border urban area, drawing on the lessons learnt from the common projects, a EGTC (European Group for Territorial Cooperation) has been established in 2011. The EGTC, considered one of the most advanced forms of cross-border territorial cooperation, shares goals related to common management and modernization in health, environment and infrastructural sector, urban transport, logistics, energy, and economic development initiatives. These were initial topics to be tackled, out of which two specific projects were further developed as ITI projects.

ITI projects were designed as interventions tailored to the area of the three municipalities. They adopt a place-based approach, but they are not a FUA, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) methodology a FUA is a bigger urban area attracting residents and commuters for work purposes. The closest examples of FUA in the Programme area, in line with the OECD methodology, are the cities of Padova and Venice in Italy, Ljubljana in Slovenia.

By including the two priority projects into the programme, the Interreg Programme Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 recognized the relevance of joint structure EGTC GO and its joint vision of three pillars. The identified urban functional area has great potentials for developing urban cross-border public services. ITI projects

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were designed as efficient interventions tailored to the specificities of the Goriška functional territory, promoting place-based approach for the benefit of its citizens.

The Cooperation Programme adopted the ITI tool for the implementation of its local development strategies, also leveraging on a series of previous experiences in the specific ITI activation area, such as the EGTC. The Programme strategy envisages the existence of territorial development patterns closely linked to the characteristics of the socio-economical but also political context in the cooperation area.

Specifically, an ITI has been adopted in an area - including the municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba- whose development model has been based on the presence of a shared border that during its existence has changed its impact on a common local development. In this perspective, an ITI aims at valorising a participative local development, hinging on several reference variables (exchange of information, experiences and practices, common approaches to tackle common problems, development of cross border services and infrastructures), all fully recognized by the Cooperation Programme Strategy.

According to the Cooperation Programme and its strategic analysis, there are numerous features supporting the choice to enhance the EGTC within the ITI framework:

- the EGTC GO is acknowledged as the most advanced form of cross-border territorial cooperation unfolding its potentials by supporting joint management and modernization in health, environment and infrastructural sector, urban transport, logistics, energy, and economic development initiatives;
- the pool of pilot actions proposed in the EGTC GO development strategy have been by the stakeholders of the target area as the most appropriate to tackle the needs and challenges as identified in the Programme;
- the involvement of the decision-making level at an early stage (presentation and endorsement of the EGTC GO strategic Plan to Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region President and Republic of Slovenia President on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Joint Declaration signed by Italian and Slovenian Government on May 27<sup>th</sup>) ensures the sustainability of the outcomes of the ITI;
- there is a clear link between the proposed pilot actions and a number of strategic operations of the past Italy–Slovenia programming period 2007–2013, whose achievements have demonstrated to be successful and worth to be capitalized for furthering impacts;
- the results achieved will unfold their impacts beyond the target area as the outputs of the actions are envisaged as replicable in other parts of the Programme area;

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- the capitalization of the experiences and outcomes of previous Italy–Slovenia Programmes ensures highest efficiency and effectiveness of public investments;
- the revitalization of the “border based” economy while supporting its reconversion by use of identified strengths and assets;
- the improvement of the quality of life of residents of the area by fostering the use of joint cross border services.

### **Capacity of networking**

Networking capacity is fundamental to implement an effective participative local governance. In this sense, the creation of a sole beneficiary has proven useful for networking on local and regional level, on national level and on European level.

The networking on local and regional level takes place regularly, firstly because the wide spectrum of local and regional actors works on commonly chosen topics, secondly because there are common infrastructural investments.

The EGTC GO both on the Slovenian and Italian side, is highly recognized and often included into project partnerships, studies, seminars. There were a lot of delegations visiting the area of the three municipalities, the EGTC GO hosted a number of delegations examining the operation model, good practices, and challenges of such close institutional cooperation. On the other hand, the EGTC-GO representatives have participated in more than 10 national and international conferences, seminars, presenting both projects and the concept of EGTC and sole beneficiary.

EGTC GO and its projects have had visibility in local and regional media (especially in Italian media).

Networking on national level takes place when required by administrative and legislative competences. Ministries have been involved in the set-up of the EGTC and are involved in the implementation of the projects on single health-related topics (Ministries of Health and of Culture). National level is widely involved on the Slovene side, while on Italian side, decision-making processes for Healthcare and Social Affairs are delegated to the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region.

The EGTC and sole beneficiary concept can be a really useful tool for overcoming administrative barriers in cross-border areas, for preparing and implementing shared ideas, projects and strategies.

For the management of ITI EGTC interventions, the EGTC GO, as intermediate body (IB), complies with the provisions of EC Regulations as well as of the Interreg V Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020 Programme and its

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related implementation documents, and not least the Agreement signed in 2016 by the IB with the Interreg V Italy-Slovenia Managing Authority (MA).

The EGTC GO has the following organizational structure: a Director and the Permanent Secretariat; the IB Office; the permanent project management office. In order to clearly define the responsibilities and the flow of information and data, the EGTC has its own Management and Control system, available on the EGTC GO website. The document sets the rules for the EGTC internal organization and covers topics such as:

- Selection and evaluation procedure
- Procedure for the processing of requests for reimbursement by the beneficiaries and for authorization and execution of payments to the beneficiaries
- Procedures for checking operations and Refund procedures
- Procedures for submitting the declaration of expenditure to the certification authority
- Procedures for reporting and correcting irregularities and recoveries
- Collection and storage of electronic data for all operations
- Statement of assurance and annual summary of checks
- Assistance to the Monitoring and Editing Committee Annual and final implementation reports
- Transmission of information to the Audit Authority
- Procedures relating to effective procedures for examining complaints concerning the ESIF
- Risk Management procedures and prevention of fraud.

The IB Office is set up by 2 staff units. **The IB has played an important role in the selection and assessment of ITI projects, as well as in their management and monitoring.** Its functions are clearly foreseen in the Agreement signed by EGTC GO with the Programme MA and described in the system description (SIGECO/Management and Control System).

**The EGTC and sole beneficiary approach has enabled regular daily communication and very operational and clear cooperation.** The contacts with the MA are regular both on daily basis as occasionally in meetings. The necessary legal bases are prepared together. Communication flows are smooth thanks to continuity in staff composition.

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**The EGTC has been proving to be an institution providing a solid framework for cooperation and as such is well suited for the development and implementation of a wide variety of projects and policies,** covering all sectors of interventions of its partners. In the case of the EGTC GO cross-sectoral cooperation is most evident when designing projects in the field of mobility, tourism, strategic spatial planning, creative industries, and culture.

The project “HEALTH - Construction of a network of cross-border health services”<sup>6</sup> aimed at improving the use and the performance of social-health services within the cross-border territory of the EGTC GO, through a work of integration between the services and health facilities involved in the project. The project contemplated the constitution of a network made up of excellences from both territories, considering the needs of the citizens and the necessity to renew the programming of the services in order to have an efficient system that will ensure the universal right to healthcare. The project included the establishment of three cross-border medical teams in the field of **mental health, autism and physiological pregnancy** and the creation of a **single center for the booking of social and health services** shared by Italian and Slovenian health facilities. The project contemplated also some solutions for the inclusion of **disadvantaged groups** in order to integrate social assistance services. The project has been developed with the collaboration of the Slovenian Ministry of Health and the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The goal of the second project, “Isonzo/Soča”<sup>7</sup> was the conservation, protection, recovery and development of the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area along the Isonzo-Soča river, as a homogeneous tourist-recreational destination. The Isonzo-Soča project aimed at “giving back” the river to the cities, encouraging the citizens to take advantage of the territory crossed by the river. This goal has been reached through a series of works that increased the value of the area by improving its accessibility. These works also increased the number of tourists by making the area more suitable for tourism purposes. The Isonzo-Soča project included the construction of a cross-border network of walking and cycling routes that constituted a cross-border urban park; this park improved the sustainable mobility of the inhabitants of the area. Consequently, the area also has become more attractive for citizens and tourists and this positively affected the economy of the area. Furthermore, a communication campaign promoted and identified the territory as a new touristic destination. Specifically, the project aimed to the construction, in the territories of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, of a cross-border network of cycle and pedestrian paths along the Isonzo river and along the State Border that connects Salcano to Šempeter-

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<sup>6</sup> Project HEALTH - Construction of a network of cross-border health services. More information: <https://euro-go.eu/en/programmi-e-progetti/progetti-iti-salute-zdravstvo/>

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Vrtojba. By 2021 substantial infrastructure works were completed, which improved the usability of the area and increased its attractiveness for citizens and tourists.

## 3.2 Poland

### 3.2.1 ITI unions

For the implementation of ITI in Poland, the following ex-ante conditions of obtaining financing were defined: is particularly the establishment of an ITI union and the development of an ITI strategy. ITI unions develop institutionalized partnerships of ITI implementing entities. Pursuant to Article 7(4) of the ERDF Regulation, the ITI union shall be responsible for tasks relating, at least, to the selection of operations for the implementation. This permits “/.../ the managing authorities to delegate the implementation of parts of different priority axes to one body (a local authority) to ensure that investments are undertaken in a complementary manner”. It means that the member state or the managing authorities (MA) of an OP may designate one or more intermediate bodies (IBs) (local authorities, regional development bodies, NGOs) to carry out the management and implementation of an ITI (Article 36 of the General Regulation). The ITI strategy is an intersectoral territorial strategy mentioned in Article 7 of the ERDF regulation and Article 12 of the ESF regulation. Pursuant to Article 7 of the regulation of the ERDF, the strategy specifies integrated activities for the purpose of liquidation of demographic, social, environmental, and climatic problems occurring in urban areas. It should be based on development needs and result from territorial and demographic analyses. It has to be coherent with the development objectives of the country and region. ITI strategies aim at linking the TOs specified in the Partnership Agreement or other territorial arrangements and provisions of regional/national OPs with the territorial dimension.

The ITI instrument supports FUAs in several countries, including Poland. An ITI is aimed at the territorialization of interventions and strengthening cooperation between local government units (LGU) in the implementation of the Cohesion Policy. Due to this, it is of key importance to designate areas of intervention and establish inter-municipal cooperation. The decision on the involvement of Poland in ITI implementation was taken in 2012. The Ministry of Regional Development (institution responsible for the implemented tool) passed a decision that ITIs will be implemented obligatorily in FUAs of voivodeship capitals (FUAs of VCs), and complementarily in FUAs of regional and subregional centres – depending on separate decisions of voivodeship authorities (Principles of accommodating..., January 2013). In the scope of preparatory works, several necessary activities were performed, resulting in: firstly, the delimitation of FUAs of voivodeship centres as a precondition for the establishment of LGU partnership, and development of the ITI strategy; secondly, preparation of ministry detailed guidelines describing the rules of ITI



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implementation in Poland (Principles for the implementation... July 2013); and thirdly, undertaking efforts for the purpose of preparation of a Partnership Agreement (PA) including the rules of ITI implementation and the act that would determine standards and regulate procedures of implementation of the Cohesion Policy, including ITI tools (they both came into force in 2014). The provisions of the Partnership Agreement (2014) were transferred to the system of national legislature in the so-called implementation act.

In practice, ITIs are implemented in 26 FUAs in Poland. These include 17 FUAs of voivodeship centres (due to the contiguity of the functional areas of Bydgoszcz and Toruń, a common ITI was established) and 9 implemented in the FUAs of regional centres (FUAs of RCs) or subregional centres (FUAs of SCs).

Financing of ITIs occurs through projects implemented in the scope of 16 ROPs and national OPs: Infrastructure and Environment 2014–2020, Eastern Poland 2014–2020 (5 voivodeships of Eastern Poland: Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie, and Warmińsko-Mazurskie), to a low degree in the scope of the OP Technical Assistance 2014–2020. ITIs are implemented through designated measures or sub measures in the scope of at least two priority axes of the regional operational programme (ROP) financed from two structural funds. In the case of Poland, they are the ERDF and ESF. Projects implemented in the scope of an ITI focus around eight directions of intervention and combine eight TOs. The highest number of directions is combined in TO8.

Conditions of ITI implementation include: 1) the establishment of an ITI union; 2) the preparation of an ITI strategy and a positive opinion on it given by: a) the MA of a regional operational programme (MA ROP) within the possibilities of ITI financing under this programme, b) the minister in charge of regional development in accordance with the partnership agreement and the possibilities of financing projects from national OPs, if stipulated by the ITI strategy; 3) concluding an arrangement or agreement concerning ITI implementation between an ITI union and the relevant governing institution of ROP, particularly including the scope of entrusted tasks, covering at least the participation of the ITI union in the selection of projects for financing by the relevant governing institution of ROP and cooperation with MA in the preparation of criteria of selection of projects for designated measures or sub measures for ITI implementation.

The implemented projects are selected in 2 modes: a) open call for proposals – the projects are chosen by the ITI union based on the rules arranged with MA ROP and included in the ITI strategy; b) restricted call for proposals – it is obligatory to enter projects in the ITI strategy in the form of a list of strategic projects. Moreover, in order to emphasize the complementary character of the project, its relations with other projects should be presented.

The ITI union can take form of an arrangement of self-governments, an association, or intercommunal union. The ITI strategy specifies in particular: 1) the diagnosis of the area of implementation of an ITI

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together with the analysis of developmental problems; 2) objectives to be implemented in the scope of an ITI, expected results and result and product indicators related to the implementation of the ROP; 3) proposals of project selection criteria in the course of an open call for proposals; 4) a preliminary list of projects selected in the restricted call for proposals together with information on the way of their designation and linking to other projects, including those selected in the restricted call for proposals subject to positive opinions by the governing institution of the national OP; 5) sources of its financing; 6) conditions and procedures binding in the implementation of the ITI strategy (Article 30, point 8 of the Implementation Act). The legal basis of the ITI strategy is provided by the decision of the management board of an ITI union. The strategy and its amendments are prepared in cooperation with the relevant MA ROP and passed by the ITI union in the form of a resolution. The ITI strategy designates areas included in the composition of FUAs in which support is to be implemented. Therefore, the most important issue at the first stage of ITI implementation was the delimitation of the support area, i.e. the determination of FUA boundaries.

The scope of competences of the ITI union as IB took three forms beginning with: 1) the identification of strategic projects (two ITI unions currently function in this form – Szczecin and Białystok), through 2) conducting recruitment, selection of projects in the ITI union/assessment of projects (22 ITI unions), 3) the performance of a complete procedure of an open call for proposals for the MA (Opole and Wałbrzych). From the perspective of building governance competences, taking full responsibility, also in the financial dimension, for ITI implementation seems to be of key importance.

The management of functional areas implemented by ITI unions has considerable consequences for the territorialization of interventions. The ITI union overtakes the tasks related to the implementation of the national or ROP which have been so far the responsibility of regional authorities, which means that regions cease to be the only entities and partners for the government regional policy. This, however, generates certain challenges for the future. ITI implementation requires efficiency and cooperation of institutions responsible for the governance and implementation of particular OPs. Due to this, ITI unions should have powers broader than just the designation of strategic projects. Having the competence of MA for conducting the full procedure of open call for proposals, ITI unions could contribute to the development of FUAs in a more efficient and responsible way.

The most important aspect of the functioning of ITI unions seems to be the cooperation of cities/communes of the functional area exceeding the barriers of administrative borders in programming the functional development of an urban area and its governance, including the organization of many governing functions covering an urban complex as a functional area. Considering that the binding provisions of ministry documents provided self-governments with the possibility of the establishment of

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partnerships and the governance of financial resources on a voluntary basis and many cities and communes took advantage of it, it should be highlighted that ITIs support (with more or less success) the promotion of the partnership model of cooperation between different administrative units at FUAs in the management of EU funds. ITIs ‘forced’ the majority of LGUs out of the sphere of declarations and arrangements (usually with no practical consequences), and ‘moved’ them to the sphere of specific activities. Because ITI has become a ‘laboratory’ of intercommunal cooperation, in the future programming period, the existing FUAs in their current boundaries should be the base on which the intervention concentrates. New ministry guidelines and legal acts should grant ITI unions powers to decide on who should or should not participate. The maintenance of flexibility of activities in the scope, without imposing artificial boundaries of the area of intervention, seems to be of key importance in the scope of governance of ITI implementation in the future.

In the majority of cases, the establishment of ITI unions was based on two models of territorial governance in the ITI implementation, namely: 1) the ‘interim’ model, usually taking form of an arrangement, in which an LGU established an ITI union for the purpose of expending allocations from a ROP (OP IE and OP EP); 2) the ‘cooperation’ model, where the ITI union is a natural continuation of previously commenced cooperation; usually taking form of an association. It is difficult to determine which of the models proves more effective, but considering the current contracting of ITIs under ROPs, ITI unions functioning in the form of associations show better results. Due to the experience of unions gained in current cooperation, it is desirable to offer freedom in the scope of formalization of partnerships in the new programming period, whereas it should be possible to change the legal form of partnership based on request of the interested ITI union throughout the period of the tool implementation.

The most important feature of using the ITI mechanism in Poland is focusing on functional areas that involve collaboration between the core city/cities and nearby areas. Such an approach is particularly useful for this country, especially since the traditions of inter-municipal cooperation are reduced and local authorities are not stimulated to jointly address the problems that need to be solved.

The local geological conditions as well as the mining situation in Poland were investigated in the context of using ITI mechanism and of needing to fulfil the sustainable development goals within 2030 Agenda. It was concluded, the use of ITI could be extremely beneficial for heavily industrialized and urbanized areas affected by mining, especially since underground mining has generated a lot of degraded areas. In addition, revitalizing devastated areas and transforming them into investment areas requires compliance with certain procedures. Funding through the ITI mechanism should be conditioned by the involvement of experts in the field of building in mining areas with soil deformations.

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The impact of using ITI mechanism between the municipalities within Białystok functional area in Poland shows that joint activities do not end when EU projects are completed, but they stimulate the development of new partnerships, especially in the field of electricity and combating natural disasters. Moreover, the cooperation of different entities can be considered and presented as an example of good practice at national and European level.

Considering the use of the ITI instrument not only from the financial perspective within the cohesion policy, but also from the political one while promoting a way of governance between urban and rural territory showed the following: The use of ITI mechanism in Poland led to institutionalizing cooperation between towns and surrounding areas, as well as to strengthening the governance capacity of the rural-urban area because the needs of the two categories of areas were taken into account during the negotiations. However, although the two had the same decision-making power and enjoyed an equal distribution of funds, the towns proved to be stronger in the negotiations. Moreover, it was found that the ITI was closely related to the ROP, especially since it is a sub-section of it. Another positive aspect is that towns have understood the importance of cooperation and integration, assuming responsibility for their development. Nonetheless, in certain areas the institutionalization of cooperation gave greater power to the capital cities while the governance capacity and the integrated approach were subject to political interests.

### 3.2.2 ITI from the point of view of City of Zabrze

ITIs first appeared in the legislation introduced by the EC for the 2014–2020 financial framework. This instrument enables partnerships between LGUs, cities, and functionally connected areas (a city and municipalities within its influence) to carry out joint initiatives funded by the ERDF and the European Social Fund (ESF).

In Poland, ITI initiatives are implemented under the ROP of the Silesian Voivodeship (RPO WSL) for 2014–2020. They are regulated by Agreement No. 12/RR/2015, signed on March 17, 2015, between the Board of the Silesian Voivodeship (MA of RPO WSL) and the Association of Municipalities and Counties of the Central Subregion of the Silesian Voivodeship (ITI IB).

The Board of the Voivodeship is responsible for managing the regional programme. The practical implementation is handled by a unit within the Marshal's Office, designated as the MA. This unit ensures efficient and correct implementation of the programme, issuing guidelines and recommendations and conducting promotional and informational activities.

ITI implementation in Poland aims to:

- Promote a partnership model of cooperation among administrative units in urban functional areas.

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- Increase intervention efficiency through integrated projects addressing urban and related areas' needs and challenges comprehensively.
- Strengthen the influence of cities and functional areas on actions supported within their territories under cohesion policy.

The ITI IB is the Association of Municipalities and Counties of the Central Subregion of the Silesian Voivodeship, an autonomous association supporting local self-governance, protecting common interests, sharing experiences, and executing joint projects.

Key responsibilities of ITI Coordinators include:

- Supporting the Association's Board Members in proposing positions and resolutions.
- Coordinating activities of municipal offices engaged in ITI implementation.
- Collaborating with other ITI coordinators in project preparation and implementation.
- Reporting, evaluating, and monitoring ITI strategy implementation.

As for the monitoring system used: Monitoring is governed by Agreement No. 12/RR/2015, which assigns responsibility to the Association for delivering annual, interim, and final progress indicators related to ITI activities.

The monitoring system covers the full project cycle - it spans from project application submission, evaluation, contract signing, reporting to payment processing.

Duration of procedures from application to grant agreement are tracked - timelines align with the annual call schedules. Measures are taken to streamline processes for efficiency.

Main conclusions from the 2014-2020 financial period: Key successes include fostering partnerships between LGUs, creating shared strategies, and achieving programme goals through participatory methods. Challenges were addressed in a flexible way to optimize EU fund utilization.

Changes made in administrative structures and implementation processes for the financial period 2021-2027: In 2014–2020, projects were evaluated for consistency with the supra-local strategy. This requirement was removed in the 2021–2027 period.

### 3.3 Romania – ITI in Danube Delta

ITI mechanisms are implemented in 20 EU countries, using different thematic, geographic, financial, and organizational approaches. 14 countries use ITIs to achieve sustainable urban development. In Poland, the

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Czech Republic and Slovakia the mechanism supports FUAs while in Belgium and Germany it is only applied in some selected regions. Spain, **Romania, and Portugal implement the mechanism in their coastal areas** while in Finland, ITI supports the development and implementation of the Six City Strategy. More than that, the number of established ITI territories varies among EU Member States. In Romania there is only one ITI territory — the Danube Delta, while the Czech Republic created seven ITI territories.

In Romania, the ITI instrument has been applied to the territory of ITI Danube Delta which brings together seven rural administrative units and one urban area in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, urban and rural administrative-territorial units partially located on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve territory from Tulcea and Constanța counties, as well as one town and eight communes located in the vicinity of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Located in the eastern part of Romania and at the south-eastern extremity of Ukraine, the Danube Delta (the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve) is the largest natural delta on the European continent as well as one of the largest worldwide. The Danube Delta could be considered one of the least populated areas with a temperate climate in Europe while the Danube sector is the only fluvial sector completely included in a biosphere reserve. This area has a special nature because there are 32 localities/municipalities on its territory, of which 25 are located inside the reservation. The population of this area totals approximately 27,000 inhabitants and over 20% of them are found in the only locality with city status called Sulina.

The basic characteristics of ITI, such as the possibility of financing from several OPs and of encouraging the cooperation of local actors, could be seen as advantages for the Romanian territory, but also as challenges for the successful implementation of this tool in Romania.

The Danube Delta ITI instrument was created to ensure sustainable economic development, with an emphasis on tourism and agricultural activities, while contributing to improving the quality of life and protecting the environment. All these aspects require the presence of an institutional and management entity to effectively coordinate the entire process related to the implementation of ITI. This organization, which has the role of IB for the implementation of ITI, is called the Danube Delta ITI Intercommunity Development Association. It aims to promote the funding mechanism and to provide help to beneficiaries in order to obtain as many funds as possible.

The implementation area of the Danube Delta ITI mechanism refers to the territory of 38 administrative units: the city of Tulcea, 4 small-medium towns (Babadag, Isaccea, Măcin and Sulina), 29 municipalities in Tulcea county (this county contains 46 municipalities) and 4 municipalities (Corbu, Istria, Mihai Viteazu and Săcele) within Constanta County.

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Organizations involved in the implementation of the ITI Danube Delta mechanism are: the **Intercommunity Development Association (IDA)** — **ITI Danube Delta**, the South-East Regional Development Agency, the eight Management Authorities for each Programme as part of ITI mechanism — the MA ROP, the MA for National Rural Development Programme, the MA for Large Infrastructure OP, the MA for Human Capital OP, the MA for Competitiveness OP, the MA for Administrative Capacity OP, the MA for Fishing and Maritime Affairs OP, the Functional Working Group within the Ministry of European Funds, and to the seven Intermediate Bodies for each programme.

Beneficiaries of the programme included: local public administrations within the ITI Danube Delta territory, the public institutions within the territory, the two County Councils (Tulcea and Constanța) involved in the mechanism and private firms.

ITI in Romania, implemented to the territory of ITI Danube Delta in the 2014-2020 programming period, showed a remarkable impact: problems of the rural areas within the same territory were successfully solved by means of the instrument. In this sense, the country can be cited as an example of good practice in the utilization of funds for integrated territorial development, using the full potential of the instruments.

Due to the allocated financing of 1,12 billion € for developing the communities in this territory, the ITI Danube Delta was the greatest investment project in Romania in the previous programming period. In this regard, the Danube Delta ITI mechanism, which includes local and county authorities from Constanța and Tulcea, managed to submit 1.743 projects worth 1,43 billion €. Out of these, 996 projects with a total value of 865,5 million € were contracted. More precisely, more than 77 % of the total funds allocated by the EU for this region were contracted. Among the projects receiving funding are the following: construction of the bridge over the Danube between Brăila and Tulcea, modernization of the Port of Tulcea, modernization of the "Danube Delta" Airport and rehabilitation of some county roads in Constanța where serious road accidents frequently occur.

The implementation of this tool during the period 2014-2020 was also marked by unpleasant events. Thus, the way of using the funds allocated through this mechanism was the subject of investigations by the Anti-Fraud Office of the EU. Moreover, the EC asked the authorities in Romania to open an investigation, while the management authorities were asked to carry out checks and the Court of Auditors to carry out an audit. Furthermore, it was mentioned that Romania had delays in implementing the programmes for protecting and preserving the environment, and in case of identifying irregularities in spending EU money, the amounts considered non-compliant would be withdrawn. Later, after the last audit of the EC, the payments to the Danube Delta ITI Association were unblocked and the projects continued to be implemented.

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Considering the above, especially the level of the allocated funds and investments, this mechanism could be considered a great opportunity for the Danube Delta area, while the absorption rate of ITI funds was significant in the 2014-2020 programming period.

The implementation of ITI Danube Delta contributed significantly to the development of the area despite the barriers that appeared along the way related to accessing financing and implementing the mechanism. Moreover, the implementation of the instrument allowed strengthening the development and increasing the social role of the actors involved, as well as improving their capacity to operate, to use and manage financial resources efficiently. A climate of trust was also created between the authorities responsible for implementing the funds and the beneficiaries.

Due to the success recorded in its first financial exercise during 2014-2021, the ITI mechanism continues in the current programming period 2021-2027 to complete the actions for achieving the objectives set in the Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Danube Delta.

### 3.4 ITI in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic used the **ITI** for the development of the urban regions (areas) in 2014–2020. It also benefited from the **Integrated Area Development Plan** (IADP, *Integrovaný plán rozvoje území, IPRÚ*) as a specific Czech tool, assigned to the urban areas of regional importance. The framework document guiding activities in urban development and responding to the EU urban policy is a conceptual document called *Principles of the Urban Policy*. The basis for the application of the integrating tools mentioned above is a functional partnership between cities and neighbouring villages. Urban development is affected by processes going outside the limits of cities, in their hinterlands; and many processes taking place in cities are important to municipalities in the hinterland.

In the Czech Republic, 7 cities were responsible for the implementation of ITIs in the funding period 2014-2020, 7 Intermediate Bodies were in place. In the period 2021-2027, already 13 metropolitan and urban regions are currently installed for the implementation of the ITI. ITI mechanism is applied to utilize integrated approaches in the use of public support to enhance sustainable territorial development. These new territorial units have been specifically established to implement ITI, they do not have any legal status and decision-making powers in terms of territorial governance.

Permanent conferences: Czech Republic has created a platform for collaboration.

**The National Permanent Conference** contributes to ensuring the interdependence and coordination of the State and regions (territorial partners) in the implementation of the territorial dimension and the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and programmes co-financed by EU funds. The Conference



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is composed of three chambers: the Regional Chamber, the ITI Chamber and the CLLD Chamber. This a conference that brings together ministries and different territorial partners around a table to discuss regional development issues, the implementation of the territorial dimension and the implementation of the Partnership Agreement - the key document that allows the use of EU funds. The main aims of the National Permanent Conference can be summarized as follows:

- Connects territorial partners
- Contributes to the coordination of national and regional policy
- Helps to implement the territorial dimension effectively
- Strengthens cooperation across regions
- Contributes to the effective absorption of EU funds
- Opens up issues of effective regional policy setting

**The Regional Permanent Conferences** meet in the 13 ITI-related regions (formerly 7), bringing together partners from the region to discuss key issues for the region's development. The respective secretariats are responsible for the functioning of these conferences in the regions. They meet regularly together with the Ministry of Regional Development and are, among others, members of the National Permanent Conference.

The main tasks of the Regional Permanent Conference include:

- Discussion and recommendation of the territorial and thematic focus of calls and the alignment of their timetable and discusses proposals submitted by its members aimed at the fulfilment of the territorial dimension, which it then communicates through its representative in the National Permanent Conference.
- Preparation (through the National Permanent Conference and the Ministry of Regional Development) of documents for decision-making and management at the level of the managing authorities on the basis of their request, coordination of activities within its territory and annual submission of the Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Regional Action Plan.
- Establishment of working groups for the key thematic areas of the region. The members of the working groups are important actors from LGUs, business entities, regional or non-profit organizations focused on activities in the given thematic area.

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Example of implementation: Brno Metropolitan Area is relatively new territorial entity in the Czech Republic. It has been established in 2013 for the purpose of the implementation of ITI of the EU Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020 and with small adaptations continues to be used also in 2021-2027. Brno Metropolitan Area is composed of 184 municipalities covering area of 1.978 km<sup>2</sup>. From the total population of 700.000 inhabitants, 381.000 concentrate in the city of Brno, which is the second largest city in country. Municipalities in the metropolitan area are diverse in terms of their population size, economy and natural environment.

Brno Metropolitan Area covers the territory of nearly two-hundreds of municipalities, each with its own elected local governments, and is a subset of an administrative region represented by elected regional government. Without any legal status of metropolitan area in the terms of own powers and competences over territorial government, the implementation of ITI is entrusted to the municipal authority of the core city of Brno. The ITI implementation is managed by the office of the ITI manager, politically guided by the ITI Steering Committee composed of key stakeholders from metropolitan region and framed by the Integrated development strategy of the Brno Metropolitan Area.

The position of metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic is still fragile as they do not have any legal status and decision-making powers in terms of territorial governance. Their reflection in national decision-making varies and is not fully appreciated as one of the key aspects of territorial dimension of public policies. Metropolitan areas and urban regions shall be commonly understood as fundamental units of territorial development of the state and as autonomous self-standing areas that sustain economic, social and cultural life and promote technological and social advancements through innovations.

The current participation in metropolitan governance, planning and cooperation is primarily driven and motivated by the availability of the EU Cohesion Policy finance provided through the ITI instrument. In national policies, there are currently no instruments and mechanisms (apart from ITI) that would encourage and frame metropolitan cooperation, planning and governance. There is risk, that with the change in the Cohesion Policy instruments, the political support for these territorial entities may fade away. The main challenge is to learn and establish the metropolitan governance, planning and cooperation as a normal practice which does not depend only on the Cohesion Policy impulses and external frame.

Recommendations for the system of metropolitan areas go far beyond the implementation of ITI and underline the challenges of this setting:

- Up to now, the metropolitan governance and cooperation has been primarily top-down policy driven. The key challenge is to strengthen and empower the institutional framework for local

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bottom-up initiatives and enhance the metropolitan leadership to address key metropolitan issues, trends and challenges.

- Establish and retain metropolitan areas (and urban regions of non-metropolitan cities) as the key territories for the territorial dimension of national and EU public policies. Enhance coordination of metropolitan dimension in national regional, urban, and spatial planning policy.
- Develop mechanisms of bottom-up metropolitan cooperation to promote complex metropolitan agenda capable to fulfil local, national and EU goals. Negotiate, define, approve, and finance development objectives beyond the frame of ITI and the incentives coming from the EU Cohesion Policy.
- Enhance the metropolitan governance and cooperation as self-standing, autonomous, and independent from the EU Cohesion Policy. Establish a new legal framework for metropolitan governance based in active involvement and responsibilities of bottom-up metropolitan actors. Articulate the role of metropolitan leadership. Find arrangements towards common metropolitan fund to fulfil the metropolitan strategic priorities by own means together with support from national and EU funds.

Analysing the characteristics of the ITI implementation in the Czech Republic as well as in the Brno metropolitan area, it was concluded that this mechanism could turn into a new dimension of strategic planning while representing a unique opportunity for metropolitan cooperation and for reducing the negative effects generated by suburbanization in some ITI areas. Moreover, the ITI strategy had an important role in developing partnerships at the mezzo-regional level and it was considered a catalyst for metropolitan cooperation. However, according to the respective analysis, the ITI mechanism generated a lot of challenges:

- Mismatching in terms of financial and thematic aspects between the activities required to be undertaken and those eligible within Czech OPs;
- Establishing ITI themes and activities after starting the debates with the partners in the metropolitan area. This led to very high expectations of the latter while the reduction of eligible activities generated distrust in the ITI mechanism;
- Detecting imperfections regarding the central monitoring and evaluation system of the ITI which lasted a long time and led to the postponement of its implementation;
- Failing to ensure a larger allocation for ITI in metropolitan areas where there is demand.

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The evaluation of ITI shows the following learnings:

- Partnership and cooperation of all stakeholders are key elements of successful implementation of planned activities and fulfilling sustainable urban development
- Balance between absorption capacity (local needs) and given possibilities (scope of suitable activities) needed
- Applicants particularly appreciated the possibility of cooperation in the preparation of the project application (individual approach) and the higher probability of obtaining funding
- Good practice: very broad and open discussion of issues and opinions by many actors. Existence of platforms where partners can meet and discuss the issues properly
- High importance of well-timed availability of methodological instructions, transparency and prompt approval and evaluation of integrated strategies

For the period 2021-2027 the following aspects were considered as highly relevant to be applied/implemented:

- Simplification of processes (esp. assessment and implementation of strategies)
- No IB at city level
- Focus on strategic projects and project preparation.

### 3.5 Structural funds management in Austria

Austria utilizes several EU Structural Funds aimed at supporting economic growth, job creation, sustainable development, and social cohesion. These funds include ERDF, European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), Just Transition Fund (JTF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The funds are allocated through specific programmes that target key goals such as regional development, employment, innovation, and environmental protection.

In the EU funding period 2014-2020, all previous “structural” EU funds were managed under the umbrella of the Common Strategic Framework (formulated in Annex 1 of REGULATION (EU) No. 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of December 17, 2013) as “ESI Funds”. The funds - EAFRD/rural development, ERDF/regional funds, ESF/social funds, EMFF/fisheries funds, CF) - were aligned with the Europe 2020 growth strategy and its core objectives and thus support the implementation of the strategy in the EU Member States. In Austria, the use and interaction of the four ESI funds (ERDF, EAFRD,

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EMFF and ESF) is coordinated as part of the “STRAT.AT 2020” partnership agreement concluded with the EC.

In the funding period 2021-2027, seven out of the eight EU funds under the EU Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) are represented in Austria. With investments of over one billion euros, the EU is providing an important impetus for regional development in Austria. In order to coordinate the funds at national level, each member state is required to draw up a partnership agreement, which forms the link between the EU framework and the individual national programmes of the various funds. The partnership agreement sets out the national contribution to the EU objectives and concrete measures to achieve the objectives, as well as the allocation of resources between the funds.

According to Article 10 of the “Umbrella Regulation” (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 24, 2021, each Member State must draw up a Partnership Agreement as a strategic and concise document. The main objective of this document is to ensure an overview of the EU fund programmes covered by “shared management” between the programme authorities and the EC. The Partnership Agreement should set out the strategic direction for programming to ensure the effective and efficient use of EU funds from the ERDF, ESF+, JTF and EMFAF. The agreement, which is based on EU priorities, defines the investment priorities that a member state can support from the various funds and programmes.

The Partnership Agreement in Austria was elaborated within the framework of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) under the leadership of the ÖROK Subcommittee REGIONAL ECONOMY and was officially submitted to the EC on July 29, 2021. All five political objectives of the “umbrella regulation” are addressed by the Austrian PA and the four programmes covered. A significant part of the EU funds is dedicated to the objective “a more social Europe”, mainly supported by the ESF+. The ERDF focuses on supporting the objectives of a “smarter”, “greener” and “more inclusive Europe” and the JTF supports the “just transition” to a climate-neutral economy. The EMFAF also contributes to the goal of a greener and CO2-free Europe.

Austria’s structure for managing EU funds involves multiple levels of governance at the national, regional and local levels. Main authorities include:

#### **a) National Level**

- **Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW):** Responsible primarily for managing the **ERDF** programmes, with a focus on promoting innovation, research and technology.

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- **Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (BMAW):** Manages the **ESF+** funds, which are allocated to support employment, social inclusion, and education.
- **Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism (BMLRT):** Responsible for managing **EAFRD** funds, which focus on rural development, agricultural projects, and environmental sustainability.
- **Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK):** This ministry is involved in implementing programmes related to climate protection, energy efficiency, and sustainable development.
- **Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG):** The FFG plays a central role in managing funds for research, development, and innovation, especially for ERDF programmes.

#### b) Regional Level

Austria is divided into nine federal states (Bundesländer), each region has specific authorities responsible for managing EU funds at the regional level. These regional bodies work in partnership with national authorities:

- **Vienna Business Agency:** Responsible for managing EU funding programmes for Vienna.
- **Regional Development Agencies:** Each federal state has a regional development agency that oversees the allocation and management of EU funds, such as **Kärnten Wirtschaftsförderung** or **Steirische Wirtschaftsförderung** in Styria.
- **Chambers of Agriculture and agricultural land offices:** These bodies are key players in the management of EAFRD funds, particularly for agricultural development and rural projects in their respective regions.

#### c) Intermediate Bodies

For certain programmes, especially **IJG/ERDF** or **ESF+**, Austria uses **intermediate bodies** or **project intermediaries**. These are typically specialized organizations or institutions that handle the day-to-day implementation of projects on behalf of national or regional authorities. They can be sector-specific or have expertise in managing public funding programmes.

#### Cooperation Between Authorities

The cooperation between different authorities in Austria is governed by the **Partnership Principle**, which ensures that all relevant stakeholders (including national, regional, and local actors) are involved in the

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planning, implementation, and evaluation of EU funding programmes. The main forms of cooperation include:

- **Monitoring Committees:** These committees are held at both the national and regional levels to bring together the relevant ministries, regional authorities, social partners (e.g. trade unions, chambers of commerce) and other key stakeholders. These meetings focus on monitoring the implementation and ensuring that the funds are being used effectively.

As an example, the Monitoring Committee of the Austrian Programme for Investment and Growth/ERDF can be stated. Voting members of the Monitoring Committee include:

one person representing each of the Länder (Land offices responsible for the programme) or regional authorities, one person representing the federal ministry responsible for the overall coordination of the EU Structural Funds, two persons representing the ÖROK Secretariat in its function as MA for the IJG/ERDF & JTF 2021-2027 programme, one person representing each of the “intermediary bodies” of the federal states, one person representing each of the “intermediate bodies” of the federal government and one person representing each of the federal ministries responsible for these bodies, one person representing the Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF), one person representing each of the economic and social partners (Federal Chamber of Labour, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Agriculture, Austrian Trade Union Federation, Federation of Austrian Industrialists), one person each representing the Austrian Association of Municipalities and the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns as the national representative of local and municipal authorities and as the representative of the largest cities and urban areas in Austria, one person representing each of the national authorities or bodies responsible for the cross-cutting principles set out in Article 9 of the CPR (respect for fundamental rights, equality between women and men, anti-discrimination, sustainable development), one person representing the federal agency responsible for the coordination of science policy (in particular in the areas of universities and research institutions), one person representing the local action groups pursuant to Article 33 of the Umbrella Regulation, one person representing each of the non-governmental organizations/bodies concerned with issues of social inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination, one person representing an NGO umbrella organization concerned with environmental issues. The members may each include a maximum of one other person with specialist expertise. These persons must obey the confidential nature of the meetings.

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In addition to the voting members, persons representing the following institutions may participate in the meetings of the IJG/ERDF Monitoring Committee as Advisory Experts:

EC: In any case, it is represented by at least one person representing the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. Persons representing other relevant Directorates-General may also participate in the meetings of the Monitoring Committee. One person representing the “audit authority”, one person representing the intermediary body for the electronic monitoring system, one person representing the MA of the ESF+ Employment & JTF programme, one person representing the MA of the ESF+ programme to combat material deprivation, one person representing the MA of the EAFRD 2023-2027 programme and the MA of the MA of the EMFAF programme 2021-2027, one person representing the ÖROK Secretariat as a coordination and interface point to for the institutions covered by the Partnership Agreement , one person representing the Federal Chancellery (BKA) in its function of summarizing the summarizing the handling of European structural policy matters.

The Monitoring Committee meets at least once per calendar year during the programme period. The meetings usually take place alternately in one of the federal states participating in the IJG/ERDF & JTF 2021-2027 programme.

The Monitoring Committee may set up **working groups** to deal with specific issues requiring special consultation. The rules of procedure of the Monitoring Committee apply mutatis mutandis to working groups; the Monitoring Committee decides on their composition. The results of these working groups must be submitted to the MA and reported to the monitoring committee.

- **Managing Authorities and Certifying Bodies:** In Austria, there is a clear distinction between **Managing Authorities**, which oversee fund distribution and programme implementation, and **Certifying Bodies**, which ensure compliance with EU regulations and verify that the funds are being used properly. The **Austrian Control Bank plays** a central role in auditing and controlling EU fund usage.
- **Cross-Border and Transnational Cooperation:** Austria is also part of several **Interreg** programmes, which involve cross-border cooperation between Austria and neighbouring countries (e.g. Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic), transnational cooperation programmes and EU-wide programmes. These cooperations aim to address common challenges in areas like regional development, innovation, urban mobility, education, culture and environmental sustainability.

### **Programme-Specific Responsibilities**



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Each of the EU Structural Funds has its own OP and MA:

- **ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)**

The Austrian Conference for Spatial Planning/ÖROK as the MA for the Investment for Jobs and Growth/ERDF (IJG/ERDF) & JTF programme in Austria is responsible for the overall management, implementation, evaluation and accounting of the programme. The tasks of actual funding implementation are delegated to 14 funding bodies, and the MA also assumes a control function for these delegated tasks.

The audit authority is responsible for the system audit of the entire IJG/ERDF & JTF programme implementation structure, as well as for a random audit of approved projects (second level control). The financial control for ERDF programmes in Austria is located in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BMLRT).

The IJG/ERDF & JTF programme is implemented by 3 federal funding agencies and 11 state funding agencies. They advise potential beneficiaries, decide on the approval and rejection of funding applications, support beneficiaries during the project phase and are responsible for the control of project expenditures.

- **ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus)**

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (BMAW) is responsible for the management of the ESF+, which funds projects aimed at improving employment, social inclusion, education, and skills development. The Regional Employment Services (AMS) also play a significant role in implementing ESF+ projects.

- **EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)**

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BMLRT) is responsible for implementing the EAFRD, supporting agricultural projects, rural development initiatives, and environmental sustainability measures. Agricultural chambers and other regional entities are also involved in this process.

- **JTF (Just Transition Fund)**

The JTF is aimed at supporting regions and sectors undergoing a transition to a carbon-neutral economy. The Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) coordinates this programme in collaboration with regional governments,

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especially in regions that face particular economic challenges due to the transition to green energy.

The strategies for implementing EU funds in Austria are laid out in the respective **EU Cohesion Policy Programmes** (e.g. OP Investment for Jobs and Growth/ERDF, ESF+) which define the priorities and goals for each funding period (e.g. 2021-2027). These OPs are commonly prepared by the relevant ministries in cooperation with the regional governments, economic and social partners. They set out the specific actions, funding priorities and objectives for each programme.

### 3.6 Lithuania – Zarasai district

The following planning and spatial planning documents and legal acts applicable to the area of implementation of the ITI programme for the Utena region was taken into account in the development of the ITI programme for the Utena region:

- the OP for the Investment of the EU Funds for the period 2014-2020, approved by the EC by Decision C (2014) 6397 of 8 September 2014, Section 4 "Description of the Integrated Territorial Development", Priorities 7 and 8 "Promoting quality employment and participation in the labour market", and "Enhancing Social Inclusion and Fight against Poverty";
- the General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania, approved by the Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania No IX-1154 of 29 October 2002 "On the General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania;
- National Progress Programme 2014-2020, approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania by Resolution No 1482 of 28 November 2012 "On Approval of the National Progress Programme 2014-2020;
- Provisions of the Interinstitutional Operational Plan of the Horizontal Priority "Regional Development" of the National Progress Programme 2014-2020, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 172 of 19 February 2014 "On the approval of the Interinstitutional Operational Plan of the Horizontal Priority "Regional Development" of the National Progress Programme 2014-2020": Objective "Enhancing territorial cohesion in the regions"; task "to address the problems specific to the target areas/residential areas by increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the place of residence and promoting economic growth";

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- Utena County Territory General (Master) Plan, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 1318 of 2 November 2011 "On Approval of the Utena County Territory General (Master) Plan";
- Guidelines for the preparation and implementation of Integrated Territorial Development Programmes, approved by the Order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 July 2014 No.1V-480 "On the Approval of the Guidelines for the Preparation and Implementation of Integrated Territorial Development Programmes".

**Programme bodies and functions, responsibilities, capacities in place:** The institutions and their functions, responsibilities and capacities are established by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 528 of 4 June 20214 "On the allocation of responsibilities and functions between the institutions in the implementation of the OP for the Investment of the Structural Funds of the EU for the 2014-2020 period" <sup>8</sup>.

**Coordination structure at national and regional level:** The implementation of the ITI projects at the national level was coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania,

At regional level - Regional development council of Utena region, at the municipal level – Zarasai district municipal council, Implementing body - Central Project Management Agency.

**Monitoring System in use:** The monitoring system is carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation and Implementation of Integrated Territorial Development Programmes, approved by the Order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 July 2014 No.1V-480 "On the Approval of the Guidelines for the Preparation and Implementation of the Integrated Territorial Development Programmes". The municipal administration implementing the actions of the programme during the reporting period, together with the other implementers of the actions of the programme, in consultation with the Ministry of the Interior, prepare, present to the municipal council and submit to the Ministry of the Interior by 1 March each year information on the implementation of the programme for large cities, small and medium-sized towns in the forms approved by the Ministry of the Interior. The last information on the implementation of the programme is drawn up after the end of the calendar year in which the implementation of the last action under the programme has been completed, but no later than 2024.

The complete project cycle is included in the Monitoring System. To coordinate the implementation of the ITI projects, i.e. The Ministry of the Interior shall set up a working group for the coordination of the

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<sup>8</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/d306c1e0f54911e3b62ec716086f051f>

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implementation of the programme, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of the Interior (two members), representatives of other ministries involved in the implementation of the programme (one member each), representatives delegated by the municipal councils implementing the programme (one member per municipality in the programme coordination working groups for small and medium-sized towns and three members per municipality in the programme coordination working groups for large towns), and a representative of the relevant regional development council.

ITI projects are also included in the relevant regional development plan and the municipality's strategic documents, so monitoring is carried out from the time the project is included in the ITAP until the end of project implementation.

The duration of procedures is monitored from application to co-financing contract: Each project has deadlines for the implementation of activities. The Financing Guidelines include penalties for delays in project implementation. If the duration of the project extends by more than 50% during the implementation of the project activities, the co-financing share of the public budget allocated to the project will be reduced by 5 percentage points, and every effort will be made to ensure that projects are implemented on time.

**Main learnings** from the funding period 2014-2020: Experience in project implementation. With each project, the experience grows, however, funding conditions change very frequently and the high turnover of staff in the institution means that every project is challenging.

**Changes made** in view of administration structures and implementation processes for the financial period 2021-2027: Project teams are more closely structured, more attention is paid to the readiness of the project application, and special and additional attention is paid to the coordination of technical documentation.

### 3.7 Croatia – Vukovar-Srijem county

ITIs are a mechanism used for the first time in the EU in the period 2014-2020. In the programme documents for the financial period 2014-2020 it is defined that the Republic of Croatia will implement sustainable urban development measures through the mechanism of ITI within the framework of two OP - the Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion (OPKK) and the OP Effective Human Potential, from three different European funds - the ERDF, CF and ESF.

The funds of the mentioned mechanism are intended for 4 urban agglomerations with more than 100.000 inhabitants in the central settlements: Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka and Split and 3 urban areas with more than 50.000 inhabitants in the central settlements: Zadar, Slavonski Brod and Pula.

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**Programme bodies and coordination structures:**

Measures of sustainable urban development through the ITI mechanism in the Republic of Croatia are implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, the MA for the OPKK and the Coordinating Authority for the Implementation of the Mechanism of ITIs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System as the MA for the OP Effective human resources.

Funds are allocated through public calls published by the two competent Ministries and are intended to finance projects implemented in seven selected areas. Funds are allocated for different areas of investment:

- creating a more favourable environment for entrepreneurs (SC 3a2 OPKK)
- enabling the development of quality infrastructure for the development of the most important economic sectors (SC 3a2 OPKK)
- reconstruction and improvement of cultural heritage for the purpose of tourism development (SC 6c1 OPKK)
- revitalization of neglected military, industrial and other areas (SC 6e2 OPKK)
- improvement of public transport service (SC 7ii2 OPKK)
- renovation of the heating system (SC 4c3 OPKK)
- employment and self-employment measures (SC 8ii1 OPULJP)
- measures to combat poverty and social exclusion (SC 9i1 OPULJP)
- improving access to high-quality social services (SC 9iv2 OPULJP)
- improvement of the education system for adults (SC 10iii3 OPULJP)
- modernization of the offer of vocational education (SC 10iv1 OPULJP).

**Monitoring System in use:** There is a monitoring system in the entire project cycle.

**Experiences from the point of view of Vukovar-Srijem County:**

In the mentioned period 2014-2020, Vukovar-Srijem County did not participate in the preparation and implementation of projects from the mentioned programmes, since the funds were intended for urban agglomerations and larger urban areas on the territory of the Republic of Croatia. The Vukovar-Srijem

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County only participated in the role of a member in the Partnership Council of the Osijek Urban Agglomeration.

### 3.8 Coordination mechanism

Recommendations of World Bank' experts proposed within the analysis of ITI in Bulgaria<sup>9</sup>:

The integrated territorial approach is inherently a multi-level governance policy arrangement since it requires the engagement of local, regional, and central stakeholders for its development, implementation, and follow up. The multi-faceted nature of territorial instruments is particularly pronounced with regard to ITI concepts, where multiple funding streams are envisaged. Putting in place and maintaining an effective and efficient coordination mechanism to ensure proper and sustained collaboration between key actors and alignment of their actions is one of the key success factors for this new approach.

Coordination is needed to ensure compatibility and interoperability of various elements of the planned system in several dimensions at every stage of the policy lifecycle. These include i) strategic planning phase, when the approach is designed, ii) operationalization and capacity building phase (preparation of technical and financial solutions, procedures, operational mechanisms and in the process of capacity building of all involved stakeholders), iii) the implementation phase, to manage project selection and flow of funds, and to monitor and assess the overall effects of the approach as well as to internally manage individual packages of investment; iv) evaluation and finetuning phase, to identify areas with scope for improvement.

The multi-stakeholder nature of integrated investments requires a new approach to coordination among different types of actors across levels of governance. Robust coordination should also enable the effective exchange of information and decision-making at the level of integrated investments, especially important for ITI concepts ('micro' level), and at the level of integrated approach ('mezzo' level). The 'micro' level coordination should ensure efficient collaboration and alignment of actions with regard to smooth implementation of an integrated package to maximize development outcomes. On one hand, it should facilitate the work of partnerships implementing integrated investments, on the other hand, it would support MAs in taking decisions about individual integrated packages.

Establishing the **Coordination Council for the Territorial Approach (CCTA)** as a formal inter-ministerial coordinator of the implementation of the integrated approach is recommended. Effective management requires sound inter-ministerial collaboration and synchronization, and sustained commitment of all key

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<sup>9</sup> <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/857861617098152281/analysis-of-the-possibilities-to-implement-territorial-instruments-program-for-development-of-the-regions-2021-2027>

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stakeholders. **Experience of EU Member States implementing integrated territorial instruments in the 2014 – 2020 programming period reveal that challenges generated by inter-ministerial cooperation are often underestimated.** The most common challenges include differing priorities among ministries that negatively affect the smooth implementation of integrated investments and resource constraints. The participating MAs will most likely not be able to efficiently solve these problems by themselves and introducing ‘a referee’ with sufficient political leverage is recommended.

The proposed Coordination Council (CCTA) should take charge of managing inter-ministerial collaboration with regard to the integrated approach to guarantee effective collaboration between the involved programme bodies. The support of such a Council by Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (or comparable) would be an optimal solution to solve potential disputes among the programme bodies. The meetings of this Council would provide for key central level stakeholders a formal format for discussing the implementation of the integrated approach as a whole, including progress, identified challenges and risks, required mitigating actions, as well as desired scope of adjustments to be introduced to the policy design. The Council should be entrusted with the power to take strategic decisions with regard to the implementation of the ITI approach. Working groups could be established to provide a regular format to discuss more technical implementation issues with regard to specific ITI concepts.

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Phase of implementation	Actions to be coordinated
<b>Project selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development and endorsement of project selection criteria for territorial instruments across relevant Programs (first and second stage of evaluation)</li> <li>development of other key documents related to organizations of call for project proposals (e.g. catalogue of eligible costs under Programs, state aid schemes, specific rules for calls, financial envelopes with funds from participating Programs; schedule of calls for projects proposals with dedicated financial envelopes, identification of evaluating experts)</li> <li>involvement of experts from participating MAS in evaluation of ITI concepts in line with the net-working principle (first stage of evaluation) and call schedule</li> <li>evaluation of fully developed project proposals (second stage of evaluation)</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation of projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>signing and annexing (if required) of grant contracts for individual projects from ITI concepts/project packages</li> <li>financial management (e.g. disbursements, financial corrections) of projects</li> <li>project controls</li> <li>introduction of modifications to the Programs and their implementing documents with impact on the modalities of integrated approach</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collecting data to estimate volume of projects and required funding prior to their official submission to allow for better-informed financial planning (data from the RDC Mediation Units) to better manage processes</li> <li>collecting data with regard to financial and physical progress of supported integrated investments (UMIS)</li> <li>early warning system to identify underperforming projects (and integrated packages) and take action</li> <li>sharing data and outcomes of conducted analyses of monitoring data with the CCTA to support evidence-based decision-making</li> <li>monitoring performance of the RDCs with regard to their new functions under the integrated approach (e.g. mediation, first stage evaluation of ITI concepts)</li> <li>coordinated evaluation of ITI concepts/packages of projects or their specific types</li> <li>coordinated evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the integrated approach as a new policy paradigm</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on-going assessment of the effectiveness of awareness raising activities dedicated to prospective applicants (based on feedback from the RDC Mediation Units and quality of submitted ITI concepts), and development and implementation of mitigating measures</li> <li>identification of cases of insufficient/outstanding demand for funding (e.g. with regard to territory, thematic objective, type of eligible beneficiary), and development and implementation of mitigating measures</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Coordination needs at the implementation stage of the integrated approach; Source: World Bank' the analysis of ITI in Bulgaria

Key messages from the WB analysis point out:

The integrated territorial approach requires strong coordinating mechanisms to facilitate its design, implementation and finetuning. A large number of diversified stakeholders, who contribute to the approach implementation at different governance levels and at stages of the process, emphasizes the need for effective and efficient coordinating arrangements. Robust coordination should enable smooth information flow and facilitate decision making at the level of integrated investments and integrated approach.

Following specific recommendations were formulated:

- Establish the CCTA to facilitate coordination and supervision of the implementation of the integrated territorial approach



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- Introduce separate chapters in the contributing Programme(s), related to the integrated approach, that will have compatible structure and content to allow prospective applicant easier overview of the implementation system
- Establish cross-institutional working groups to allow contributions from different stakeholders at planning and implementation stage
- Consider possible flexible solutions in the demarcation line to allow future adjustments
- Establish clear and transparent procedures on how funds between/within Programme(s) and their priority axes could be shifted, should some instruments not perform as expected
- Ensure the ability to replace individual projects within the ITI concepts, shall one fail, by creating the project reserve list and scoring all the applications that pass the formal assessment
- Ensure elaboration of compatible guidelines, user's manuals, and procedures
- Create a platform for beneficiaries to exchange information about integrated instruments
- Incorporate flexibility into the system to allow future additions of instruments/programmes, for instance Just Transition Mechanism and Fund.

### 3.9 Concluding remarks

Why and how are European countries using ITI in 2014-2020 or why not? Some flashlights:

- The implementation of the ITI into national structures was not considered in the United Kingdom at all. The reasoning behind shows that the existing organizational structure fully allows the financing of multi-fund investments within the framework of the ERDF, the ESF and the EAFRD. In the end, ITI was applied, but only in selected regions (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly).
- No interest in the ITI tool was shown by Wales and Gibraltar; they did not consider it due to their sizes. In contrast, Scotland used the ITI for its socio-economic needs in two areas.
- The German federative states of Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein applied the ITI mechanism, financed by the ERDF. In other federative states, urban development was solved through integrated urban development plans without the use of the ITI.
- The introduction of the ITI tool was not considered in Austria either. Cities are seen as centres of development, and all activities related to research and technological development, the fight against poverty, and issues concerning transport are supported here. Urban development got at

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least 5 % in the framework of the Investment and Growth programme/ERDF. These grants are mainly to increase the shares in Vienna, Upper Austria, and Styria. The themes of cities are then reflected in various national programmes, a special emphasis being on strategies of smart cities, mobility, sustainable urban development, and social affairs against segregation.

- The situation in the Slovak Republic is similar to the Czech Republic. The basic requirement for the implementation of the ITI is the existence of a strategic document that defines overall goals, including the expected results, relevant territories, investment priorities, and the implementation of strategies, together with the corresponding monitoring mechanism. In Slovakia, the document required for the implementation of an ITI is called a Regional Integrated Territorial Strategy. Regional integrated territorial strategies are prepared at the level of self-governing regions. They contain an integrated strategy of sustainable urban development. A self-governing region (the authority for RITS coordination) ensures the preparation and implementation of RITS in accordance with the principle of partnership, whereas regional centres, i.e. seats of local self-governments (coordinating bodies for sustainable urban development) are responsible for the preparation and implementation of the integrated territorial strategy of the urban area, also in accordance with the partnership principle. In all, regional self-governments in Slovakia drew 6,5 % (i.e. almost 1 billion €) of the total ERDF resources allocated to the country for the 2014–2020 programming period. The ERDF funds within the Integrated Regional Operational Programme were used for the ITI. The planned measures were additionally supported by 'soft' measures funded through the ESF OP for Human Resources to ensure an integrated and comprehensive nature of the solutions.
- The approach of countries to the use of ITI is specific. Among the decisive factors for the use or non-use of integrated tools are, in particular, experience in implementing similar instruments from the previous period (e.g. sustainable urban development) and settlement (city division x countryside) as well as the administrative structure of the individual countries. The ITI benefit is a general definition at the central level and individual requirements of funding under the terms of individual countries. Thanks to the principle of subsidiarity, it is possible to target subsidies directly to the main problems of regions, thereby increasing the efficiency of the funds expected. The countries using ITI welcome the great universality of the tool.
- The establishment of Permanent Conferences in the Czech Republic facilitates discussion and coordination of issues related to implementation of the territorial dimension and the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and programmes co-financed by EU funds.

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**Based on the examples and analysis, following conclusions might be drawn for ITI in Slovenia:**

- Regarding the organizational set up, a review of respective roles and responsibilities of the involved bodies, resources used, interfaces should be executed, with a view to establish effective working structures - with a clear division of responsibilities focusing on shared management, coordination, cooperation. Tasks such as e.g. project assessment or verification of expenditures should be clearly attributed to single bodies, not replicated at several levels and different bodies. Meaningful sharing and delegation of tasks from the MA with and towards the Intermediate Bodies should be included in such organization of work.
- Establishment of an additional coordination platform or body (or cross-institutional working groups) might be a useful tool to attribute tasks and responsibilities within the programme during different phases of programme implementation and for different functions to be fulfilled (preparation of the programme, call procedures, project selection, project implementation, monitoring, evaluation, communication).
- A coordination platform for exchange of information and experiences for structural funds programmes in Slovenia might be taken into consideration. Representatives of other initiatives and countries might be invited to such exchanges to enrich the implementation in Slovenia with experiences made in other European countries.
- Provision of harmonized set of rules and procedures by the programme MA should be envisaged, such rules might be developed in cooperation with the other programme bodies (IBs).

### 3.10 Feedback by Slovene experts

The following comments have been highlighted by the Slovenian Experts within each chapter and sub-chapters:

#### **a) European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba**

This project represents an example with a specific and unique approach for Slovenian ITI that was adopted in an area including the municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba. In its organizational structure, this project needed a formal inter-ministerial working group; on the Slovenian side ZMOS represents all urban municipalities, ITI projects and mechanism on state and EU level.

#### **b) Poland – ITI Unions**

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Regarding FUAs, it has been highlighted that in Slovenia this is not applicable, and the situation should not change. The ITI instrument is used for urban development on urban municipal areas.

Regarding the use of call for proposals, there are currently no open calls in Slovenia and the intention is to maintain the two-phase process as it is.

Whereas in Poland the use of the ITI mechanism promoted an institutionalized cooperation between urban and rural territories, in Slovenia the situation is different since urban development applies only to 12 cities and in the remaining 200 municipalities the approach rests on regional development and there is no understanding for urban development. Nevertheless, urban, and regional development should be on the same level and should go hand-by-hand.

### **c) Romania – ITI in Danube Delta**

Slovenia has only one OP and it would need an institutional and management entity to effectively coordinate the implementation of ITI, like it happens with the Danube Delta ITI Intercommunity Development Association.

However, in Slovenia there is an indicative amount per beneficiary. Each beneficiary does its own work and ZMOS as a Secretariat is not meant to provide tasks as it is the case for the Delta IT IDA. In the case of Slovenia, the coordination role could rather be assigned to a formal inter-ministerial working group. In comparison with the case in Romania for this region, where 77 % of total funds allocated by the EU were contracted, in Slovenia as a whole almost 100 % of funds could be allocated.

### **d) ITI in the Czech Republic**

The situation in the Czech Republic shows some similarities with Slovenia (responsibilities for ITI implementation, IBs, metropolitan areas and urban regions, challenges, etc.). The IADP, could be an interesting tool also for Slovenia but it is not applicable in Slovenia right now.

Unlike in the Czech Republic, where a National Permanent Conference was created to coordinate collaboration between the State and regional levels, composed of three chambers (Regional Chamber, ITI Chamber and CLLD Chamber), in Slovenia there is a Regional Development Council that addresses only CLLD and regional development, not ITI.

The simplification of processes (especially the assessment and implementation of strategies) that was considered as highly relevant to be applied/implemented for the period 2021-2027 in the Czech Republic, represents a high priority as well for Slovenia.

### **e) Coordination mechanism**

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The case of Bulgaria shows some similarities as well with Slovenia and some of the recommendations would be applicable, e.g. to ensure proper and sustained collaboration between key actors and alignment of their actions, since the integrated territorial approach requires strong coordinating mechanisms to facilitate its design, implementation and finetuning.

The recommendation of establishing a CCTA as a formal inter-ministerial coordinator of the implementation of the integrated approach was already suggested as such but it is not implemented. This would be applicable in Slovenia, where it should rather be a Directorate for urban development to be established at the MA, since there already is a Directorate for regional development. A strong coordinating mechanism that should enable smooth information flow and facilitate decision making at the level of integrated investments and integrated approach should be envisaged as a formal inter-ministerial working group.

Other potentially feasible recommendations are considered interesting, such as that of creating project reserve lists and scoring all the applications that pass the formal assessment, ensuring the ability to replace individual projects within the ITI concepts, shall one fail. The same for ensuring the elaboration of compatible guidelines, user's manuals, and procedures and for creating a platform for beneficiaries to exchange information on integrated instruments. This last one could be the ZMOS web page.

In Slovakia regional integrated strategies are prepared at the level of self-governing regions whereas in Slovenia they are prepared by urban municipalities for sustainable development, not just for ITI projects.

In general, regarding recommendations for the organizational set up, there has been to date ongoing discussion mostly at informal level and explicit reference is made to the action plan and to the models of implementation of cohesion policy indicated in the 4 scenarios elaborated by the Slovenian experts.

#### **f) Concluding remarks**

Regarding the establishment of an additional coordination platform or cross-institutional working group, as a tool to attribute tasks and responsibilities within the programme during different phases of programme implementation and for different functions to be fulfilled, the possibility that this could be in Slovenia a sub-body or working body established by the Monitoring Committee is suggested.

In relation to the provision of harmonized sets of rules and procedures by the programme MA, that might be developed in cooperation with the other programme bodies (Intermediate Bodies), some other suggestions could be drawn as well from other MS. E.g. Metropolitan areas, urban rural areas, FUAs – something to consider since in Slovenia ITI is strictly framed for 12 city municipalities (joint association). Other municipalities (also including city municipalities) are mainly involved in Slovenia in regional

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development tool – on the basis of regional development plan – that could be considered as a kind of ITI also (12 regions/12 regional development plans).

The use of ESF and other funds to really address urban development issues in an integrated way may also be suggested (so far mainly infrastructure was financed, link to urban development strategy is weak, etc.).

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## 4. Efficiency of processes to decrease turn over times

The objective of this chapter is to provide examples of how to shorten the time for awarding co-financing (also cross-border ITI 2021-27 example Italy) and simplify the process of co-financing reimbursement claims.

### 4.1 Procedures from application to co-financing

The overall lengthy duration of project cycle from the application until signing the funding contract and further on till reimbursement of funds, as a main finding from analysis done within Deliverable D2.1 by the Slovenia experts, can be addressed by different measures:

- Elaborate compatible, clear guidelines, user's manuals and procedures for applicants and beneficiaries (to allow for correct and timely information submitted by applicants and beneficiaries, to avoid several rounds of clarifications)
- Elaborate common, harmonized project selection criteria and processes related to requests for additional information
- Harmonize the interpretation of the elaborated guidelines and procedures among the involved programme bodies (to avoid different interpretations towards applicants and beneficiaries)
- Provide continuous guidance and support to applicants and beneficiaries in all project phases – trained and experienced staff should be specifically dedicated to providing such guidance and consultation opportunities
- Establish support and advisory network/structure for ITI applicants and beneficiaries, offering general information, thematic orientation, consultations, exchange opportunities with other applicants/beneficiaries, present success stories
- Create platform for applicants and beneficiaries to allow for exchange of information and experiences, gather insights from experienced beneficiaries and from successfully implemented projects
- Establish an integrated monitoring system accommodating all phases of programme implementation, with a special focus on including the project application, assessment, selection of projects and respective contracting as well as monitoring – all programme bodies as well as applicants and beneficiaries should be participants to such a system

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- Within a monitoring system, the project application would be done electronically – in such a case automatic warning messages might be integrated in case of missing or non-compliant information, missing documents, missing signatures, etc. This would drastically shorten the time need for administrative checks and avoid several rounds of clarification requests. Exchange of information between applicants/beneficiaries would be incorporated in the system, also the submission of documents would be on electronic way. Checks and assessments performed would be clearly displayed in the system, to avoid double checks or requests for further data.

## 4.2 Co-financing reimbursement claims

When talking about co-financing reimbursement claims, two related processes will be focused on:

A) One process is about the **verification of expenditures based on a payment claim issued by the beneficiary**; verification is done by the IB – ministry.

The second process B) is about the **claim for reimbursement issued by the Certifying Authority (CA) to the EC**.

The objective would be to know whether the second process – B) could be simplified on the basis of **“financing not linked to costs” methodology**.

### 4.2.1 Verification of reimbursement claims issued by beneficiaries

To streamline the process of reporting expenditures and preparing reimbursement claim by beneficiaries, simplified cost options could be offered to beneficiaries (lots of different options are available off-the-shelf meaning ready to use, e.g. lump sums, residual cost flat rate, ...). National IJG/ERDF programme 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 in Austria is using several options, Interreg programmes also introduced different options already in the period 2014-2020 and continue offer such possibilities in 2021-2027. EU regulations offer numerous options in this respect.

On the level of verification of reimbursement claims, simplified, risk-based management verifications could be introduced – after developing a respective methodology with identification of risks in advance, based on previous experiences. Such a methodology should be agreed with all involved programme bodies and clearly described and communicated to applicants and beneficiaries at an early stage of programme implementation.



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#### 4.2.2 Claim for reimbursement issued by the CA to the EC

As the IJG/ERDF programme 2021-2027 in Austria is using the methodology “financing not linked to costs”, the context of use shall be further explained. A simplified process of reimbursement from EC (B) could positively influence the streamlining of procedures as far as the verifications of expenditures issued by beneficiaries are concerned.

Materials provided by the MA of the European Regional Development Fund/Investment for Jobs and Growth programme (ERDF/IJG) in Austria indicate the following for the programme 2021-2027 (full documents provided as annex):

Two Intermediate Bodies (IBs) from the programme (out of 14) apply the methodology of financing not linked to costs: Kommunalkredit Public Consulting (KPC) and FFG.

**KPC** is applying the methodology on RSO2.1. Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (040. Energy efficiency and demonstration projects in SMEs or large enterprises and supporting measures compliant with energy efficiency criteria). Conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission are around 261.467 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> eq./year saved, of which around 257.534 in more developed regions and around 3.933 in transition regions. The deadline for fulfilment of conditions or results to be achieved is 31.12.2029.

The indicator definition: RCR29: Total estimated greenhouse gas emissions of the supported entities or processes.

The tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent saved per year correspond to the sum of all savings at individual project level. The savings at project level result from the difference between the level of greenhouse gas emissions in the year before the implementation of the measure begins and the estimated level of greenhouse gas emissions in the year after completion of the measure. The applied method of the IB KPC for the calculation of the energy savings is in accordance with Annex V (1) lit. c of the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU. The energy savings calculated using this method as part of the "Domestic environmental promotion" strategic measure and the FNLTC approach are also reported to the national energy efficiency monitoring centre (currently the Austrian Energy Agency) in accordance with the Federal Energy Efficiency Act (EEffG) and subsequently to the EC (DG ENER) as part of the reporting obligations under Article 24 of the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU.

Unit of measurement for conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission: tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> eq./year saved. The applicable price of EUR 300 (ERDF funding) for the annual

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tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> saved was determined on the basis of the ERDF-eligible investment types based on the data provided by the annual environmental aid reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Intermediate deliverable (if applicable) triggering reimbursement by the Commission with schedule for reimbursement	Envisaged date	Amounts in €
1) Jury meeting at which projects were selected	31/12/2023	15.688.000
2) Jury meeting at which projects were selected	31/12/2024	7.844.000
3) 25 % CO <sub>2</sub> of the total CO <sub>2</sub> eq./year to be saved	31/12/2025	19.610.000
4) 60 % CO <sub>2</sub> of the total CO <sub>2</sub> eq./year to be saved	31/12/2026	15.688.000
5) 80 % CO <sub>2</sub> of the total CO <sub>2</sub> eq./year to be saved	31/12/2027	7.844.000
6) 95 % CO <sub>2</sub> of the total CO <sub>2</sub> eq./year to be saved	31/12/2028	7.844.000
7) 100 % CO <sub>2</sub> of the total CO <sub>2</sub> eq./year to be saved	31/12/2029	3.922.000

Figure 2: Intermediate deliverables (if applicable) triggering reimbursement by the Commission with schedule for reimbursements – KPC; Source: Union contribution based on financing not linked to cost in the framework of the ERDF/IGJ Programme 2021-2027 in Austria (Official Journal of the European Union L 231/454, 30.6.2021)

Tasks and responsibilities MA and IB (KPC): The MA delegates all tasks related to the implementation of the FNLC approach and the management of the individual projects to the KPC. According to its function, the MA is ultimately responsible for all IBs – also for the KPC. Therefore, as part of its systemic supervisory verifications, the MA reviews the proper and compliant implementation of the tasks delegated to the IB. Thus, the MA also reviews the KPC in the context of its supervisory function. The documentation of the individual projects including all necessary information as well as the reimbursement triggered via the funding conditions and the intermediate deliverables is carried out by the KPC in the electronic data recording and storage system in accordance with Article 72(1) lit. e of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Obligatory elements of the audit trail for the reimbursement of the Union contribution by the Commission under Article 95 to be stored by the MA/IB:

- documents evidencing the ex-ante agreement of the Commission on the conditions to be fulfilled or the results to be achieved and corresponding amounts (programme approval or amendment);  
MA ERDF/IJG & JTF
- documentation relating to the selection and approval of operations covered by the reimbursement of the Union contribution by the Commission based on Article 95 (financing not linked to costs);  
IB KPC

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- document setting out the conditions of support signed by the beneficiary and the MA/IB stating the form of support provided to beneficiaries; IB KPC
- documentation evidencing management verifications and audits conducted in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 95(3); external auditor and IB KPC
- proof of payment of the public contribution to the beneficiary and of the date the payment was made; IB KPC
- documents evidencing the fulfilment of conditions or the achievement of results at each stage if done in steps, as well as before final expenditure is declared to the; IB KPC.

Just to complete the picture on the reimbursement processes: The envisaged type of reimbursement method used to reimburse the beneficiary/ beneficiaries is reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred.

**FFG** is applying the methodology on RSO1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the introduction of advanced technologies. Conditions to be fulfilled or results to be achieved are: 100% of the R&D infrastructures according to the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. in 100% of all funding agreements, the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement. Deadline for fulfilment of conditions or results to be achieved is 31.12.2029.

The respective indicator is defined as: Number of R&D infrastructures funded and put into operation under the respective funding agreement. This includes facilities, equipment, installations, data infrastructures, e-infrastructures, test centres, (joint) research centres, instruments, collections, or other resources that are distributed at one or more locations or virtually. A supported infrastructure is the entirety of the funded facilities of a R&D infrastructure project.

Intermediate deliverable	Envisaged date	Amounts in €
1) - The call for the R&D infrastructure funding has been published.  - Selection of the operations has been completed: funding decision made by the FFG management board based on the evaluation panel's funding recommendation.	06/2024	1.000.000 (approx. 3 %)
2) 50 % of the funding agreements registered in ATES 2021 (Monitoring System) have been concluded	12/2024	7.500.000 (approx. 23 %)

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3) 100 % of the funding agreements registered in ATES 2021 have been concluded	12/2025	7.500.000 (approx. 23 %)
4) 15 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 15 % of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	12/2026	2.500.000 (approx. 8 %)
5) 45 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 45% of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	12/2027	4.500.000 (approx. 14%)
6) 70 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 70% of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	06/2028	3.500.000 (approx. 11%)
7) 85 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 85% of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	12/2028	3.500.000 (approx. 11%)
8) 95 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 95% of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	06/2029	1.500.000 (approx. 5%)
9) 100 % of the R&D infrastructures agreed in the respective funding agreement have been put into operation, i.e. the R&D infrastructure has been put into operation for 100 % of all funding agreements and the overall project has been fully implemented in accordance with the funding agreement	12/2029	619.572 (approx. 2%)

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Total amount (including Union and national funding): <b>44.610.517,00 €</b>		
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*Figure 3: Intermediate deliverables (if applicable) triggering reimbursement by the Commission with schedule for reimbursements - FFG; Source: Union contribution based on financing not linked to cost in the framework of the ERDF/IGJ Programme 2021-2027 in Austria (Official Journal of the European Union L 231/453, 30.6.2021)*

Verification of the achievement of the result or condition (and where relevant, the intermediate deliverables): The FFG as an IB of the MA in accordance with the IB-MA agreement in the framework of the call for R&D infrastructures implements the relevant part of Measure 1.1. The R&D projects are carried out by the beneficiary. The FFG is responsible for the selection and controlling of the projects. The description of the selection and approval process and of the relevant decision panels and documents are included in the FFG's management and control system description as well in the document of the project selection criteria and process handed to the monitoring committee.

The checklists for verifying compliance with the provisions for public procurement and state aid are completed by the FFG for all projects; sampling is not provided. The procurement procedures themselves are carried out by the beneficiaries. The verification of fulfilment of conditions and the intermediate deliverables (according to section 7) is carried out by an external auditor commissioned by the FFG on the basis of the evidence listed for each of the intermediate deliverable.

Arrangements to ensure the audit trail:

Obligatory elements of the audit trail for the reimbursement of the Union contribution by the Commission under Article 95 to be stored by the MA/IB:

- documents evidencing the ex-ante agreement of the Commission on the conditions to be fulfilled or the results to be achieved and corresponding amounts (programme approval or amendment); body responsible for storage: MA ERDF/IJG & JTF
- documentation relating to the selection and approval of operations covered by the reimbursement of the Union contribution by the Commission based on Article 95 (financing not linked to costs) (ERDF project selection criteria, FFG assessment criteria, the evaluation panel's meeting protocol incl. funding recommendation, funding decision, checklist for project approval); body responsible for storage: IB FFG

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- document setting out the conditions of support signed by the beneficiary and the MA/IB stating the form of support provided to beneficiaries (funding agreement); body responsible for storage: IB FFG
- documentation evidencing management verifications and audits carried out in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 95(3) (First level control (FLC) checklist and verification report); body responsible for storage: external auditor of the IB FFG
- proof of payment of the public contribution to the beneficiary and of the date the payment was made; body responsible for storage: IB FFG
- documents evidencing the fulfilment of conditions or the achievement of results at each stage if done in steps, as well as before final expenditure is declared to the Commission (see section 10, Verification of the achievement of the result or condition); body responsible for storage: IB FFG.

Envisaged type of reimbursement method used to reimburse the beneficiary or beneficiaries: Reimbursement of eligible actual costs.

**Conclusion:** Especially the second methodology (applied by FFG) might be interesting, feasible and applicable to ITI in Slovenia. Certain elements of methodology applied by KPC seem applicable too.

## 4.3 Feedback by Slovene experts

### a) Verification of reimbursement claims issued by beneficiaries

Regarding the streamlining of the process of reporting expenditures and preparing reimbursement claims by beneficiaries, Slovenia stays on a process of expenditures based on payment claims but from a beneficiary's point of view a prepayment would be very helpful.

Simplified, risk-based management verifications should be addressed carefully: Slovenia wants to maintain the level of responsibility enforced on beneficiaries by reporting. But the processes must be simpler and approvals faster. Clear instruction for beneficiaries and controllers.

Regarding reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred, this is considered as the most transparent way. But in Slovenia improvement is needed in the way it is done to achieve a better turnaround time. The idea of pre-payments to decrease exposure of beneficiaries waiting for reimbursement should be checked.

### b) Claim for reimbursement issued by the CA to the EC

Regarding the potential application to ITI in Slovenia of the second methodology (applied by FFG, and certain elements of methodology applied by KPC), this is considered as a very important suggestion -

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especially for MA. In order to focus more on achievements/results and maybe to go a step further - to develop similar method also in relation to IB – beneficiary. It would be interesting to see why costs between beneficiary and IB are reimbursed as actual costs - what was the reason for that kind of decision (maybe national legislation or accounting logic (costs vs revenues have to be equalized)).

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## 5. Use of overcommitment, overbooking

Objective: First a common understanding (definition) of over-commitment and its framework had to be reached: Are we talking about over-commitment on the level of a single priority within ITI, between different thematic priorities within ITI, between ITI priorities and the overall programme, over-commitment by providing additional national funding (and by this increasing the overall project budget or decreasing the EU funding part)?

Based on the “Analysis of urban development in Slovenia – ITI Implementation from the perspective of ministries as intermediate bodies” as well further discussions in the framework of the project’s workshops, overcommitment in ITI is to be seen especially in the direction of committing more than 100 % of the available ITI funding from national level at the early stages of programme implementation in order to achieve a 100 % spending in the end. The experiences of the last two programming periods have shown that a commitment of around 115% of national allocation of cohesion policy funds was needed in order to sign contracts for the implementation of operations in an amount around 110%. The latter resulted in payments just over 100% of funds by the end of the programming period. Since the initial plan (INP) secures funding that is necessary for commitment of funds to actual measures (call for proposals, directly approved projects, actual programmes) it is therefore of crucial importance that the funding is secured with a necessary buffer (called overcommitment or overbooking) of at least 110 % in the early phase of the programme implementation. Experiences of the last 2 programming periods also show that late overcommitment in the later years of programme implementation cause uncertainty, unpredictability and focus the implementation process more on absorption of funding than on effectiveness/objectives. This has very often a negative influence on multiplication effect of funds.

So far, the practice of overcommitment has not included urban development and the respective ITI mechanism but has been successfully used in Slovenia within the national regional development tool.

Adapting this practice to be used also for ITI would ease the implementation, spending of funds and efficiency of processes. Within the first calls for proposals in a funding period, such overcommitment might be secured for approved projects by means of approving the projects with the submitted co-financing rate and a conditional approval of higher co-financing rates – in case funds become available in the course of programme implementation and quotas are not binding anymore. This would save time and resources as no additional calls for these approved projects, able to absorb a higher co-financing that originally approved (due to programme internal limitations and quotas agreed between the city municipalities), would be needed. Specific clauses should be included in the funding contracts for the projects that ask for lower co-financing at the beginning but could absorb more funds – limited by the maximum co-financing



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rate within the programme – in case the quotas are not binding anymore. Such contractual clauses are used also in other funding initiatives – for projects on reserve lists which might receive funding in case projects approved at earlier stages of programme implementation do not absorb their approved funds to the full extent and the unspent funds are available for new projects.

## 5.1 Regulatory framework

Basically for shifting funds between priorities in a Structural Fund programme, respective EU-Regulations have to be taken into account. No specific reference is required here, as this is common practice and well known in Slovenia too.

## 5.2 Call procedures, selection of projects

Basically, projects are approved on the basis of submitted applications and related documents, in line with the respective call for projects. The calls have to specify the framework for submission and selection of projects, also including a budgetary framework for the call in overall. The submitted application includes a description of the planned objectives, activities, and budget of the individual project. On this basis the responsible programme bodies assess the quality of the application and decide whether to approve or decline funding for the specific project. In case of approval, a funding contract is offered to the project applicant, specifying the rights and obligations in regard to the approved project, also including the maximum amount of funding. Additional activities and funds would require amendments of such a contract. In case the programme still has funding to distribute to projects, additional programme funds might be offered to projects after thorough assessment and decision by the respective programme bodies. Such decisions must be based on objective principles and rules, to guarantee equal treatment of all beneficiaries and not providing funds for randomly selected projects. In case no funds are available in the programme, other sources of funding might be looked at – under the condition that no double funding for the same activities is provided. A separate funding contract must be issued, clearly demarcating ITI funds (with the related activities and expenditures) and additional funds (with additional activities and expenditures).

As regards call procedures, the programme might decide to offer funding to projects on the basis of dedicated/restricted calls with clearly defined TOs, deadlines and budgetary framework or the so-called revolving calls (used for example by several Intermediate Bodies within the National ERDF/IJG programme in Austria).

The system of revolving calls is about setting the framework for submission, evaluation, selection of projects at the beginning of a funding period, inviting and accepting project submissions throughout the

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overall programme period, without dedicated calls once per year with a strict deadline and a limited budgetary framework. This might be well suited to the characteristic typology of projects funded within the ITI mechanism – being rather complex and holistic, as the open time frame would allow for more time and support to applicants before actually submitting a proposal, getting support in advance to avoid several rounds of clarification requests or requests for improvements, as well as the possibility of better evaluating the spending levels of the programme and the issue of over-commitment. For a mechanism of revolving calls cut-off dates twice a year could be introduced, in line with planned meetings of the project selection committee (PSC) (cut off dates would be aligned with such meetings). In such a case, project appraisal, evaluation, support would be carried out on a continuous basis, avoiding peaks with huge amounts of submitted proposals at single deadlines. Project decisions would be made by a PSC/Monitoring Committee, meeting usually on a regular basis, e.g. twice a year.

In addition, ITI mechanism in Slovenia might think of a facility that would allow to replace individual, already approved ITI projects, shall one fail, by creating a project reserve list and scoring all the applications that pass the formal assessment.

Flexibility within the ITI mechanism might be introduced also in the sense of allowing future additions of instruments/programmes, such as Just Transition Mechanism and Fund.

## 5.3 National funding

The next subchapters indicate different examples and practices of providing national funding to EU funded projects and initiatives, specifically focused on Interreg programmes and national ERDF/IJG programme in Austria:

- Interreg programmes in Italy: national funding scheme Fondo di Rotazione. This funding scheme automatically provides the remaining funding in Interreg projects for Italian beneficiaries, once approved by the respective Programme's Monitoring Committees. Italian beneficiaries therefore do not have to provide own funding for the participation in an Interreg project.
- Interreg programmes in other countries: similar funding schemes like in Italy. Such schemes are established in several EU Member States to co-finance the participation of the country's beneficiaries in Interreg projects. There are slight differences in the conditions under which these funds are provided to the beneficiaries: Some countries apply the automatism as in Italy - with the selection of funding and approval of the project by the respective programme's Monitoring Committee the national funds are guaranteed, in some countries an additional request has to be submitted, the amount of co-financing is not always fully covering the funding necessary to be

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provided by the beneficiary. Examples of such schemes can be for examples found in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary.

- Interreg programmes in Germany: National funding is provided to German applicants in Interreg projects for the preparation of their application. This helps to cover costs of project preparation which is usually not covered by Interreg funding (only to a very small proportion Interreg can cover these costs – in the form of a lump sum for project preparation, which does not necessarily cover the costs of preparation nor is it intended to be consumed by only 1 partner, usually this lump sum is shared by the whole partnership). German applicants have to apply for this funding separately, it is not an automatic scheme given to all German applicants in Interreg projects.
- In the framework of the Austrian ERDF/IJG programme in the funding period 2021-2027 (or former ERDF/IGJ programme, funding period 2014-2020), the system of national co-financing is set up by the Programme structure already – the Intermediate bodies of the programme are at the same time the co-financing bodies, either on national or regional level. By this practice, once a project is approved in the national programme by the Monitoring Committee, the respective national/regional funds are approved as well, contracting is done by the respective IB in overall terms, saving administrative procedures, time and resources.

## 5.4 Feedback by Slovene experts

### a) Use of overcommitment

Possible common understanding (definition) of over-commitment and its framework:

- To ensure 100 % absorption of the ITI found provided.
- Possible use of co-financing for excess eligible costs.

Overcommitment should be used for ITI as a whole in all specific objectives - SOs (2.7, 2.8, 5.1). The rationale is to enable bottom-up logic, to support different contents (like mobility, green infrastructure, urban renewal etc.) as needed by the municipalities according to their sustainable urban strategies and projects. E.g. for an allocation of 100 units for ITI - a 10% of overcommitment should be granted - 110 units could therefore be granted to projects in all 3 SOs together (enabling also, that primarily division of allocations between the 3 SOs could be adapted to needs of the projects). Such modification would be at the end of the day part of the flexibility rule on the level of the programme, or it would require modification of a programme. 10 additional units would be granted as EU funds from national budget - if also spent 110% (what very rarely occurs) - then they would cover for unsuccessful absorption on the same or other

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SOs or it would be at the end of the day borne by national budget. Over commitment not only enables strengthening of bottom-up principle but enables also faster granting and faster implementation.

**b) Regulatory framework**

Regarding shifting funds between priorities in a Structural Fund programme, overcommitment actually means securing funds from national budget rather than taking into account EU-Regulations

**c) Call procedures, selection of projects**

This is not feasible in Slovenia; it would be too complicated; it was already addressed, and this approach was not taken into consideration. It could be doable only if: national budget in Slovenia would cover all the EU expenditures first - the EU funds are then reimbursed into the national budget (so we have the system of paying all the EU expenditures first of national budget and then reimbursed afterwards, after authorized and certified and granted by the EC). So, the national budget should enable e.g. 110 % of available funds to be granted (EU budget lines), contracts signed and paid out (projects in Slovenia usually get paid out between 80-90 % of the contract value, not 100 %). Therefore, in practice - additional 10 % of funds (the 10% may never be recovered if paid out in full) as same source, under same conditions, enabling also "reserve" projects - it is a risk taken by the state budget (10 % of "grant leverage" to speed up and to top up the development).

A facility allowing to replace individual, already approved ITI projects, shall one fail, by creating a project reserve list and scoring all the applications that pass the formal assessment is already implemented in Slovenia. Flexibility within the ITI mechanism in the sense of allowing future additions of instruments/programmes, such as Just Transition Mechanism and Fund is not applicable for ITI in Slovenia since one urban municipality is eligible.

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## 6. Readiness of beneficiaries and projects

Objective: Readiness also includes willingness and available resources of applicants/beneficiaries. Reasons for failing in getting a project approval or successfully implementing a project in ITI 2014-2020 should be listed here as a starting point. Analysis of failing as beneficiary within ITI (and other programmes, with municipalities as applicants/beneficiaries) should be elaborated.

In addition, analysis of support given to applicants and beneficiaries should be done. What kind of support is given in ITI Slovenia, by whom, at which point during the project cycle? What are good examples of support structures? Support should be given during the whole project cycle, starting already with the project planning.

Examples of support structures and measures have been elaborated.

### 6.1 Readiness of projects

According to the analysis of ITI 2014-2020 in Slovenia, the processes of project preparation and application seem to take a long time to be finalized. This might partly be due to limited staff resources available on the level of applicants, as well as due to missing knowledge and experience in regard to project development or due to limited motivation, willingness, and support by the respective decision structures.

How to achieve a good level of knowledge in preparing and implementing European projects is driven by the motivation and availability of resources to be able to properly prepare for such tasks. Preparation and implementation of European projects should – in the best-case scenario – not be just one task among many others, but a task fulfilled by staff dedicated primarily to this objective. Experiences in European projects can be collected and drawn upon smaller initiatives in other EU environments and programmes than ITI itself, cooperation with other bodies, organisations and countries might be helpful in this respect – to enable the process of getting to know the mechanisms of EU funding. On the other hand, initiatives supporting (also in financial terms) the preparation of bigger investments and infrastructures, might be taken into consideration (see chapters on instruments funded by international financial institutions).

Last but not least a thorough planning of necessary actions and infrastructure investments in the respective regions should be subject to strategic development and planning, incorporated in Strategic Development Plans and Strategies, aligned with the national level. In this sense, further national funds might be drawn to continue strategic implementation – by coordinating and discussing the strategic priorities in the national and regional perspective.

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By this, the ITI projects might be used as a vehicle to attract further funding upon completion, to enlarge the scope of activities.

## 6.2 Support structures

### ÖROK as cooperation and coordination platform

ÖROK, founded in 1971, is an organization established by the federal government, the Länder and municipalities to coordinate spatial development at the national level. The political decision-making body is chaired by the Federal Chancellor and its members include all federal ministers and heads of the Länder, the presidents of the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and the Austrian Association of Municipalities as well as the heads of the social and economic partners with a consulting vote. To execute its tasks at the administrative level, ÖROK employs a “commission of deputies” as well as several working formats that are made up of representatives of the ÖROK members.

Apart from the formal bodies, soft “governance” formats have been gaining significance for ÖROK’s work in the last years and decades. The main function can be described as providing a platform (conference) for discussing issues of spatial and regional planning on national and European level, a platform involving representatives from all line ministries, regional governments, Associations of Cities, Associations of Municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of employees, Association of Industry, as equal partners.

One of the central areas of ÖROK’s work comprises the preparation and publication of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept (ÖREK). The current “ÖREK 2030” was published in 2021 and covers a planning period of around ten years. Guided by the key theme of “Need for Transformation”, it is a strategic instrument for overall spatial development in Austria. Based on the previous ÖREK 2011, the concept of **ÖREK Partnerships** was introduced as an instrument to bring together all relevant partners to work out the content in more detail and develop approaches to solutions.

Moreover, its tasks include creating basic planning materials for Austria’s spatial development policy (e.g. “ÖROK Forecasts”). The outcome of the work of the experts can be presented in the form of **ÖROK Recommendations which also find acceptance at the political level**.

Within the context of European regional and spatial development policies, ÖROK has played an **important role as the co-ordinating body between the national and the European level** since Austria’s accession to the EU.

The drafting of the “Partnership Agreement” for the ESIF and ongoing support in this context during the different programming periods have been integrated into ÖROK’s operations for decades already.

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The ÖROK Office has been appointed MA for the Austria-wide Investment for Growth and Jobs/ ERDF programme 2014-2020, as well as for the period 2021-2027.

ÖROK's tasks in the preparations for the programming period include, for example, defining the regional aid map pursuant to the EU state aid rules (Art. 87 EC-Treaty), coordination of the national distribution of funds from the EU Structural Funds as well as issues relating to evaluation and programme administration.

### **Training programmes for public institutions in Austria in the framework of VAB**

The Federal Academy of Public Administration (VAB) is the central training and further education institute for the civil service. But it is much more than that: as one of the largest institutes for further vocational training in the country, the VAB offers around 10,000 participants a comprehensive course programme every year. It is the starting point for professional careers and an engine for career advancement and change. At the same time, the VAB acts as an innovation laboratory for new developments in public administration.

The Federal Academy of Public Administration has been offering high-quality continuing education opportunities for over 40 years and is one of the largest professional training centres in Austria.

Specifically dedicated to European funding, the Federal Academy of Public Administration offers a **comprehensive course programme for ESIF programme management**. The “**ESI Funds Curriculum**” aims to offer employees working in funding management an attractive training programme and thus promote the transfer of know-how for the bodies involved in the programme implementation. This curriculum with selected courses is offered by the Federal Academy of Public Administration in coordination with the ÖROK office as the MA as part of the implementation of the IJG/ERDF & JTF programme 2021-2027. The costs for persons entrusted with the tasks of IJG/ERDF & JTF programme management can be covered from technical assistance funds of the programme via the ÖROK office.

Numerous courses on the implementation of European Structural and Investment Fund funding programmes are offered in the following areas:

- Anti-discrimination and gender equality
- Disability and accessibility (barrier-free access)
- Funding processing, e-government, control and combating fraud
- Budget controlling
- Compliance

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- Impact orientation and statistical systems
- Public procurement law, state aid and environmental legislation
- EU 2020 and general information

More than 40 courses are primarily aimed at administrative staff who are responsible for the implementation of ESI Fund programmes in the programme authorities, the federal and state funding agencies and the audit body, among others. The current programme of the “ESI Funds Curriculum” can be downloaded online<sup>10</sup>.

### **Advisory services in Interreg and national ERDF programmes**

Interreg (transnational and network programmes):

System of Joint Secretariats and National Contact Points is employed. Joint Secretariat implements the programme in close coordination with the MA and the Monitoring Committee and provides guidance and information to all stakeholders. The National Contact Points, established in each country of the programme area in transnational and network Interreg programmes, provide information and guidance to all stakeholders (primarily to applicants and beneficiaries) on the national level and support the national representatives of the Monitoring Committee. These bodies (Joint Secretariats and National Contact Points) provide guidelines, explainers and tutorials, seminars for applicants, seminars, and dedicated trainings on implementation aspects for beneficiaries, and last but not least individual consultations.

Interreg cross-border programmes: In each project region of a programme, so-called regional coordinators (as programme bodies) are established. They provide advice and support in the development (including feedback on whether a project idea is in line with programme objectives) and implementation of the projects as well as with the dissemination of information and project results. They are an important local contact point that provides project partners with information and help, also supporting the MA and the Joint Technical Secretariat in fulfilling information and publicity tasks and in organizing information events and partner exchanges.

Interreg Europe offers specific, dedicated support in the form of **Policy Learning Platform**.

The Platform consists of a team of Thematic Experts supporting practitioners and policymakers across Europe. The policy learning services include

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vab.gv.at/dam/jcr:5d7957a6-1fef-4fb0-8fe2-5364c39e9657/vab2024-ibw-efre-curriculum.pdf>



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- Peer review (public authorities receiving feedback from relevant peers during a two-day in-depts analysis)
- Matchmaking sessions (inspiration from good practices in a broad range of policies across Europe)
- Policy helpdesk (providing answers to questions in regional policymaking)

In the national ERDF/IJG programme Austria guidelines, tutorials, good practice examples and stories are provided, in addition the IBs provide consultations to applicants and beneficiaries.

#### **Recommendations from other countries:**

- ITI Bulgaria

Analysis carried out by the WB on **ITI in Bulgaria** suggests establishing a central Advisory Hub to provide professional, standardized, and regular training, along with targeted advisory support, as a possible suitable way to support prospective applicants. The beneficiaries' ability to tap into funding from the integrated approach from the very start is a key performance indicator of a successful implementation mechanism.

A second key recommendation of the WB team is addressing the need to **further streamline the ITI selection process and adopt selection criteria that support the selection of impactful ITIs and strong sustainable ITI partnerships**. It suggests a further streamlining of the process of selecting integrated projects as it seems that different selection approaches for different types of projects prove difficult for beneficiaries to navigate. The **criteria and processes of selecting integrated projects need to be transparent and objective**. It is important to promote a technical and merit-based assessment of applications.

- ITI in Danube Delta in Romania

Referring to the implementation of ITI in Danube Delta in Romania, the following topics were the result of analysis: Regarding the degree of difficulty concerning the understanding of the programming documents used in the 2014–2020 period, 26.2% of the fund managers found the **programming documents difficult and very difficult to understand**. However, the majority of the respondents — 57,1 % — attributed them a medium degree of difficulty, while 16.7% considered them easy to understand. On the whole, the results have shown a positive perception regarding the degree of difficulty in understanding the programming documents, but **the authorities should simplify these documents considering their importance in the implementation process**.

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## **6.3 Feedback by Slovene experts**

### **a) Readiness of projects**

In Slovenia the processes of project preparation and application seem to take a long time to be finalized but this is not only due to lack of resources available on the level of the applicant and to missing knowledge and experience. At the beneficiary level there is relevant experience with complex projects and if the project is ready-to-go, then the readiness of project is not an issue. Nevertheless, if there is an application with a project that has, for example, no building permit, then the application process will take longer. Regarding the level of knowledge for the preparation of projects, there is never enough training, especially for designers. Very relevant knowledge in European projects can be drawn in other environments and programmes than ITI, through cooperation with other bodies, organizations and other countries. Capacity building within the TSI project can effectively address the lack of understanding, knowledge and experience.

### **b) Support structures**

This role should be that of the Monitoring Committee (MC) for ESIF programme for Slovenia for 2021-2027. Since Slovenia for cohesion has all in one programme, the MC could be a perfect starting point to develop some kind of "conference" - maybe as a sub-MC body.

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## 7. Annexes

### Annex A: Financial instruments

The combination of financial instruments with grants under shared management can play an important role in delivering EU policy objectives and addressing market failures related to project's design, viability, and access to finance issues. Primarily, combinations are needed where investments are not capable of generating sufficient economic returns or cost savings to be viable without additional support. They may also be used to stimulate investment demand, reach ambitious policy objectives, and attract private financing.

The CPR for the 2021-2027 programming period (2021-2027 CPR) does not bring changes to the type of investments that are in principle eligible to support from financial instruments. Article 58(2) 2021-2027 CPR states that 'financial instruments shall provide support to final recipients only for investments in both tangible and intangible assets as well as working capital, expected to be financially viable and which do not find sufficient funding from market sources. Such support shall be in compliance with applicable Union State aid rules. Such support shall be provided only for the elements of the investments which are not physically completed or fully implemented at the date of the investment decision'.

In the 2021-27 programming period, 2021-2027 CPR will continue to allow for two types of combination of financial instruments and grant, i.e. in one and in two operations. An important change is the enlargement of the possible options to combine financial instruments and grants in one operation. The rules on combinations of financial instruments and grants are defined in the articles 58(4) to 58(7) of the 2021-2027 CPR as follows:

- Grants can be combined with financial instruments in one single operation (art. 58(5)). In the 2014-2020 period, financial instruments could only be combined with grants in one operation at the financial instrument level, where the grants took the form of an interest rate, guarantee fee or technical support subsidy. These grants could not be paid directly to the final recipient. The 2021-2027 CPR adds the possibilities to:
  - use different types of grants under the condition that 'the programme support in the form of grants shall be **directly linked and necessary** for the financial instrument and shall **not exceed the value** of the investments supported by the financial product', and
  - to **make direct payment to the final recipients** (and not only to the benefit of the final recipients as in the 2014-2020 period).

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- Grants can also be combined with financial instruments in two separate operations (Art. 58(4)) at the level of the final recipient as in the 2014-2020 period.
- In the 2021-2027 programming period, market failures and investment needs will be taken into account and forms of support (financial instruments and grants) will be justified at programme level (Art. 22(3)).

Under the 2014-2020 programming period, 2014-2020 CPR already allowed for the combination of financial instruments and grants in a single operation, provided that grants were used for technical support or to subsidize interest rates and guarantee fees. While keeping these possibilities, 2021-2027 CPR extends the combination options and allows the disbursement of the combined support directly to final recipients. Article 58(5) 2021-2027 CPR states: ‘Financial instruments may be combined with programme support in the form of grants in a single financial instrument operation, within a single funding agreement, where both distinct forms of support shall be provided by the body implementing the financial instrument. In such a case, the rules applicable to financial instruments shall apply to that single financial instrument operation. The programme support in the form of grants shall be directly linked and necessary for the financial instrument and shall not exceed the value of the investments supported by the financial product’.

### **Typology of combined financial instruments**

The combination of financial instruments and grants in one operation may follow one of the schemes described below. These examples are not exhaustive. Depending on the observed market failures and on the programme objectives, a MA may decide to implement different options.

- Combination of financial instruments and grants for interest rate and guarantee fee subsidies

This option is unchanged as compared to 2014-2020 CPR except that, in the next period, it will be possible to disburse the grant directly to the final recipient (not only for their benefit).

In order to make the best use of the programme contribution transferred to the financial instrument, interest rate and guarantee fee subsidies should be used only to improve the conditions of access to private capital. They should not be used to improve the conditions of the support already received from EU Funds or from national public co-financing through the financial instruments.

- Combination of financial instruments and grants for technical support

This option is also unchanged as compared to 2014-2020 CPR except that, in the 2021-2027 period, it will be possible to disburse the grant directly to the final recipient (not only for their benefit).

- Combination of financial instruments and capital grants

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In this type of combination, the capital grant is intended to cover the non-revenue generating/ cost-saving part of the investment. This combination will thus be used to finance investments reporting financial viability gaps.

- Combination of financial instruments and performance-based grants

In this type of combination, the grant element will be used to incentivize more project promoters to submit investment projects with a higher policy impact. The type of performance-based grants used may be one of the following. Some others may be chosen provided they remain in line with the conditions defined by the 2021-2027 CPR.

- Capital rebates: a part of the loan is converted into a grant
  - Recoverable grants: a part of a grant is converted into a loan
  - Convertible grants: a part of a grant is converted into equity
- Combination of financial instruments and grants in two operations

As far as the possibility to combine financial instruments and grants in two separate operations is concerned, article 58(4) 2021-27 CPR states that ‘support to final recipients may be combined with any form of union contribution, including from the same Fund and may cover the same expenditure item. In that case, the Fund’s financial instrument support, which is a part of a financial instrument operation, shall not be declared to the Commission for support under another form, another Fund or another instrument’.

### Feedback by Slovene experts

It is hard to provide comments on that since the period 2014-20 is finished, for 2021-27 Slovenia is in the middle of the process for establish the mechanism.

Regarding the combination of financial instruments with grants under shared management that doesn’t seem to be applicable at this stage for ITI in Slovenia.

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## **Annex B: Good practices of multiple EU co-funding sources in one project**

The following chapter deals with good practices of multiple EU co-funding sources in one project (conditions, requirements, examples) and examples of blended funding (examples from other International Financing Institutions - IFIs - such as the EBRD, CEB and even the WB/IFC). IFIs appear to be increasingly using blended finance approaches to attract private investment for sustainable urban projects.

For city municipalities it is of crucial importance to know whether two sources (grants) could be applied to the same project – provided that indicators, financial data, etc. are then also reported to 2 different programmes/ financial sources. Some guidance on how to do it, make it possible and what should be considered (exclusion of double funding, etc.), shall be listed.

### **I. Examples of multiple funding**

#### **i. Austrian promotional bank aws**

##### **aws erp loan<sup>1</sup>**

With the aws erp loan, investments in start-ups, modernization, growth and innovation through low-interest loans with fixed interest rates, flexible terms and redemption-free periods are enabled. Supplementary subsidies:

Within the framework of the AGVOG and the De-minimis-ObergrenzeG, the following subsidies can be combined with the aws erp loan:

- aws Guarantee
- aws Digitalisation
- aws Investment in growth
- aws Processing of agricultural products
- Subsidies on the level of federal states/regions (Bundesländer)

Conditions/requirements: ex-ante definition of the possibility to submit a project with different forms of financial support, explicitly indicating if and which funding sources can be combined in one project

#### **ii. Austrian Research Promotion Agency FFG**

General programme<sup>2</sup>, funding instrument combining grants and low-interest loans.

The funding strategy of General Programme is fundamentally based on the bottom-up principle. It is open to all branches of industry and research topics and eligible to companies and projects of all sizes. General



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Programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness of companies based in Austria by funding the development of new products, processes, and services. Funding is up to 50 % (for Startups up to 70 %) of total eligible project costs. **The FFG uses a combination of several financing instruments - such as grants as well as low-interest loans.** Additionally, the federal states/regions (Bundesländer) provide further funds. Submission of an application is possible at any time.

With its permanent open call and wide range of funding models for the development of new products, processes and services, the FFG General Programme is aiming at strengthening the competitiveness of companies based in Austria.

All projects are analysed and assessed in terms of the technical and economic aspects for funding. **Technical funding criteria** include in particular the degree of innovation and the technical challenge of the planned project. The **economic assessment focuses** on the commercialization potential and the applicant's economic performance.

Funding is provided by Austrian Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austrian Ministry for Labour and Industry (through FFG).

Important requirements include the residual/remaining financing of the project by the company and proof of costs for the project-related use of the funding.

Conditions/requirements: ex-ante definition of the possibility to submit a project with different forms of financial support, explicitly indicating if and which funding sources can be combined in one project.

## II. Blended funding from International Financing Institutions

### i. Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

Set up in 1956, the CEB has 42 Member States. Twenty-two Central, Eastern and South-eastern European countries, forming the Bank's target countries, are listed among the Member States. As a major instrument of the policy of solidarity in Europe, the Bank finances social projects by making available resources raised in conditions reflecting the quality of its rating (Aa1 with Moody's, outlook stable, AAA with Standard & Poor's, outlook stable, AA+ with Fitch Ratings, outlook positive and AAA\* with Scope Ratings, outlook stable). It thus grants loans to its Member States, and to financial institutions and local authorities in its Member States for the financing of projects in the social sector, in accordance with its Articles of Agreement.

**Slovenia:**

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Slovenia became a CEB member country in 1994. In the past 15 years the CEB supported inclusive growth in Slovenia with 170 million € in investments across different sectors, such as social and affordable housing, environment, education, and municipal infrastructure.

In November 2021, the CEB has approved a new €50 million loan to the Slovene Export and Development Bank (SID Banka) to support the improvement of living conditions in urban and rural areas through co-financing investments of both urban and rural public infrastructure, improvement of public services, access to social and affordable housing, as well as energy efficient investments.

The loan addresses the priorities set in the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 since the improvement of social infrastructure and continued availability of long-term financing to municipalities are essential for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth, and employment.

With at least 33 % of the loan expected to be allocated to green investments, it will also support the implementation of Slovenia's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan adopted in 2020.

The end-borrowers will be municipalities, public and municipal organizations and enterprises that will directly use the funds for eligible investments, while the final beneficiaries will be residents of participating municipalities.

The CEB had previously approved two loans to SID Banka to improve living conditions in urban and rural areas, enhance energy efficiency, and protect the environment throughout the country. The first one worth €40 million was approved in 2010, while the second one worth €50 million was approved in 2017.

As a public financial institution under full Slovenian ownership, SID Banka provides economic and structural support, mainly by way of financial services, in segments where the country's market economy has left social and other gaps.

### **Croatia:**

A member of the CEB since 1997, Croatia has so far received more than 1 billion € in financing from the Bank to support key investments in health, urban and rural infrastructure, flood prevention measures, and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Croatia also benefits from and is a partner of the CEB-managed Regional Housing Programme.

In May 2022, the CEB and the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR) signed a 200 € million loan to foster economic growth and support earthquake recovery and reconstruction efforts in Croatia.

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In 2020 Croatia's economy contracted sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, two powerful earthquakes hit the country in March and December 2020, causing large-scale damages and hampering people's access to public services, including healthcare and education.

The CEB loan will be channelled through HBOR directly to eligible end-borrowers to partially finance the development and upgrading of local and regional infrastructure, such as water supply, wastewater disposal and treatment networks, local roads, educational, cultural and other municipal facilities.

The loan will allow HBOR to support MSMEs, create new jobs and preserve the existing ones, and to finance the reconstruction and retrofitting of the infrastructure and buildings damaged by the earthquakes.

Due to its flexibility in terms of allocation, regional distribution, and possibility to blend with other financing sources, the loan will enable HBOR to promote competitiveness and enhance access to financing for small businesses and local authorities.

## ii. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

The EBRD was founded in 1991 to create a new post-Cold War era in central and eastern Europe. We are now doing more than ever before - across three continents - to further progress towards 'market-oriented economies and the promotion of private and entrepreneurial initiative'. The EBRD is owned by 73 countries, as well as the EU and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

### **Romania: Sibiu Urban Infrastructure Rehabilitation**

The client is Sibiu Municipality. EBRD finance amounts up to 15 million € senior loan to the city. The total cost of the project has been estimated at 18,35 million €.

The EBRD is providing a loan of up to 15 million € to Sibiu Municipality (the "Municipality" or the "City") to finance key investments in the urban transport sector and related infrastructure including street rehabilitation, a concession for local road maintenance, as well as support for the preparation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan ("SUMP").

### **BULGARIA: Sofia Public Transport Sector Reforms - Sofia Municipality**

The Client is City of Sofia. EBRD Finance provided: The size of the bank loan to the Municipality is up to 5,96 million €.

The project cost of the Sofia Municipality transaction is estimated to 61,69 million €. The total size of all related projects under the Bank's Public Transport Reform Project is estimated at 94,63 million €.

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This transaction is part of the Bank's Public Transport Reform Project covering essential areas of the Sofia's urban transport system including 4 loans worth a total 24,96 million € to Sofia Municipality, Urban Mobility Centre Ltd (UMC), Sofia Electric Transport Company JSC (SETC) and Metropolitan JSC (Metropolitan). Under this transaction the Bank is considering providing a loan of 5,96 million € to the City of Sofia, representing the Bank's co-financing contribution to the City's Integrated Urban Transport Project, jointly funded with EU grants under Operating Programme Regional Development on a blended basis. Total EU project cost amounts to 61,69 million € of which up to 42,5 million € will be provided by the CF on a grant basis.

The EU funded programme supports the upgrade and the expansion of the electrical transport in the City, introduces intelligent, adaptative control traffic management system, real time passenger information both within public transport fleets and at public transport stops. As part of the Project the Municipality will revise its existing contract with UMC to convert it into a Public Service Contract (PSC) compliant with EU regulation 1370. The contract also will define concrete funding commitments which will ensure that the public transport system is appropriately funded in future.

#### **REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO: Pristina Urban Transport II**

EBRD Finance Summary: 10.000.000 €

Total Project Cost: 10.764.580 €

The Project's objective is to increase services and improve the reliability, sustainability, safety, and efficiency of Pristina's public transport. The Project is expected to bring the following benefits:

- Extend and improve public transport services in the city of Pristina;
- Support a continued shift from private cars to public transport;
- Facilitate easy access for passengers, particularly those with limited movement, including the elderly and the disabled;
- Improve the reliability, safety, and efficiency of public transport;
- Reduce air pollution emissions from public transport, improving local air quality; and
- Reduce GHG through the launch of a pilot electric bus route.

The introduction of an electric bus route is an important step towards developing a sustainable urban transport system. Fleet electrification strategies typically start with an initial limited number of vehicles allocated to specific bus routes for operational and demonstration purposes. This allows familiarization

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with technology and maintenance and limits the risks of purchase of full fleets under rapid technological development. The same strategy is considered to be appropriate for Pristina, where the operator aims to introduce electric bus technology for the first time in the country by purchasing 6 electric vehicles (EVs) to operate on a flagship circular route passing through Pristina city centre. This pilot will be used to gain experience of the operation of public electric buses and will facilitate the continued transition of the fleet to electric buses in the future.

The introduction of electric buses and EURO VI buses will reduce GHG emissions by 76% compared to the baseline and will deliver a substantial reduction of air pollutant emissions, making the Project eligible for EBRD Green Cities and compatible with the Green Economy Transition Approach 2021-2025 (BDS20-082/F).

Purchase of 30 new buses, comprising 24 Euro VI buses and 6 battery electric buses and related charging infrastructure, which will be added to the existing bus fleet of Trafiku Urban (the "Client" or the "Company"), to expand its operations (the "Project"). The Project will enable the Company to increase the frequency of bus services and to add new routes across the Municipality of Pristina (the "City"). The 6 electric buses will be deployed on a pilot route with the aim to introduce electric bus technology for the first time in the country.

### iii. European Investment Bank

Examples of Technical Assistance projects provided by EIB – ELENA SCHEME:

#### Sustainable mobility programme in Slovenia

<b>Location of planned investments</b>	Slovenia
<b>Final beneficiary</b>	City Municipality of Novo Mesto
<b>Beneficiary's address</b>	Seidlova cesta 1, 8000 Novo Mesto, Slovenia
<b>Sector(s) of investment</b>	Urban Mobility
<b>Total Project Development Services (PDS) cost</b>	2.653.000 €
<b>ELENA co-financing</b>	2.388.000 €
<b>PDS financed by ELENA</b>	The PDS financed by ELENA will provide support to implement the Investment Programme of nine municipalities in Slovenia (Novo Mesto, Kranj, Celje, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Laško, Slovenske Konjice, Zreče, Slovenska Bistrica) as well as ELES Ltd. (headquartered in City of Ljubljana) and Post of Slovenia Ltd

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		<p>(headquartered in Maribor). The PDS are needed to secure the coordination of the preparation and development of the investment programme.</p> <p>This specifically entails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management &amp; Coordination:</li> </ul> <p>A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be established with the responsibility of project management during the project development phase. PIU will be supported by a Project Support Team including external experts for the support to the project management and coordination and the preparation and implementation of PDS and Investment Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical &amp; Feasibility Studies</li> <li>• Tendering &amp; Contract Support</li> </ul>
<b>PDS Timeframe</b>		Quarter 1 2021 – Quarter 4 2024
<b>Investment description</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<p>The Investment Programme (IP) consists of investments of nine municipalities in Slovenia (Novo Mesto, Kranj, Celje, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Laško, Slovenske Konjice, Zreče, Slovenska Bistrica) as well as ELES Ltd. (headquartered in City of Ljubljana) and Post of Slovenia Ltd (headquartered in Maribor).</p> <p>The two critical components of the IP are promoting active modes in urban mobility (in particular, cycling) and electrification of transport. Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) will be used for improving public transport and realizing a multimodal transport system in municipalities.</p> <p>The planned investments are grouped in the following categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Implementation of EV charging infrastructure</li> <li>2) Purchase of EVs (i.e. cars, vans, scooters, etc.)</li> <li>3) Purchase of EVs for public transport and municipal use (i.e. electric buses, utility vehicles)</li> <li>4) Implementation of active mobility measures (i.e. cycling infrastructure, bike-sharing systems, soft measures to promote cycling use, etc.)</li> </ol>

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	<p>5) Implementation of ITS services to improve transport efficiency and public transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Intelligent traffic lights and signalization</li> <li>b. Smart traffic management utilizing Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and technologies</li> <li>c. Smart parking systems in the city centres</li> <li>d. Central information system, traffic flows monitoring and integration of sustainable modes of mobility into a single mobile application - city card</li> <li>e. Multi-modal public transport management and control systems, traveller information systems, routing systems</li> </ul> <p>6) Implementation of Park and Ride facilities to improve public transport accessibility and use</p> <p>7) Implementation of vehicle access restrictions and shared spaces</p>
<b>Investment amount to be mobilized</b>	98 million €
<b>Description of the approach to implement the Investment Programme</b>	<p>The final Beneficiary and its partners will establish a cooperation with a clear set of roles, responsibilities and contractual obligations in a Consortium Agreement. The Final Beneficiary will, on behalf of other consortium partners, manage all the process regarding the procurement and implementation of the PDS.</p> <p>The IP will be implemented by the newly created PIU including the involvement of existing City Administration departments responsible for the implementation of the investments and steered by the special Project Steering Committee.</p> <p>It is foreseen to aggregate the procurement in the project. Therefore, the planned measures (investments) shall be analysed in a manner that similar measures shall be procured jointly. Occasional joint procurement approach shall be taken in the project to increase the economy and efficiency of the use of budgetary funds and to increase the market competition.</p>

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	Contracting authorities shall perform procurement for specific measures jointly to the maximum extent.
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### Sustainable Energy – East Slovenia

<b>Location of planned investments</b>	Slovenia
<b>Final beneficiary</b>	City Municipality of Kranj (on behalf of 12 municipalities and 2 state-owned companies)
<b>Final Beneficiary's address</b>	Slovenski trg 1 SI-4000, Kranj Slovenia
<b>Sector(s) of investment</b>	Energy efficiency in public buildings, Energy efficiency in street-lighting, Renewable energy in buildings, Waste heat recovery
<b>Total PDS cost</b>	2.213.000 €
<b>ELENA co-financing</b>	1.991.700 €
<b>PDS financed by ELENA</b>	Activities supported by ELENA include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and coordinate with municipal services on planning and permitting</li> <li>• Energy audits and energy baselines</li> <li>• Procurement documentation and procedures</li> <li>• Feasibility/technical studies and investment plans</li> <li>• Contracting for ESCOs, suppliers, construction companies</li> <li>• Project management and coordination</li> </ul>
<b>PDS Timeframe</b>	Q1 2021 to Q1 2024
<b>Investment programme description</b>	The participating municipalities and state-owned companies will jointly tender Energy Performance Contracts (EPC) and Contracts for works for the buildings and street-lighting networks they own and operate. Some 68 buildings will be EE retrofitted and over 15.000 street lighting points will be upgraded.
<b>Investment amount to be mobilized</b>	54,9 million €
<b>Description of the approach to implement the Investment Programme</b>	Each participating municipality/company will make a detailed inventory of their assets to be EE retrofitted. Joint tenders will be launched for larger contracts in order to attract both local and



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	foreign ESCOs. European structural funds money, managed by the government, will be used to co-finance the projects.
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aws.at/aws-erp-kredit/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ffg.at/en/programme/general-programme> , <https://www.ffg.at/ausschreibung/basisprogramm-2024>

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Examples of infrastructure projects financed by the EIB in Austria by means of investment loans:

**Austria - Operations with PCRs completed between 2014-2020 in Infrastructure\***

**INFRASTRUCTURE:**

***- Economic Infrastructure: operations classified under Energy, Transport, Telecoms, Composite Infrastructure, Water & Sewerage, Solid Waste, Urban Development or Civil Engineering***

***- Social Infrastructure: Operations classified under Health or Education***

PJ PCR Completion Year	Operation ID	Operation Name	Operation Description	Economic & Social Infrastructure	Sector	Financing Type Name	Country Name
2014	20050628	BIG UNIVERSITAETEN INFRASTRUKTURAUSBAU	New construction and upgrading of a number of public university facilities in Austria including Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Linz, Leoben and Klagenfurt.	Social Infrastructure	Education	Investment loan	Austria
2014	20060516	OEBB PRIORITY TEN WESTBAHN	Construction of two additional tracks on the Priority TEN-T Railway section between Vienna and St. Pölten, located on the "Westbahn" rail mainline.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2014	20070007	SICHERUNG ENERGIEVERSORGUNG LINZ	Construction of a waste-to-energy co-generation plant and expansion of a gas-fired combined-cycle power plant in the city of Linz.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2014	20070007	SICHERUNG ENERGIEVERSORGUNG LINZ	Construction of a waste-to-energy co-generation plant and expansion of a gas-fired combined-cycle power plant in the city of Linz.	Economic Infrastructure	Solid waste	Investment loan	Austria

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2017	20070451	WIENER WOHNEN STADTTEILSANIERUNG	The present operation concerns the fifth phase of the extensive rehabilitation and upgrading programme of the rental social housing stock of Wiener Wohnen to bring it up to contemporary housing quality standards.	Economic Infrastructure	Urban development	Investment loan	Austria
2016	20070460	OEBB WIEN HAUPTBAHNHOF TEN	Construction of the new main railway station in Vienna, at the junction of Priority TEN-T railway corridors 17 (Paris-Vienna-Bratislava), 22 (Nürnberg/Dresden-Prague-Vienna-Budapest-Athens/Constanta) and 23 (Gdansk-Warszawa-Brno/Bratislava-Wien).	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20080084	KRANKENHAUS WIEN NORD	The project consists in the construction of a new hospital in the northern district of Vienna.	Social Infrastructure	Health	Investment loan	Austria
2015	20080773	EVN GAS PIPELINES IN LOWER AUSTRIA	The Project concerns the construction and operation of two sections of a high-pressure natural gas pipeline over a total length of 267 km in the Federal State of Lower Austria.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2014	20090183	OEBB UNTERINNTAL	Construction of a 41km section of 2-track high-speed line on the Brenner railway axis (Berlin-Palermo TEN-T Priority Project n°1) between Kundl/Radfeld and Baumkirchen in the Lower Inn Valley in Tyrol (Austria).	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2015	20090472	WIRTSCHAFTSUNIVERSITAET WIEN	Construction of a new university campus	Social Infrastructure	Education	Investment loan	Austria
2015	20100408	IMWIND WIND POWER	The project consists in the construction and operation of four onshore wind parks for a total capacity of 131 MW, three of them	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria

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			located in Burgenland (Convergence Region in the East of Austria), and one in Niederösterreich near Vienna.				
2014	20100480	HYDRO POWER IN STYRIA	Construction of two 19 MW hydro power plants in Styria (locations of Goessendorf and Kalsdorf).	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2015	20100481	PUESPOEK WIND POWER	Construction of wind parks for a total capacity of 162 MW at two locations in the region of Burgenland (Mönchhof and Halbturn)	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2016	20100482	BEWAG AUSTRIAN WIND POWER	Construction and operation of 3 wind farms and two individual wind turbines located in the Austrian Burgenland (Convergence Region).	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2016	20100710	MITSUI LOCOMOTIVE LEASING II	Acquisition of a locomotive fleet of around 80 locomotives for medium-term leasing to European rail freight service operators.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20110056	WIENER WOHNEN ENERGIEEFFIZIENZ	Upgrading of social housing stock in the City of Vienna with particular focus on energy efficiency measures	Economic Infrastructure	Urban development	Investment loan	Austria
2017	20110062	S 10 SCHNELLSTRASSE SÜD (TEN)	Construction of a 22 km section of the S 10 Mühlenviertler Schnellstraße between Unterweikersdorf and Freistadt.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20110368	VERBUND PSP REISSECK II	The project is a 430MW pumped storage scheme for hydroelectric power generation, located within the boundaries of the municipalities of Mühlthal, Reisseck and Zandlach (Kärnten) at an altitude between 1600m and 2300m. It makes use of existing reservoirs and consists mainly of a new underground system of around 6km	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria

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			long water and access tunnels, the new Reisseck II pump and turbine house and a 3.5km long underground high voltage transmission cable.				
2018	20120060	WINDLANDKRAFT WIND POWER	Construction and operation of 4 onshore wind parks for a total capacity of 105 MW located in the Austrian Federal State of Lower Austria (municipalities of Leopoldsdorf, Untersiebenbrunn and Engelhartstetten). The promoter is an Austrian private company named WindLandKraft GmbH.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20120061	ENERGIEPARK BRUCK WIND POWER	Construction and operation of 7 onshore wind parks for a total capacity of 150 MW located in the Austrian Federal State of Lower Austria (municipalities of Bad Deutsch Altenburg-Carnutum, Höflein Ost, Rohrau, Haadfeld, Hof, Seibersdorf and Au). The promoter is an Austrian private company named Energiepark Bruck/Leitha GmbH.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20120198	OEBB AUSBAU WESTBAHN PRIORITY TEN-T	Expansion of capacity on the Westbahn railway (TEN-T PP 17) corridor (St. Pölten, Ybbs, Linz)	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2019	20120199	AQUA BURGENLAND SOPRON	Installation of a trans-boundary water supply system linking the systems between the water associations of the northern and central part of Burgenland and of Sopron. Rehabilitation and replacement of water supply infrastructure from 2013 to 2017.	Economic Infrastructure	Water, sewerage	Investment loan	Austria

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2017	20120235	WIEN ENERGIE WASTE TO ENERGY	Revamping and extension of the existing 72 MWth waste to energy plant Spittelau located in Vienna.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2017	20130177	EVN ELECTRICITY NETWORKS	2013-2016 capex programme of the Austrian regional utility company covering electricity networks in Lower Austria.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20130190	TUNNELSICHERHEIT 2013-2018	Tunnel safety investment programme in the Austrian motorway network	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2019	20130275	AUSTRIAN ENERGY EFFICIENCY FL	Funding of energy efficiency investments in social and private residential buildings supported by the Republic of Austria and/or Austrian Regions through dedicated grants programmes.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Framework loan	Austria
2019	20130275	AUSTRIAN ENERGY EFFICIENCY FL	Funding of energy efficiency investments in social and private residential buildings supported by the Republic of Austria and/or Austrian Regions through dedicated grants programmes.	Economic Infrastructure	Industry	Framework loan	Austria
2019	20130439	CITY BY-PASS ZWETTL	Design, built, finance, operation and maintenance a by-pass road around the city of Zwettl, district capital in the State of Lower Austria, within a PPP availability scheme	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20140022	OBERVERMUNTWERK	The project comprises two pumped storage schemes, Obervermuntwerk II of 360 MW and Rellswerk with 13 MW, for hydroelectric power generation, located in the valley of Montafon in the Austrian region of Vorarlberg, and required reinforcements of the substation in Bürs. The investment will add balancing capacity	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria

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			to the German power system and contribute to security of supply.				
2020	20140216	EFFICIENT UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE KLAGENFURT	Extension and refurbishment of the City's district heating and water networks, including replacement of fuel oil heat supply with gas and biomass installations.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20140216	EFFICIENT UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE KLAGENFURT	Extension and refurbishment of the City's district heating and water networks, including replacement of fuel oil heat supply with gas and biomass installations.	Economic Infrastructure	Water, sewerage	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20140253	OEBB INFRASTRUKTUR ERNEUERUNG	Rehabilitation of rail infrastructure across Austria.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20140292	STADT-REGIO-TRAM GMUNDEN- VORCHDORF	Construction of a rail link between the tram line of the city of Gmunden and the Traunsee regional railway and acquisition of rolling stock.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2019	20150210	KELAG ENERGY PRODUCTION AND NETWORKS	Investment programme in district heating, wind and hydro power production, and electricity distribution to be implemented over 2014-2017 by the regional multi-sector energy company of Carinthia.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20150519	WINDPARK PRETUL	Construction and operation of a 42 MW windpark in the state of Styria, Austria.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2018	20150689	ENERGIEPARK BRUCK ONSHORE WIND	Construction and operation of two wind parks and a single wind turbine in the Austrian Federal States of Lower Austria and Burgenland, respectively. The project has a total capacity of 39 MW. The two wind farms were appraised already as part	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria

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			of operation ENERGIEPARK BRUCK WIND POWER (2012-0061).				
2020	20160028	FOOD INDUSTRY RESOURCE EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION	Investment programme consisting of the modernisation of an integrated starch and bioethanol plant in Austria, the construction of a new sugar packaging line at a sugar mill in Hungary, and the support to the promoter's research and innovation programme.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria
2019	20160614	MITSUI RAIL EUROPE LOCOMOTIVE LEASING	Acquisition of a fleet of 67 new electric locomotives for leasing to European rail service operators mainly for freight operations in Germany, Italy and Austria.	Economic Infrastructure	Transport	Investment loan	Austria
2020	20170323	SIMONSFELD ONSHORE WIND	Construction and operation of three wind parks in the Austrian Federal State of Lower Austria. The project has a total capacity of 39 MW. One wind farm is a re-powering project.	Economic Infrastructure	Energy	Investment loan	Austria



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### III. Feedback by Slovene experts

Regarding the use of multiple EU-funding sources in one project, in Slovenia there is knowledge about preparing investment and design documentation, and on how to split costs. There is an issue with the financial programme used by the Ministry of Finance when co-financing one project with funds from different mechanism of the CPF. If the reporting process goes through different financial programmes, there are no problems.

For the conclusion - some key points that are used currently when drafting a measure that will encompass possibility of drawing funds from 2 specific objectives (SOs):

On the first hand, we distinguish between 2 expressions used:

- integrated approach - means financing several projects, measures on the basis of the same strategic background (like Sustainable urban strategy); so projects that derive from the SUS are integrated projects;
- complementarity measures: measures and projects with combination of funds - projects, enabling financing from different funding sources;

As for complementarity of funds:

- a) defined in the legal provisions for the implementation of different sources (explore different legal basis and backgrounds); set rules to avoid double financing (different cost/expenditure item from different source, grant vs loan etc.)
- b) if in frame of same policy (like cohesion policy) - provisions of general regulation - 2 different set of rules:
  - a. grant vs loan - easier, also same cost/expenditure item can be financed from 2 different funds provided that the whole amount does not exceed the set value for that item;
  - b. grant vs grant - requires separation on the cost/expenditure item + contribution to indicators/results;
    - the latter requires that a measure is already set in a way that clearly defines what part of the project can be financed from one SO/fund and what part of the project from other SO/fund;
    - that means that such "parts" of the projects must present a self-standing unit/activity/phase of a project - that because of the requirements of audit authority in Slovenia have to be defined as different operations;

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- that also means that we prepare a call for proposal (an example where we support energy renovation of buildings as EE measure and at the same time setting up a PV on the roof as RES measure) with 2 slots (financial, indicators, rules etc.) - we enable the applicant to apply with ONE project (in which 2 different activities, subprojects, phases have to be clearly separated - in the invest documentation<sup>3</sup>); if successful the applicant will have to enter 2 operations in the eMA system, he will be able to sign one (or two if he wishes) contract for co-financing the projects; he will have to divide claims for payment between both operations, the same goes for indicators.

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## Annex C: Good practices of integrated projects in degraded urban areas

Good practices of integrated projects in degraded urban areas from funding period 2014-2020 within ITI: content and funding approach.

### I. Poland

#### i. City of Zabrze

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Adjustment of didactic conditions to the implementation of the project objectives Our quality - Your chance - a comprehensive programme for the development of vocational education in Zabrze. (12.2.1) ERDF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/nasza-jakosc-twoja-szansa-kompleksowy-program-rozwoju-szkolnictwa-zawodowego/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/nasza-jakosc-twoja-szansa-kompleksowy-program-rozwoju-szkolnictwa-zawodowego/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The project aimed to raise the competences of students of vocational schools in the city by creating a vocational education infrastructure tailored to the requirements of professions and the needs of employers on the local labour market. The scope included the reconstruction of rooms for practical vocational training along with the provision of additional equipment in 3 institutions: School Complex No. 18 - a graphic design, photography, space arrangement studio, School Complex No. 10 - an interdisciplinary studio for electronics and IT classes, the Practical and Continuing Education Centre: automotive and mechatronics studio in the New Technologies Hall, the Technical Studio Complex - machining and electrical studio (Hall C), Construction Studio: bricklaying and plastering, concrete and reinforcement and road construction studio, and a studio for innovative forms of teaching vocational subjects.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the quality of vocational education in the Subregion. Mechanism of combining soft and infrastructural intervention - complementarity. Vocational workshops are used by students and teachers.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

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<b>Project activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational and career counselling for 1,194 students in Zabrze vocational schools participating in the project;</li> <li>• Improving students' professional skills by organizing specialist classes and courses and training providing professional qualifications;</li> <li>• Organizing internships and placements for 597 students with employers;</li> <li>• Improving professional skills and competences of 117 vocational education teachers/practical vocational training instructors;</li> <li>• Implementation of new innovative forms of education;</li> <li>• Equipping professional workshops so that they reflect the working conditions of employers to the greatest extent possible;</li> <li>• Increasing cooperation between schools and institutions and their socio-economic environment.</li> </ul>
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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Our quality - your chance - comprehensive programme for the development of vocational education. (11.2.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/nasza-jakosc-twoja-szansa-kompleksowy-program-rozwoju-szkolnictwa-zawodowego/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/nasza-jakosc-twoja-szansa-kompleksowy-program-rozwoju-szkolnictwa-zawodowego/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to increase the employability of 1194 students of Zabrze schools providing vocational education by equipping them with qualifications/skills in accordance with current labour market requirements and to increase the effectiveness of education as a result of equipping 116 teachers/training instructors of 14 schools and 1 institution with additional vocational skills/competences, as well as retrofitting of vocational laboratories of 15 schools and 1 institution so that they reflect natural working conditions to the greatest possible extent, and increasing cooperation between schools/institutions and their socio-economic environment.

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<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the quality of vocational education in the Subregion. Vocational workshops are used by students and teachers. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	95 % EU; 5 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	Design your professional life - renovation and equipment of the vocational laboratory at School Complex No. 3 in Zabrze
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/zaprojektuj-swoje-zycie-zawodowe-remont-i-wyposazenie-pracowni-zawodowej-w-zespole-szkol-nr-3-w-zabrze/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/zaprojektuj-swoje-zycie-zawodowe-remont-i-wyposazenie-pracowni-zawodowej-w-zespole-szkol-nr-3-w-zabrze/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project aimed to improve the competencies of students - automation technicians and fashion industry technicians - through the use of vocational training infrastructure tailored to the requirements of the profession and the needs of employers and the local labour market.</p> <p>The scope includes the creation of a group of laboratories for automation technology and fashion industry at School Complex No. 3 in Zabrze and the purchase of teaching equipment.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the quality of vocational education in the Subregion. Vocational workshops are used by students and teachers. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>To create reality - adaptation and equipment of the advertising technique laboratory complex at Technical School No. 6 in Zabrze. (12.2.1) ERDF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kreowac-rzeczywistosc-dostosowanie-i-wyposazenie-zespołu-pracowni-techniki-reklamy-w-technikum-nr-6-w-zabrze/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kreowac-rzeczywistosc-dostosowanie-i-wyposazenie-zespołu-pracowni-techniki-reklamy-w-technikum-nr-6-w-zabrze/</a>

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<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The project aimed to improve the competencies of students - advertising technicians - through the use of vocational training infrastructure tailored to the requirements of the profession and the needs of employers and the local labour market. The scope includes the creation of a set of advertising technology workshops at the Zabrze Centre for General and Vocational Education and the purchase of teaching equipment.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the quality of vocational education in the Subregion. Vocational workshops are used by students and teachers. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>New places, new start - Childcare services for children up to 3 years old (8.1.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://mapadotacji.gov.pl/projekty/784538/">https://mapadotacji.gov.pl/projekty/784538/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The project increased access to childcare services for children up to the age of three by creating a branch of the City Crèche (40 places
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Creation of 40 places, retrofitting of the facility, covering the running costs of the created places during the project. Impact on opportunities to return to work after becoming a parent. Activation of the labour market in the Subregion.
<b>Funding</b>	90% EU; 10% own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Pre-school our chance</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/przedszkole-nasza-szansa/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/przedszkole-nasza-szansa/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The objective of the project is to increase access to high quality pre-school education for 92 children aged 3-4 in 4 newly created branches and the remaining children attending Kindergartens No. 43,47,49 in

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	<p>Zabrze. Within the framework of the project, maintenance of 4 newly created branches</p> <p>preschool divisions in the Zabrze city area (within the framework of Measure 12.1.1) and implementation of additional specialist classes aimed at levelling deficits among children. As part of supplementary tasks, activities will be carried out to improve the skills and professional competences of teachers from the kindergartens covered by the project.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	<p>Improving the quality of pre-school education. Area of better education. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.</p>
<b>Funding</b>	<p>85 % EU; 15 % own contribution</p>
<b>Project activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of specialist services for a total of 96 children with disabilities (including alternative communication - PECS/AAC method, bilateral integration, classes with a psychologist, social skills training, multi-sensory stimulation, speech therapy, hand therapy, horticultural therapy).</li> <li>• Purchase of teaching aids supporting psychomotor and cognitive development.</li> <li>• Adaptation works aimed at adapting existing places to the needs of children with disabilities.</li> </ul>

<b>Topic</b>	<p><b>Preschool of our dreams - adaptation of kindergarten infrastructure in Zabrze for programme implementation (12.2.1) ERDF</b></p>
<b>Link</b>	<p><a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/przedszkole-naszych-marzen-dostosowanie-infrastruktury-przedszkolnej-w-zabrze-do-realizacji-programu">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/przedszkole-naszych-marzen-dostosowanie-infrastruktury-przedszkolnej-w-zabrze-do-realizacji-programu</a></p>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The aim of the project was to facilitate access to comprehensive pre-school education through the reconstruction of 3 Zabrze facilities: Kindergarten No. 43, ul. Klonowa 2, Kindergarten No. 47, ul. Kalinowa 9a, Kindergarten No. 49, ul. Sportowa 42.</p>

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	<p>In each of them, the effect of the project was additional educational rooms adapted to the needs of pre-schoolers, with particular emphasis on the age groups of 3 and 4 years old.</p> <p>Each of the investments also included elements related to the adjustment of the facilities to the needs of people with disabilities, the purchase of equipment necessary for educational activities. The project also resulted in modern playgrounds that meet all safety standards.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the quality of pre-school education. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<p><b>Comprehensive thermo-modernization of public buildings in the Zabrze area.</b></p> <p>The aim of the project is to increase energy efficiency in the public sector by reducing energy consumption in public utility buildings and reducing the costs of their operation and maintenance, and improving energy efficiency through the use of materials and technologies that promote better performance as part of a comprehensive thermal modernization project.</p>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznoscipublicznej-na-terenie-zabrze/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznoscipublicznej-na-terenie-zabrze/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project involved ten public buildings. It involved carrying out work to improve the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of windows and doors, modernization of internal heating systems and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system, door woodwork, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. The investment</p>



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	complies with legislation on emissions and energy efficiency, and contributes to the implementation of the local authorities' low-carbon management plans in line with the Central Subregion's ZIT Strategy.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Infrastructure improvement, ecology - increasing energy efficiency, low-carbon economy.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>The scope of project activities includes ten public utility buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten No. 16 at ul. Korczoka 96 in Zabrze</li> <li>• School and Kindergarten Complex No. 16 at ul. Cmentarna 7 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Freestanding gymnasium building and facilities at the School and Kindergarten Complex No. 16, at ul. Cmentarna 7 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Kindergarten No. 19 at 1 Konopnicka Street in Zabrze</li> <li>• Junior High School No. 29 at Budowlana 26 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Food School Complex at 13 Franciszkańska Street in Zabrze</li> <li>• Municipal Family Assistance Center - District Social Welfare Point at ul. Andersa 34 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Municipal Nursery at Buchenwaldczyków Street 32 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Children's Home at ul. Park Hutniczy 15 in Zabrze</li> <li>• Primary School No. 1 at ul. Sportowa 5 in Zabrze</li> </ul> <p>The project consists of carrying out works aimed at improving the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of window and door joinery, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar installation. The planned investment complies with the regulations on pollutant emissions and energy efficiency and will contribute to the implementation of low- emission economy plans of local governments in accordance with the ZIT Strategy of the Central Subregion.</p> <p>Additional effects of the project implementation:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the aesthetic and functional values of the buildings subjected to thermal modernization and the city as a commune promoting ecological solutions</li> <li>• Improving ecological conditions in the city and the quality of life of residents: reduction of greenhouse gases, reduction of pollutant emissions into the atmosphere and improvement of the quality and condition of the air</li> <li>• Reduction of air pollution in the commune and rational use of energy, which will directly translate into improvement of the living conditions of residents,</li> <li>• Improving the image of the commune and increasing the investment attractiveness of the commune implementing the assumptions of the SC Strategy in the field of using environmentally friendly solutions (making the region more attractive and improving its competitiveness).</li> </ul>
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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comprehensive thermal modernization of public buildings in Zabrze - phase II</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrze-etap-ii/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrze-etap-ii/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project involved a further three public buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten No. 14 at ul. Piotra Ściegiennego 1 in Zabrze,</li> <li>• Junior High School No. 9 at ul. Olchowa 2 in Zabrze,</li> <li>• Municipal Nursery at 2 Niedziałkowskiego Street.</li> </ul> <p>It involved carrying out work to improve the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of windows and doors, modernization of internal central heating systems and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. door carpentry, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting,</p>

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	installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. The investment complies with legislation on emissions and energy efficiency and contributes to the implementation of the local authorities' low-carbon management plans in line with the Central Subregion's ZIT Strategy.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Infrastructure improvement, ecology - increasing energy efficiency, low-carbon economy.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comprehensive thermal modernization of public buildings in Zabrze - phase III</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosc-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrza-etap-iii/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosc-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrza-etap-iii/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project involved a further four public buildings. It involved carrying out work to improve the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of windows and doors, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar power system.</p> <p>door carpentry, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. The investment complies with legislation on emissions and energy efficiency and contributes to the implementation of the local authorities' low-carbon management plans in line with the Central Subregion's ZIT Strategy.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Infrastructure improvement, ecology - increasing energy efficiency, low-carbon economy.
<b>Funding</b>	40 % EU; 60 % own contribution

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comprehensive thermo-modernization of public utility buildings in Zabrze (4.3.1) - phase IV. The aim of the project is to reduce air pollution in the commune and to rationally use energy, reduce energy consumption in facilities and reduce their maintenance costs.</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrze-etap-iv/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrze-etap-iv/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project involved a further five public buildings. It involved carrying out work to improve the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of windows and doors, modernization of internal central heating systems and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system.</p> <p>door carpentry, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. The investment complies with legislation on emissions and energy efficiency, and contributes to the implementation of the local authorities' low-carbon management plans in line with the Central Subregion's ZIT Strategy.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Infrastructure improvement, ecology - increasing energy efficiency, low-carbon economy.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution
<b>Project activities</b>	<p>The scope of project activities includes 4 educational institutions – 5 public buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary School No. 28, Kosmowska Street 43,</li> <li>• ZSP No. 8 – Kindergarten and School ul. Badestinusa 30,</li> <li>• Kindergarten No. 22, Gwarecka Street 13</li> <li>• Kindergarten No. 39, Pobożnego 5</li> </ul>

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comprehensive thermal modernization of public buildings in Zabrze (4.3.1) - phase V</b>
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<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrza-etap-v/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/kompleksowa-termomodernizacja-budynkow-uzytecznosci-publicznej-na-terenie-zabrza-etap-v/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project involved a further four public buildings. It involved carrying out work to improve the energy condition of the building, including, depending on the building, insulation of building partitions together with replacement of windows and doors, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar power system.</p> <p>door carpentry, modernization of internal central heating installations and modernization of heat sources, replacement of lighting, installation of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, installation of a solar thermal system. The investment complies with legislation on emissions and energy efficiency and contributes to the implementation of the local authorities' low-carbon management plans in line with the Central Subregion's ZIT Strategy.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Infrastructure improvement, ecology - increasing energy efficiency, low-carbon economy.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Interchange centre in Zabrze</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/2024/02/12/centrum-przesiadkowe-zabrze-goethego-otwarte-dawna-belka-zmienila-sie-nie-do-poznania/">https://miastozabrze.pl/2024/02/12/centrum-przesiadkowe-zabrze-goethego-otwarte-dawna-belka-zmienila-sie-nie-do-poznania/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project included the construction of two transfer centres in Zabrze: in the city centre at Goethego Street and in the Rokitnica district at Krakowska and Ofiar Katynia Streets. The first location will involve the construction of a facility with an area of approx. 10.4 thousand m2 with bus platforms, a P&amp;R car park, a waiting room, and associated services. The second location will include open platforms, a small outdoor car park and a facility with an area of 276 m2 (waiting room and minor services). In two locations, the possibility of charging EVs, a Kiss&amp;Ride zone and associated infrastructure (dynamic</p>

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	passenger information boards and space occupancy boards in the P&R car park) will be provided. Road reconstruction will be planned to the extent necessary to include the infrastructure and the construction and reconstruction of the infrastructure network.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Low emissions, improving communication infrastructure, popularizing public transport.
<b>Funding</b>	75 % EU; 25 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Social revitalization in the City of Zabrze with particular emphasis on the areas identified in the LPROM - Social Services Centre</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/rewitalizacja-spoleczna-na-terenie-miasta-zabrze-ze-szczegolnym-uwzglednieniem-obszarow-wskazanych-w-lprom-centrum-uslug-spolecznych/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/rewitalizacja-spoleczna-na-terenie-miasta-zabrze-ze-szczegolnym-uwzglednieniem-obszarow-wskazanych-w-lprom-centrum-uslug-spolecznych/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	This project consisted of creating a space conducive to activities in the field of activation and prevention of social exclusion through the reconstruction and adaptation of a building located at 7 Stalmacha Street in Zabrze for the purpose of creating a Social Services Centre.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Restoration of the historic fabric. Development of infrastructure for the delivery of social services. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Family Support Centre - development of social services in Zabrze. (9.2.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/centrum-wsparcia-rodziny-rozwoj-uslug-spolecznych-na-terenie-zabrze/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/centrum-wsparcia-rodziny-rozwoj-uslug-spolecznych-na-terenie-zabrze/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to increase the availability and quality of social services in Zabrze. Activities are directed to people excluded or at risk of poverty or social exclusion and their environment, families, families/candidates for foster families. The CWR envisages work with children and young people in community centres, family assistantship, a foster care centre, a seniors' club, assistant services for people with

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	disabilities, the launch of a coordination point for support for people with disabilities and their families. Indicators realized within the framework of the project are the number of places of social services existing after the end of the project - 43 and the number of people covered by social services - 300 (195K/105M) people.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Development of social services. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	93 % EU; 7 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Community activity programme for the Zandka district (9.1.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/program-aktywnosci-lokalnej-dla-dzielniczy-zandka/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/program-aktywnosci-lokalnej-dla-dzielniczy-zandka/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to increase the social and professional activity of the local community of the Zandka district (a district included in the revitalization process). The activities are targeted at people who are excluded or threatened by poverty or social exclusion and their environment (from the areas covered by the Local Revitalization Programme) as well as the local community of the entire Zandka district. The PAL (Local Activity Programme) includes activities connected with building social bonds and local animation, local initiatives, activities for the social and professional development of the inhabitants of Zandka.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Development of social services. Social revitalization. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	95 % EU; 5 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>We act - we change. Family Development Centre. (9.2.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/dzialamy-zmieniamy-centrum-rozwoju-rodziny/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/dzialamy-zmieniamy-centrum-rozwoju-rodziny/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project was to increase the availability and quality of social services in Zabrze. Activities targeted at people excluded or at risk of poverty or social exclusion and their families and surroundings. The project included

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	Daytime support for children and young people, consultation, and specialist support for families from revitalized areas, family assistantship. Support for the social revitalization process.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Development of social services (including for families). Social revitalization. Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	93 % EU; 7 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>We act - we change 2. (9.2.1) ESF</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/dzialamy-zmieniamy-2/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/dzialamy-zmieniamy-2/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to increase the availability and quality of social services in Zabrze. The activities are targeted at people excluded or at risk of poverty or social exclusion and their families and environment. The project includes support for daytime support for children and young people (25 persons, 15 F, 10 M), specialist support for families from revitalized areas, family assistantship (15 persons, 10 female, 5 male).
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Development of social services (including for families). Mechanism for combining soft and infrastructural interventions - complementarity.
<b>Funding</b>	93 % EU; 7 % own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Get started and you too - comprehensive support programmes for the unemployed</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/zaczynij-i-ty-kompleksowe-programy-wsparcia-dla-osob-bezrobotnych/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/zaczynij-i-ty-kompleksowe-programy-wsparcia-dla-osob-bezrobotnych/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The main goal of the project is to reduce unemployment by increasing the professional activity of participants and changing their status in the labour market. The aim is to activate 100 unemployed people (60 women and 40 men), in particular those most disadvantaged in the labour market (women, people aged 50+, people with disabilities, people with low qualifications and the long-term unemployed). Project participants will have at their disposal such forms of assistance



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	as: -vocational counselling, -job placement, -IPD (Individual Action Plans) - development and updating, -training, -internships, - intervention work.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the employability of jobseekers and the unemployed in revitalized areas.
<b>Funding</b>	95% EU; 5% own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Starter pack</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/2019/01/24/projekt-pakiet-na-start/">https://miastozabrze.pl/2019/01/24/projekt-pakiet-na-start/</a> <a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/2019/01/28/miasto-zabrze-realizuje-projekt-pakiet-na-start/">https://miastozabrze.pl/2019/01/28/miasto-zabrze-realizuje-projekt-pakiet-na-start/</a> <a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/dla-biznesu/projekty/projekt-pakiet-na-start/promocja-projektu-pakiet-na-start/">https://miastozabrze.pl/dla-biznesu/projekty/projekt-pakiet-na-start/promocja-projektu-pakiet-na-start/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to develop entrepreneurship among the unemployed and economically inactive people over 30 years of age in the revitalized areas of the City of Zabrze through the creation of 34 jobs in the form of self-employment (34 one- person business activities) - training and counselling support, a grant for starting a business and bridge support for 12 months. The project is aimed at people belonging to at least one of the following groups: - women (in particular those returning to the labour market after a break related to childbirth), - people with disabilities, - long- term unemployed, - over 50 years of age, - low-qualified.
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Support for people intending to start a business. Increase in self-employment in revitalized areas.
<b>Funding</b>	97% EU; 3% own contribution

<b>Topic</b>	Language and computer training. Training for working people
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/jezykowo-komputerowo-szkolenia-dla-osob-pracujacych/">https://miastozabrze.pl/miasto/projekty-unijne-i-krajowe/jezykowo-komputerowo-szkolenia-dla-osob-pracujacych/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The aim of the project is to improve the qualifications of working adults in the area of foreign languages (English, German, French)

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	<p>and/or ICT competences or qualifications (ECDL or equivalent and specialized IT courses/training). W</p> <p>The project also allowed for validation and certification of skills acquired outside the project. The project was aimed at people working or living in Zabrze (a city in the SC area of Śląskie Voivodeship) belonging to disadvantaged groups, i.e. those showing the greatest competence gap and having the greatest need in access to education. The project participants were interested in gaining, supplementing or increasing their competences on their own initiative. The project covered min. 282 persons, including persons with low qualifications, persons aged 50+, persons aged 25+.</p>
<b>Obtained effects</b>	Improving the professional qualifications of adults. Building the concept of life-long learning. Strengthening the local labour market with people with higher qualifications and skills.
<b>Funding</b>	85 % EU; 15 % own contribution

## II. Croatia

### i. Region Krapina-Zagorje

<b>Topic</b>	<b>re-Generator / Culture ITI Project</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://re-generator.hr/">https://re-generator.hr/</a> (includes links to social networks) Town Zabok (newsletters of the project): <a href="https://www.zabok.hr/re-generator/">https://www.zabok.hr/re-generator/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	The project of reconstruction of the centre of urban culture in Zabok (Croatia) was submitted to the Call for proposals "Revitalization of brownfield locations" within the mechanism Integrated Territorial Investments - Urban agglomeration Zagreb area (OP Competitiveness and cohesion 2014-2020).
<b>Funding amount</b>	Total eligible costs of the project: 4,4 million € Allocated grant: 3,7 million €
<b>Project activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of design and technical documentation</li> <li>• Reconstruction of the building</li> <li>• Equipping the building</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotional activities</li> <li>• Project management</li> </ul>
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ii. Region Primorije Gorski Kotar, Municipality of Viskovo

<b>Topic</b>	Infrastructure
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://opcina-viskovo.hr/projekt-radna-zona-mariscina-k-2-u-opcini-viskovo">https://opcina-viskovo.hr/projekt-radna-zona-mariscina-k-2-u-opcini-viskovo</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	The goal of this project is to encourage the improvement of the entrepreneurial climate in such a way as to attract new investors and create opportunities for the creation of new jobs in the area of Viškovo Municipality. The project includes the construction of the 1st and 2nd phases of an unclassified road (GMU 1 road) with infrastructure (water supply installation, water drainage, public lighting, telecommunications network, gas corridor and basic low-voltage electrical installation) and a plateau in the Business Zone Mariščina K-2.
<b>Project activities</b>	

iii. Region Primorije Gorski Kotar, City of Kastav

<b>Topic</b>	Start-up Incubator
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://kastav.hr/projekt/kastav-smart-start/">https://kastav.hr/projekt/kastav-smart-start/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	The "Kastav Smart Start" is a project whose implementation aims to enable newly founded as well as existing SMEs to realize their potential and ideas more easily within the framework of the newly launched start-up incubator in Kastav, i.e. influence the development of entrepreneurial culture and create a stimulating environment for self-employment and raising work competencies for employment.  The Kaspi incubator was opened in June 2022.

iv. Region Primorije Gorski Kotar, City of Rijeka

<b>Topic</b>	IT & Creative technologies
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<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/energana-startup-inkubator-za-kreativne-tehnologije-industriju/">https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/energana-startup-inkubator-za-kreativne-tehnologije-industriju/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	<p>The main goal of the project is to strengthen the competitiveness of IT and creative technologies in the area of UA Rijeka and encourage the development of competitive products and services with greater added value, through the expansion of the system of existing business incubators and the increase of their quality and the services they offer. The project will stimulate the growth and development of newly established and existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the IT sector and creative industries in the area of the Urban Agglomeration of Rijeka.</p> <p>With the reconstruction of the Energana building in the former Rijeka Paper Factory, more than 2.700m<sup>2</sup> of usable area will be arranged on three floors.</p>

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Energy Efficiency</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/obnova-toplinarstva-grada-rijeke/">https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/obnova-toplinarstva-grada-rijeke/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	<p>The goal of the project is to increase the energy efficiency of the heating system and the reliability of the heating energy supply in the area of the city of Rijeka by investing in the modernization of production facilities, i.e. heating plants, and the distribution network, with a gradual transition to an energy-efficient centralized heating system. The scope of the project refers to the renovation of 7.9 km of the existing hot water distribution network, the construction of 2.5 km of new connecting hot water pipes and the renovation of 7 Rijeka thermal systems</p>
<b>Funding</b>	<p>Total value of the project: 112.270.986,39 HRK</p> <p>Total eligible costs of the project: 106.924.107,46 HRK</p> <p>Amount of EU co-financing/grants: 83.893.707,80 HRK (78,46%)</p>

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Let's connect with heritage</b>
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<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/povezimo-se-bastinom/">https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/aktualni-projekti/povezimo-se-bastinom/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	Planned activities in this project include the establishment of 13 new or improved cultural and touristic locations in the area of UA Rijeka and include built or revitalized facilities aimed at strengthening touristic, economic and regional development based on the cultural identity of the Rijeka Urban Agglomeration area.
<b>Funding</b>	Total value of the project: 76.328.201,95 HRK Amount of EU co-financing: 36.369.926,74 HRK

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Revitalization City Center</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/zavrzeni-projekti/revitalizacija_kompleksa_bencic_cigleni_i_t_objekt/">https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/zavrzeni-projekti/revitalizacija_kompleksa_bencic_cigleni_i_t_objekt/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	<p>The project includes the revitalization of the former industrial complex "Rikard Benčić" in the centre of Rijeka and the conversion of buildings within the complex into public cultural and educational purposes. The former Rikard Benčić building, known under the name T-objekt, is being reconstructed and equipped as the headquarters of the Rijeka City Library.</p> <p>The former Rikard Benčić building, called the "Cigleni" Building, was reconstructed and equipped as a Children's House, and was opened in March 2021.</p>

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mobility and public transport</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/zavrzeni-projekti/jacanje-sustava-javnog-prijevoza/">https://www.rijeka.hr/gradska-uprava/eu-projekti/zavrzeni-projekti/jacanje-sustava-javnog-prijevoza/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The project represents the modernization of the existing fleet, which implies the purchase of 32 new buses. As part of the project, informative displays will be introduced to announce the arrival of buses at stops, smart traffic lights will be introduced at a total of six intersections in Rijeka, and a mobile and web application will be created to announce the arrival of buses at stops.

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v. Region Primorje Gorski Kotar, City of Čavle

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://www.cavle.hr/izgradnja-interne-ceste-u-zoni-proizvodne-namjene-i2-soboli/">https://www.cavle.hr/izgradnja-interne-ceste-u-zoni-proizvodne-namjene-i2-soboli/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	The "Construction of an internal road in the production zone I2 Soboli" project is aimed at developing and improving the quality and availability of physical entrepreneurial infrastructure in the area of the Rijeka Urban Agglomeration through investment in the existing zone I2 Soboli and increasing the competitiveness of SMEs, creating new jobs, increasing rates of foreign and domestic investments, raising the profitability of business and increasing the standard of living in the environment.

vi. Region Primorje Gorski Kotar, City of Lovran

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://poslovnazonalokva.com/o-projektu/">https://poslovnazonalokva.com/o-projektu/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	The main purpose of infrastructure development in Lokve zone is to create conditions for starting the investment cycle of new business entities; creation of conditions for increasing the number of employees, improving the results of business entities in the area of the Zone; revitalization of the area and initiation of economic dynamics and protection of the environment. The expected results of achieving the objectives of the development of Lokva zone are primarily the creation of conditions for attracting investors, developing entrepreneurship and increasing the number of employees.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://drustvenidomlovran.com/o-projektu/">https://drustvenidomlovran.com/o-projektu/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	The Municipality of Lovran will reconstruct the building of the former barracks in Zaheji, which is located next to the Lokva football field, and thus finally stop its long-term deterioration and put it at the service of about twenty Lovran cultural-artistic, sports and many other

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	associations and clubs that are today scattered in various locations. By arranging these spaces, non-profit organizations from the area of Lovran will get adequate office space and a multifunctional hall for their activities, which will enable the unhindered work of various civil society associations.
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vii. Region Primorje Gorski Kotar, City of Opatija

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Start-up Incubator</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://hubbazia.opatija.hr/">https://hubbazia.opatija.hr/</a>
<b>Main goals</b>	<p>The implementation of this project establishes a start-up incubator focused on creative solutions in tourism - HUBBAZIA. The area of Villa Antonio was arranged and equipped within the project, and during the implementation of the project, programme cycles for entrepreneurs will be established and implemented, aimed at strengthening them and encouraging the creation of new companies.</p> <p>The HUBBAZIA incubator was opened in July 2021. The user completed the project activities.</p>

viii. Region Primorje Gorski Kotar, City of Kastav

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Revitalization City Center</b>
<b>Link</b>	<a href="https://kastav.hr/projekt/revitalizacija-bivseg-industrijskog-postrojenja-preda/">https://kastav.hr/projekt/revitalizacija-bivseg-industrijskog-postrojenja-preda/</a>
<b>Main activities completed in the indicated task/project</b>	By implementing this project, the City of Kastav will renovate the old neglected industrial facility "Preda" and convert it into a business and administrative building of the city administration with accompanying business premises and a multifunctional hall.

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### III. Lithuania

#### i. Region City of Zarasai

Within the framework of the EU Integrated Territorial Development Fund 2014-2020, assessment of progress in the implementation of the ITI for the Utena region case study (final evaluation report, Annex 5) is as of April 30, 2018 (as amended on June 12, 2018) the following projects mentioned:

- Road reconstruction in the city of Zarasai Zaraso Str.
- Complex improvement of public spaces in the city of Zarasai in the area between Darius- Girėnas Street and Šiaulių Street and in two courtyards of two residential buildings on P. Širvzs Street - under implementation
- Establishment of a shopping and service arcade at D. Bukonto Street, Zarasai
- Improvement and implementation of public spaces on the Big Island in Lake Zaraso
- Renovation of the event infrastructure on the Big Island in Lake Zarasas and implementation
- Improving public spaces at Lake Zarasaitis and establishing infrastructure for active recreation
- Development and reconstruction of water supply and sanitation infrastructure in Zarasai Municipality - Implementation
- Expansion of pedestrian and cycle paths on the shore of Griežtas Lake from Vytautas Street to Griežtas.
- Improving the accessibility of the living environment in Zarasai through the reconstruction of E. Pliaterytės str.
- Renovation of Zarasai Sports Center (improvement and adaptation of interiors) for non- formal education

### IV. Feedback from Slovene experts

Degraded urban areas represent the first goal for Slovenia, however IBs are not landowners. In the period 2014-20 one of the conditions for which a project is eligible for ITI funds (PN 6.3) was that the project is located in a degraded urban area.



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## **ANNEX D: Other funding instruments for projects in (degraded) urban areas**

In the next chapter a list of further funding instruments for integrated project in (degraded) urban areas has been elaborated (eg. CPF programmes – ERDF/ESF, ITI, Interreg, Urbact, UIA/EUI, CERV, RRF, Rural development programme, Norwegian Financial Mechanism, ...). For each funding instrument a number of projects has been identified and described. As for the comparability of projects, the indicators used were similarity in topics, project sizes in budgetary terms, project areas.

### **I. Vienna's Main Train Station**

#### **Business Case – Vienna's Main Train Station Development Process**

Vienna has long been a major hub for both rail and international travel in Central Europe. The development of the main train station (Wien Hauptbahnhof or Vienna Central Station) is part of a comprehensive urban renewal and infrastructure expansion project aimed at enhancing transportation, stimulating economic growth, and improving the city's global connectivity. The process of its planning and development is a business case that highlights the intricate balance between public investment, commercial opportunities, and social benefits. This summary explores the rationale behind the project, its economic drivers and the implementation challenges faced during the development of the station.

##### **a) Background and Objectives**

Vienna's previous central train station, the Südbahnhof (South Railway Station), was no longer able to meet the demands of a modern and expanding city. The infrastructure was aging, and the station lacked the capacity to handle the increasing traffic of both regional and international trains. Moreover, there were limitations in terms of passenger facilities, accessibility, and the station's integration into the broader urban landscape. This prompted the decision to develop a new central station, capable of modernizing the city's transportation network while fostering urban development.

The project, known as Wien Hauptbahnhof, was conceived as more than just a new transportation terminal. It was envisioned as a focal point for urban renewal, offering the potential for mixed-use development that would transform a large section of the city. The objectives behind the station's development were multifaceted:

- **Improved Transport Infrastructure:** The station needed to serve as a central hub for national and international rail services, including high-speed trains (such as the Railjet and the European high-speed rail network). It was essential for better integration with the metro, tram, and bus systems.

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- **Urban Development:** The area surrounding the station, particularly the former Südbahnhof site, was to be revitalized to create commercial, residential, and office spaces. The goal was to turn this part of Vienna into a vibrant urban centre that could support the city's growth.
- **Sustainability and Efficiency:** The development was expected to feature cutting-edge environmental technologies and to operate with high energy efficiency, supporting Austria's commitment to sustainability.
- **Economic Growth and Employment:** The business case hinged on leveraging the station's development to stimulate the local economy. This included creating job opportunities during construction, fostering retail and commercial activities in the station complex, and driving long-term economic benefits for Vienna.

#### **b) Financial and Economic Considerations**

The business case for Vienna's main train station was rooted in a combination of public investment and private sector involvement. The project was largely funded by the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB), with substantial contributions from the city of Vienna and other public entities. The total investment for the entire project was estimated at over 1 billion €.

**Revenue Generation and Economic Impact:** A critical part of the business case was the anticipated revenue from the commercial development surrounding the station. This included retail spaces within the station itself, office buildings, hotels, and residential areas. The station's prime location and expected high foot traffic made it an attractive site for commercial tenants, thus ensuring that the development would be financially viable in the long term.

The integration of commercial spaces into the station's design created a symbiotic relationship between transportation and business activity. The station itself would generate significant rental income from shops, restaurants, and offices. Additionally, the district surrounding the station, once fully developed, would contribute further revenue through real estate sales and leases. The entire project was designed to enhance Vienna's status as a business and tourism destination, thus boosting overall city revenues.

**Cost Structure and Risk Management:** Given the scale and complexity of the project, it was crucial to manage the cost structure and ensure risk mitigation. The development was executed in phases to spread out the financial burden. The construction of the train station itself was followed by the development of surrounding commercial and residential areas. The timeline for the project spanned several years, with various stages of construction being coordinated to minimize disruption and optimize capital flow.

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Risk management strategies were also key to the project's success. The development team, consisting of ÖBB, private contractors, and city planners, employed a collaborative approach to ensure that potential risks related to construction delays, environmental impacts, and financial overruns were addressed.

### **c) Development Phases and Challenges**

The development of Wien Hauptbahnhof was divided into several phases, each with its own set of challenges and milestones.

- **Planning and Design Phase:** Initial planning began in the early 2000s, with a goal of transforming the entire Südbahnhof area into a modern transport and business hub. Architects, urban planners, and engineers were brought together to create a station that would not only accommodate the projected increase in passenger traffic but also integrate seamlessly with Vienna's broader transportation network.
- **Construction Phase:** The construction of the station took place from 2008 to 2014, with the complex involving a mix of underground and above-ground work. One of the major challenges faced during this phase was minimizing disruption to existing train services. Construction work had to be carefully scheduled to avoid significant impacts on daily train operations. Moreover, there were issues related to urban planning, as the station had to be integrated with the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Operational Challenges:** Upon opening, Wien Hauptbahnhof became a significant transit point, handling millions of passengers each year. Early operational challenges included managing crowd flow, ensuring connectivity between various transport modes, and integrating new technologies into the station's operations. However, these issues were gradually addressed, and the station has since become a model for modern transportation hubs in Europe.

### **d) Social and Environmental Impact**

The development of Wien Hauptbahnhof also had substantial social and environmental implications. The creation of new residential areas, commercial spaces, and recreational facilities was expected to improve the quality of life for residents in the vicinity. Moreover, the station was designed with sustainability in mind. It incorporated energy-efficient technologies such as a green roof, solar panels, and rainwater recycling, which helped reduce its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

The project also provided significant social benefits, including job creation during the construction phase and long-term employment opportunities in the retail, service, and office sectors once the station was operational.

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### e) Conclusion: Long-Term Business Viability

The business case for Vienna's main train station development is characterized by a careful balance between public investment and private commercial opportunities. By transforming a former industrial site into a modern transportation and business hub, the project has provided significant economic, social, and environmental benefits to the city.

The development has successfully positioned Vienna as a central European gateway for international travel while revitalizing an underdeveloped area of the city. Its integration of transport and commercial spaces has proven to be a model of urban development, combining infrastructure with business opportunities to deliver long-term financial sustainability.

In conclusion, Wien Hauptbahnhof is more than just a transportation facility; it is a transformative urban project that has reshaped Vienna's infrastructure and economic landscape. The successful implementation of this development serves as an example of how large-scale infrastructure projects can achieve significant returns on investment while also enhancing urban livability.

## II. Funding instruments 2014-2020

### i. Funding instrument: URBACT (funded from ERDF)

#### **URBACT supports cities to develop integrated practices**

Cities can learn a great deal from each other's experiences, that's why URBACT funds and supports **networks of cities**. Partners share ideas around bottom-up initiatives and co-design long-term strategies and urban policies – all at European and local levels.

City-makers need the right skills to make positive change and to push for more integrated and participative practices. This is why URBACT proposes **capacity-building activities** and tools for city representatives and urban professionals.

To inspire practitioners and decision-makers in the EU and beyond, URBACT capitalises on cities' success stories by sharing urban knowledge and policy recommendations.

#### **Beneficiaries:** cities

**Specific objectives:** To ensure that practitioners and decision-makers at all levels (EU, national, regional and local) have increased access to URBACT thematic knowledge and share know-how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban policies; To improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way; To improve the

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design of sustainable urban strategies and action plans in cities; To improve the implementation of integrated plans for sustainable urban development.

ii. Funding instrument: Urban Innovative Actions 14-20

Initiative of the EC promotes innovative measures in sustainable urban development. UIA provides room and resources for urban authorities across Europe to test new approaches and solutions to complex, real-world challenges. The projects funded must be innovative, of high quality, developed with the participation of key stakeholders, oriented towards results, and suitable for implementation.

iii. Funding instrument: Interreg (funded from ERDF)

Interreg is one of the key instruments of the EU supporting cooperation across borders through project funding. As part of the EU's Cohesion Policy, Interreg plays a vital role in promoting regional development, cohesion and reducing economic disparities. It aims to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more.

Interreg programmes are divided along 3 strands of cooperation: cross-border (supports cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different EU Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them), transnational (involves regions from several countries of the EU forming bigger areas where it aims to promote better cooperation and regional development within the Union by a joint approach to tackle common issues), interregional/EU-wide (interregional programmes are geographically "pan-European" covering vast areas, include the following programmes: Interreg Europe, Interact, Urbact and Espon).

Beneficiaries can range from local associations, regional governments, regional development agencies, energy agencies, Chambers of Commerce, to national ministries, universities, R&D institutions, etc.

Funding is provided on the basis of open, thematic, or revolving calls.

iv. Funding instrument: HORIZON EUROPE

Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.

It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.

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The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting, and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports the creation and better diffusion of excellent knowledge and technologies.

It creates jobs, fully engages the EU's talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness, and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

Legal entities from the EU and associated countries can participate.

Funding is provided on the basis of calls for proposals or calls for tenders.

v. Funding instrument: Norwegian Financial Mechanism (NFM)

The Norwegian Financial Mechanism (NFM) is a key financial instrument designed to support the economic and social development of EU countries that are part of the European Economic Area (EEA), as well as non-EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The NFM focuses on areas such as environmental protection, climate change mitigation, social inclusion, health, and cultural heritage, among others. The funding is often directed towards various urban development projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure, improving living conditions, and fostering sustainable growth.

The contribution from NFM 2014-2021 shall not exceed 85% of eligible expenditure of the programme, with some exceptions. The amount of grant assistance applied for within a programme shall normally not be less than 1.000.000 €.

**Beneficiaries:** Any entity, public or private, commercial, or non-commercial and non-governmental organizations, established as a legal person in the respective Beneficiary State are considered eligible **project promoters**. Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organizations established as a legal person either in Norway, the Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or any international organization or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, are considered eligible **project partners**.

Examples of urban development projects co-funded through the NFM are aimed at improving infrastructure, sustainability, and social inclusion in urban areas, they focus on various sectors such as **energy efficiency, transport, environmental protection and public services**.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=URED3708>

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### III. Project examples from funding period 2014-2020

Project title	Funding instrument	Topic	Funding
<b>Vilawatt UIA transfer mechanism</b>	URBACT 14-20	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b> To improve the design of sustainable urban strategies and action plans in cities</p> <p>VILAWATT [TM] aims to help local governments to drive their energy transition process by the creation of an innovative governance structure (local public-private-citizen partnership), providing four key services to improve energy management at local level: energy supply, energy culture, retrofitting of buildings and a local crypto currency linked to energy savings. The project aims to increase citizen commitment and sense of belonging to promote a sustainable energy transition process.</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 533.675,00 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total EU funding: 373.572,50 €</li> <li>• Co-financing sources: ERDF</li> </ul>
<p>Spaces for circular co-creation and action</p> <p><b>Project acronym:</b> Resourceful Cities</p>	URBACT 14-20	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way</p> <p>The Resourceful Cities network seeks to develop the next generation of urban resource centres to promote the positive economic, environmental, and social impacts for the circular economy. They facilitate waste prevention, reuse, repair, and recycling. The centres also work as connection points for citizens,</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 749.824,49 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total EU funding: 582.435,37 €</li> <li>• Co-financing sources: ERDF</li> </ul>

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		new businesses, researchers, and the public sector to co-create new ways to close resource loops at the local level.	
Circular Building Cities; <b>Project acronym:</b> URGE	URBACT 14-20	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way</p> <p>URGE (circULaR buildinG citiEs) aims to design integrated urban policies on circularity in the building sector – a major consumer of raw materials – as there is a gap in knowledge on this topic. The result is an in-depth understanding of this theme and a first plan for a tailor-made methodology that allows the circular dimension to be widely integrated in the large construction tasks the URGE partnership is facing. URGE thus accelerates the transition towards a circular economy.</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 748.494,20 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total EU funding: 568.927,11 €</li> <li>• Co-financing sources: ERDF</li> </ul>
Building Regulations Information for Submission Involvement, <b>Project acronym:</b> BRISE Vienna	Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) 14-20	The BRISE digitization project set out to improve public administration in the City of Vienna and thus the lives of the population. In a “city of short distances” like Vienna, it allows for faster and more efficient administrative processing. Digital and analogous participation processes guarantee democratic, service-oriented progress towards a modern, sustainable city administration. BRISE has set new standards for submission and permit procedures in building and construction. The project	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 6 million €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-financing: 4,8 million €</li> <li>• Source: ERDF</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vienna – Chief Executive Office for Strategic ICT,</li> </ul>



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		<p>results can be transferred to other fields of administration and other European cities.</p> <p>The BRISE project combined high-tech methods like Building Information Modelling (BIM), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR) to allow for a comprehensive, fully digital and automated building permit procedure. It uses digital 3D building models instead of 2D planning documents. As a result, BRISE provides an innovative basis for the entire building administration process – from planning and submission to building site inspections and, finally, handing over the finished structure. The combination of high-tech methods reduced project risks and expenses, improves schedules, eases the workload of administrative staff, increases transparency and leads to better results overall. BRISE was successful among 175 projects submitted by applicants from 23 EU member countries. As a European showcase project, BRISE created essential future know-how for Vienna and the whole of Europe. BRISE's unique approach combined aspects of technical and organizational relevance. It further developed ICT infrastructure and software with the help of AI, AR and BIM, always oriented towards practical application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vienna – Chief Executive Office for Construction and Technology,</li> <li>• tbw – ODE (the better way – office for digital engineering) – expert consultants for digitisation processes,</li> <li>• TU Vienna – Vienna University of Technology – Construction Engineering and Computer Science,</li> <li>• WH – Media,</li> <li>• ZT-Kammer – Chamber of Civil Engineers, Architects and Engineers for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland</li> </ul>
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<p>CORE – Integration in the centre</p> <p><b>Project acronym:</b> CORE</p>	<p>Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) 14-20</p>	<p>The project used numerous measures to already prepare refugees for the labour market in Austria during the asylum procedure: A database for recording competence was thus developed in order to document strengths and abilities from the outset and to use them as best as possible. In addition, refugees were accompanied in their vocational planning and prepared for entrepreneurship in selected professions. A focus was placed on refugee teachers for whom own training and support programmes are offered. For people who want to set up their own business, there were info events in order to clarify potential and boundary conditions. Furthermore, support services for volunteers working with refugees were developed further and a Housing First programme was implemented. In addition, in a think-tank, national and international challenges in the integration sector were discussed and future-oriented solutions developed.</p> <p>With facilities in the 15th district in Vienna, CORE not only offered the space but also the organizational infrastructure so that organizations, associations, civil society initiatives and above all also refugees themselves can implement integration offers. Within the framework of CORE, information modules were</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 6 million €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-financing: 4,8 million €</li> <li>• Source: ERDF</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Vienna – Integration and Diversity,</li> <li>• Vienna Social Fund,</li> <li>• Vienna Employment Promotion Fund,</li> <li>• Vienna Business Agency</li> <li>• European Office/Board of Education for Vienna,</li> </ul>
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		<p>developed that aim to make orientation in Vienna easier. In the process, refugees act as experts for their own account: Selected persons are trained as mentors who support other refugees and make life and settling in the city easier for them. CORE also opted for refugees as experts in the field of health promotion. The participative approach of CORE ensured that refugees can design integration offers themselves and actively collaborate in the project.</p> <p><b>Innovative approaches:</b></p> <p>CORE thus created new integration offers that make integration easier for refugees in Vienna from the outset and accelerate the entire integration process. The project was closely associated with the implementation of the concept "Integration ab Tag 1" ("Integration from Day 1") of the city of Vienna with which refugees in receipt of basic services are given perspectives from the first day in Vienna.</p>	
<p><b>PERFECT</b></p> <p>Planning for Environment and Resource efficiency in</p>	<p><b>INTERREG EUROPE 14-20</b></p>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 2.501.314 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total EU funding: 2.126.116,90 €</li> <li>• Co-financing sources: ERDF: 2.126.116,90 €</li> </ul>

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<p>European Cities and Towns</p>		<p>programmes, in the field of the protection and development of natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>The socio-economic and environmental services provided by the protection, development and exploitation of natural heritage in urban areas are collectively known across Europe as 'green infrastructure' and the aim of the PERFECT project is to improve the implementation of regional development policies for the protection and development of natural heritage through the recognition of the multiple benefits of Green Infrastructure by Managing Authorities, partners and stakeholder groups. In 2013 the EC adopted a strategy which recognised that investment in Green Infrastructure enables nature to deliver benefits to ecosystems and to people, including health and quality of life, that are key to driving jobs and growth while tackling our environmental challenges head on. In addition, EU Structural Funding programmes encourage the improved resource efficiency of natural heritage but, despite extensive proven good practices and growing evidence from across Europe, many Managing Authorities, practitioners and politicians, working in the municipalities and public bodies responsible for natural</p>	<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town &amp; Country Planning Association (United Kingdom)</li> <li>• Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung (Austria)</li> <li>• Comune di Ferrara (Italy)</li> <li>• Mestská časť Bratislava-Karlova Ves (Slovakia)</li> <li>• Somogy Társadalmi Felemelkedésért Fejlesztési, Kommunikációs, Oktatási Nonprofit Kft (Hungary)</li> <li>• Regionalna razvojna agencija Ljubljanske urbane regije (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Gemeente Amsterdam (Netherlands)</li> <li>• Cornwall Council (United Kingdom)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b></p> <p>2017 - 2021</p>
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		<p>heritage, are unaware of the multi benefits of Green Infrastructure to increase competitiveness. Investment in natural heritage is often overlooked or misunderstood and the PERFECT project aims to redress the balance and raise awareness of the value of the natural heritage through the exchanges of good practice, study visits and peer-to-peer working. PERFECT partners will work with regional stakeholders and inter-disciplinary teams within their organisations to identify and integrate the multi-use of Green Infrastructure into long-term policies and practices, and crucially, investments. PERFECT outputs will include 7 Action Plans for new and improved GI through maximising its multiple benefits; Expert Paper and Factsheets; Guidance on Green Infrastructure Partnership working, and a MAGIC (Multi-Advantages of Green Infrastructure in Cities) Matrix of good practices.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>In terms of activities, the project has organised a total of 86 policy learning events. It has also identified 19 good practices, produced 8 action plans and led to the increased capacity of 40 people. In terms of results, the project has succeeded in improving 8</p>	
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		regional development policies for a total amount of funds influenced of 89.512 €.	
<b>TRIBUTE</b>  inTegRated and Innovative actions for sustainaBle Urban mobiliTy upgradE	<b>INTERREG VB Adriatic</b>  - <b>Ionian 14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>Enhance capacity for integrated transport and mobility services and multimodality in the Adriatic-Ionian area</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>City transport is facing the challenges posed by the new technologies and by the undergoing socioeconomic and demographic changes, seeking for more efficient solutions and mobility services tailored to citizens' new travel behaviors and needs. TRIBUTE project aims at creating and testing integrated innovative tools and actions in the Adriatic-Ionian (AI) cities, by means of the creation and the implementation of eight living labs on sustainable urban mobility. These will be the mean to discuss transport policies and solutions (best practices), and to share views about the future needs following a participatory approach involving governmental institutions, businesses, researchers, and citizens (i.e. the quadruple helix).</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>TRIBUTE Transnational Strategy: A common Transnational Strategy for sustainable urban mobility in the cities of the</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 3.269.400 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total EU funding: 2.778.990 €</li> <li>• Co-financing sources: <b>ERDF:</b> 2.414.000 € , <b>IPA/IPA II/IPA III:</b> 364.990 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politecnico di Milano (Italy)</li> <li>• Comune di Milano (Italy)</li> <li>• Grad Sarajevo (Bosnia Herzegovina)</li> <li>• Mestna Občina Maribor (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Grad Novi Sad (Serbia)</li> <li>• Municipality of Patras (Greece)</li> <li>• Grad Zagreb (Croatia)</li> <li>• Glavni grad Podgorica (Montenegro)</li> <li>• Mestna občina Ljubljana (Slovenia)</li> </ul>

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		Adriatic-Ionian (AI) Region has been defined: this has been rooted in the results of the implemented project activities, related deliverables, and outcomes. Particularly, the Strategy considers the key findings from TRIBUTE project analyses, concerning: - socio-demographic changes and travellers' behaviour in the AI Region; - recommendations from the Action Plans, also including the analysis of best practices and policy guidelines in the three main areas of intervention of the TRIBUTE project, i.e. innovative public transport services, green cycling route network, and management of highly congested road corridors; - policy recommendations about the transferability of TRIBUTE results and outcomes to other cities in the AI region.	<b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2021 - 2023
<b>AtlaSWH</b> Heritage in the Atlantic Area: sustainability of the urban world heritage sites	<b>INTERREG VB Atlantic Area 14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b> Enhancing natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The urban World Heritage sites (WHS) represent an important cultural value in the context of the Atlantic Area. The AtlaS.WH project intends to create a network of urban WHS, by addressing common challenges related to the protection of their identity, while enhancing their cultural assets, in order to stimulate</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 1.822.665 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 1.366.998,75 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 1.366.998,75 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipio do Porto (Portugal)</li> <li>• Bordeaux Métropole (France)</li> <li>• Comune di Firenze (Italy)</li> </ul>

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		<p>heritage-led economic and cultural development. AtlaS.WH will be an important step for their preservation, enhancement, and sustainability. The main objectives are: i) To address, within a common methodology, the main challenges that each WHS is facing, including tourism, gentrification, risk management, climate change, energy efficiency, among others; ii) To develop strategies and public policies for the sustainability of urban WHS; iii) To create governance models, open to the community, integrated and participative; iv) To develop management tools, recommendation guides, assessment and measurement models; v) To create a long-lasting network of WHS, in order to disseminate best practices and to reinforce cooperation. The main result will be the Sustainability Plans for each WHS, by implementing an integrated and participative management and monitoring model, which arises from the common construction of a methodology and the exchange of know-how and best practices.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>Each of these WHS faces challenges related to tourism, population, risk management, climate change, energy efficiency, among others. This long-lasting network facilitates the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ciudad de Santiago de Compostela (Spain)</li> <li>• Edinburgh World Heritage (United Kingdom)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2020</p>
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		dissemination of good practices, the development of strategies, public policies, governance models and the strengthening of cooperation with a view to urban sustainability and the social well-being of populations. Throughout ATLAS.WH, several studies were carried out to better understand the reality of each WHS and to develop a common approach to the identified challenges, namely: “Diagnostic Study”; “Thematic Study on Common Challenges”; “Methodology” and “Firenze, Santiago de Compostela, Edinburgh, Porto, Bordeaux: mind the map”. These studies served to inform the Management and Sustainability Plans whose elaboration and implementation is one of the main objectives of this project.	
<b>GreenSAM</b> Green Silver Age Mobility	<b>INTERREG VB Baltic Sea 14-20</b>	<b>Specific Objective:</b> ‘Environmentally friendly urban mobility’: To enhance environmentally friendly transport systems in urban areas based on increased capacity of urban transport actors  <b>Description:</b> Although a lot of cities in the Baltic Sea region are introducing green urban mobility solutions, the majority of senior citizens remains reluctant towards these alternatives. The GreenSAM project develops a toolbox of good practices and potential	<b>Total budget:</b> 1.934.854,98 €  • <b>Total EU funding:</b> 1.531.832,09 €  • <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 1.531.832,09 €  <b>Partnership:</b> • City of Hamburg (Germany) • Aarhus Kommune (Denmark)

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		<p>obstacles for the participation of seniors in the decision-making processes in green urban mobility. The toolbox applied by public authorities in Hamburg, Aarhus, Gdansk, Tartu and Riga enables to exchange knowledge in efficient involvement of seniors and increasing their acceptance of eco-friendly mobility services such as collective transport and ridesharing.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>The project made an important step to increase the acceptance of eco-friendly mobility services among senior citizens. The eight GreenSAM partners from six countries of the Baltic Sea region jointly developed guidance for improved participation of elderly citizens in green urban mobility solutions. The developed solutions focused on inducing behaviour change among the user group of elderly citizens, helping public authorities to gain structured knowledge on the user needs, and increasing needs-driven decision-making in urban mobility planning. A big emphasis was made on the transnational exchange and dissemination of the results is an important aspect of the project, too. The dissemination strategy includes the exchange with seven Follower Cities: Gothenburg and Växjö (Sweden), Oslo (Norway), Tampere (Finland), Vilnius (Lithuania), Gdynia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gmina Miasta Gdańska-Urząd Miejski w Gdańsku (Poland)</li> <li>• Tartu Linnavalitsus (Estonia)</li> <li>• Rīgas pilsētas pašvaldība (Latvia)</li> <li>• Valonia / Varsinais-Suomen liitto (Finland)</li> <li>• Balti Uuringute Instituut (Estonia)</li> <li>• Turun ammattikorkeakoulu Oy (Finland)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2019 - 2021</p>
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		(Poland), St. Petersburg (Russia). The project also developed solutions and made impact assessment for age-friendly public space for green mobility. The partners explored a number of issues related to the general public space design with regards to senior needs. This included possibilities for making older people feel more confident with green mobility modes, exchanging the experience and success stories, as well as institutionalizing of practices.	
<b>SURFACE</b>  Smart Urban Reuse Flagship Alliances in Central Europe	<b>INTERREG VB Central Europe 14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To improve environmental management of FUAs to make them more liveable places</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Large volumes of waste &amp; wastewater, poor air and water quality, high levels of ambient noise, lack of integrated environmental management are relevant issues in FUAs. Reuse is a highly relevant approach to tackle them. Despite recent improvements at transnational level there is still a highly fragmented decision-making landscape in this field. SURFACE's main objective is to improve environmental management &amp; quality of life of FUAs through the establishment of multi-stakeholder based Smart Re-Use parks as a possible solution for</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 2.168.025 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 1.776.088,50 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 1.776.088,50 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abfallwirtschaft Tirol Mitte GmbH (Austria)</li> <li>• ZAK Abfallwirtschaft GmbH (Germany)</li> <li>• Insieme società cooperativa sociale a r.l. (Italy)</li> </ul>

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		<p>increasing sustainability in selected FUAs. The change consists in the availability of a harmonized &amp; evidence based decision making setting in the field of waste prevention &amp; reuse in CE area where: 1) reuse &amp; waste prevention options become integrated options of environmental management strategies &amp; action plans, 2) urban decision makers can share decisions, 3) multi-stakeholder cooperation schemes and Smart ReUse Parks Action Plans can be shared and used; 4) tested &amp; validated Pilots can be studied and 5) an increased set of immediately usable instruments be adopted through twinning training schemes. 7 outputs guide to this change: 1 Menu of Modular Reuse and Synergic oriented Urban Practices in Waste Prevention, 2 A Multi-Stakeholder Permanent Forum on Urban Waste Prevention Plans, 3 Cooperation Matrix, 4 Regional Smart Reuse Park Action Plans, 5. Smart ReUse Parks Pilots, 6. Smart ReUse Parks Activation Tool, 7 Smart ReUse Twinning Scheme are. SURFACE innovative approach is based on 1) a participatory system / Multi-Stakeholder Permanent Forum on Urban Waste Prevention Plans, 2) an on-site, real case based delivery of Smart Re-Use Park services portfolio. SURFACE involves complementary &amp; synergic partners in different small and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bay Zoltán Alkalmazott Kutatási Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. (Hungary)</li> <li>• CENTER PONOVSNE UPORABE d.o.o., SO.P. (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Województwo Kujawsko-Pomorskie (Poland)</li> <li>• Provincia di Rimini (Italy)</li> <li>• Reuse and Recycling European Union Social Enterprises (Belgium)</li> <li>• ACT Grupa (Croatia)</li> <li>• IURS - Institut pro udržitelný rozvoj sídel z.s. (Czech Republic)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2020</p>
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		<p>medium-sized cities to contribute to the development of local waste prevention &amp; reuse based environmental management strategies and plans.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>The SURFACE project brought together 10 partners from Central Europe (AUT, BEL, CZE, DEU, HUN, ITA, PL, SLO) with the aim to set up multi-stakeholder based Smart Re-Use parks as a possible solution for increasing sustainability in selected FUAs. The involved regions benefitted from the transnational cooperation through know-how-exchange and learning from best practice examples. This knowledge exchange was especially addressed with the regularly held Multi-Stakeholder-Fora and the Twinning Learning Journeys. Project outputs and results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Action Plans and Strategies for the 9 involved FUA.</li> <li>• 5 Tools and Services for establishing urban re-used oriented roadmaps and Smart Re-Use Parks.</li> <li>- SRP-Activation Toolbox: A set of open-source documents and tools to help start a Smart Re-use Park.</li> <li>• 5 Smart Re-use Parks (SRP) in IT, AT, DE, PL, HU including two digital platforms.</li> <li>• 4 Feasibility studies were carried out for future SRP in IT, CZ, SI, HR.</li> <li>• 18 regions and cities in total were working on the set-up of SRP: The impact of the project increased twofold through the</li> </ul>	
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		<p>‘Twinning scheme’ where each partner region engaged a ‘twin’ partner interested in replicating the SRP. • 366 people were trained in the course of the Multistakeholder Forum on Urban Waste Prevention Plans; the SRP training schemes and activation tools trainings. • 9 implemented Twinning plans and trainings. • 5 Twinning Learning Journeys with personal and virtual site visits at the SRPs and thematic workshops were performed.</p> <p>Cooperation continues: The consortium committed to keep supporting each other and boost re-use even after the project end through regular online multistakeholder forums every 6 months. The results helped to improve environmental management and quality of life of the involved FUAs in the CE programme area through reducing waste streams, creating jobs, offering new trainings, and boosting investments, creating a set of tools for harmonized and evidence-based decision-making setting in the field of waste prevention and re-use.</p>	
<p><b>UGB</b></p> <p>Urban Green Belts – Smart integrated models for sustainable management of urban</p>	<p><b>INTERREG VB Central Europe 14-20</b></p>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To improve environmental management of FUAs to make them more liveable places</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 2.391.306,02 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 2.005.049,99 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 2.005.049,99 €</li> </ul>

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<p>green spaces for creating more healthy and liveable urban environments</p>		<p>Living in a large city to have a park or garden right on your doorstep is such an advantage most property seekers are looking for. Such greens offer you an improved life quality. They not only provide leisure or sports facilities but make the air cleaner, reduce urban noise and even improve the urban climate. Yet if they are not in a good shape they can easily turn into a burden and a constant “battlefield” between inhabitants and the responsible authorities.</p> <p>Green belts, often spreading over a number of smaller settlements around big cities, are the “lungs” of these densely populated cities that can provide various environmental, social and economic benefits. To achieve these, however, traditional authority approaches are no longer enough and efficient. So how these green spaces could be managed smartly through cooperation of inhabitants and various authorities, using also 21st century tools will be in the focus of Urban Green Belts. There is a common demand for better functioning operational models in Central Europe, yet project partners would not have the capabilities to develop a complex novel system on their own. Through improving capacities of all actors via this joint work, management of urban green spaces will become more efficient</p>	<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budapest Főváros XII. Kerület Hegyvidéki Önkormányzat (Hungary)</li> <li>• The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary)</li> <li>• Research Studios Austria – Studio iSPACE (Austria)</li> <li>• Comune di Padova (Italy)</li> <li>• Mariborska razvojna agencija (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Městská část Praha 6 (Czech Republic)</li> <li>• Województwo Małopolskie (Poland)</li> <li>• Agencija za razvoj Zadarske županije ZADRA NOVA (Croatia)</li> <li>• Gmina Miejska Kraków (Poland)</li> </ul>
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		<p>and a more integrated part of environmental management systems. This will also lead to an enhanced biodiversity, improved air quality, less urban noise, more bearable urban heat waves and a generally improved quality of urban life.</p> <p>Urban Green Belt partners from 7 countries will develop innovative methods and tools (based on applying Green Infrastructure, community involvement and multi-level governance concepts) leading to integrated models for managing urban green spaces smartly. How these novel solutions work will be tested jointly through pilot actions and compiled into a Manual to serve as guidance on reforming green spaces management for any public authority in Europe for the benefit of inhabitants.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>Throughout the project, the partners, with nearly 300 stakeholders, studied the effectiveness of the models and designed local pilot activities. Stakeholders included national, regional, and local organizations, knowledge partners, small entrepreneurs and NGOs as well as representatives of the local people. The pilot activities carried out in the partner cities will continue to live on and be integrated into longer-term plans for</p>	<p><b>Period of Implementation:</b></p> <p>2016 - 2019</p>
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		managing urban green areas. For example, the stewardship programme at Hegyvidék, or Krakow with good practices for maintaining and animating an urban forest, or a GIS-based green space quality indicator system in Salzburg and Padua, or a tree cadastre, could be the basis for further urban green development initiatives.	
<b>DTP1-037-3.1</b> <b>CHESTNUT</b> CompreHensive Elaboration of STrategic plaNs for sustainable Urban Transport	<b>INTERREG VB Danube</b> <b>14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>Support environmentally friendly and safe transport systems and balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas (short title). Improve planning, coordination and practical solutions for an environmentally friendly, low-carbon and safer transport network and services in the programme area contributing to a balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>CHESTNUT will contribute to developing a better-connected &amp; interoperable environmentally friendly transport &amp; safe system in FUAs of Danube Region, overall based on integration between more sustainable means. Whilst TEN-T corridors and a better exploitation of Danube River as transportation way could improve transportation of people &amp; goods on long distance, they wouldn't solve the great internal problems affecting cities and</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 2.004.272,18 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 1.703.631,35 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 1.581.316,95 € ; <b>IPA:</b> 122.314,40 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mestna občina Velenje (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Община Димитровград (Bulgaria)</li> <li>• Razvojna agencija Grada Dubrovnika DURA (Croatia)</li> <li>• Agencija za razvoj Zadarske županije (Croatia)</li> <li>• Technische Universität Wien (Austria)</li> </ul>

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		<p>their surroundings, in terms of first-mile and last-mile mobility, due to intense daily commuting as well as short urban trips made both by cars. The combination of these different aspects leads to congestion, noise, air pollution, emission of CO2 in atmosphere, accidents (more frequent in urban roads). CHESTNUT will face these issues, all affecting coastal, inland and border urban areas involved in the project, by developing a joint methodology to depict mobility scenarios, drafting Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) at FUA level (to support new policy making with a special focus on PEOPLE), implementing 12 joint pilot actions involving sub-groups of project partners. The expected change that CHESTNUT intends to bring concerns both an enhancement of regional/local authorities' capacity in sustainable inter-modal mobility planning at super-communal level (FUA) and promotion of urban mobility models less dependent on car. Policymakers and officials of regional/local authorities, managers of PT, interest groups, will overall use the forecasted outputs. CHESTNUT is clearly linked to EUSDR strategy, Pillar A "Connecting the Danube Region", Priority 1 "To improve mobility and multimodality". The strategy emphasizes that mobility goes beyond technical aspects and infrastructure: it includes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regionalni razvojni center Koper (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Stadtgemeinde Weiz (Austria)</li> <li>• Pannon Gazdasági Hálózat Egyesület (Hungary)</li> <li>• AGENTIA PENTRU DEZVOLTARE REGIONALA CENTRU (Romania)</li> <li>• Městská část Praha 9 (Czech Republic)</li> <li>• LIR Evolucija (Bosnia and Herzegovina)</li> <li>• Budapest Főváros XIV. kerület Zuglói Önkormányzata (Hungary)</li> <li>• MUNICIPIUL ODORHEIU SECUIESC (Romania)</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2016 - 2019</p>

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		organizational issues, meeting overall transport demand and seasonal/ daily traffic peaks, spatial planning, lifestyles, innovations, etc.; all aspects that CHESTNUT will face in an integrated manner.	
<b>CESBA MED Sustainable MED Cities</b>	<b>INTERREG VB Mediterranean 14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To raise capacity for better management of energy in public buildings at transnational level.</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Energy efficiency improvement is a key strategy to reduce the environmental impact of public buildings. But usually, energy efficiency plans do not fully exploit the potential for synergies that groups of buildings might offer. Energy efficient measures and their implementation at neighbourhood level (i.e. district heating, PV installations, etc.) are showing clearly that a building scale approach is not optimal in reaching significant and cost-effective improvements. However, at neighbourhood scale, decision making processes and the design of the intervention are more complex. Many EU projects addressed this issue proposing different methodologies, tools and indicators. CESBA MED intends to test 10 of them and to select the most affordable and operational solutions. On the base of the test results' evaluation,</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 3.105.405 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 2.639.594,25 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 2.639.594,25 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Torino (Italy)</li> <li>• Energetski institute Hrvoje Požar (Croatia)</li> <li>• Common European Sustainable Built Environment Assessment (Austria)</li> <li>• Institute for Environmental Research &amp; Sustainable Development – IERSD (Greece)</li> <li>• University of Malta (Malta)</li> <li>• City of Sant Cugat del Vallès (Spain)</li> </ul>

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		<p>a common sustainability assessment framework at urban scale, a set of 8 regional assessment tools (CESBA MED SNTTool) and an innovative decision-making process will be defined to support the development of energy efficiency plans for public buildings in the context of their surrounding neighbourhoods. CESBA SNTTool will allow to produce the MED Passport to compare the performances of buildings and neighbourhoods, in line with the EC COM 2014 445. A CESBA MED network of cities will be set up to maximize results' transferability. Training courses and workshops will be organized in the MED area. The project will be part of the European CESBA initiative.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>WP1PPs worked to organize the 6th PP and SC meeting that took place in March in Marseille and involved all PPs. PPs worked to organize the 7th PP and SC meeting that took place in July in Lyon. PPs to submit the PR4 end of March. In June the AFV5 have been submitted. WP2PPs continued to disseminate information about the project. WP5PPs participated to the jury meeting of the CESBA Award in Marseille on March 27 and to the seminar and training workshop the following day. PPs were also present at the conference where the awards winners were presented, in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain)</li> <li>• AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES ÉNERGIE ENVIRONNEMENT (France)</li> <li>• EnvirobatBDM (France)</li> <li>• Comune di Udine (Italy)</li> <li>• iiSBE Italia R&amp;D S.r.l. - I.S. (Italy)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2016 - 2019</p>
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		Scilla in May 2019. PPs made various presentations to share experience in sustainable building and participatory certification. PPS went to Brussels in June for EUSEW and for the PP meeting organized by GENCAT and SCUGAT to work on Policy Guidelines contents.	
<b>SHICC</b> Sustainable Housing for Inclusive and Cohesive Cities	<b>INTERREG VB North  West Europe 14-20</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>To enhance innovation performance of enterprises throughout NWE regions</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>The project seeks to address the growing problem with housing affordability found in many cities in the NWE region, by supporting the establishment of more and successful Community Land Trusts (CLTs), initially in four cities to prove the concept; - Brussels (Be), London (England), Ghent (Be) and Lille (Fr) - and then in cities (above 10,000 inhabitants) across the region. CLTs are democratic community-based organizations that develop and manage homes that are affordable to people on low and median incomes and remain affordable. CLTs create cohesive neighbourhoods through ongoing affordability and extensive community and resident involvement. The CLT sector in the NWE region is underdeveloped and unevenly spread -</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 3.769.419,84 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 2.261.651,90 €</li> <li>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b> 2.261.651,90 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ville de Lille (France)</li> <li>• South of Scotland Community Housing (United Kingdom)</li> <li>• id22:Institut für kreative Nachhaltigkeit e.V. (Germany)</li> <li>• vzw Samenlevingsopbouw Gent (Belgium)</li> <li>• National Community Land Trust Network (United Kingdom)</li> <li>• And the People (Netherlands)</li> </ul>

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		<p>there are only 33 urban CLTs, of which 30 are in England and Wales (the remaining 3 are in Belgium and France) - and, where CLTs are present, the movement is still fragile. However, there is a growing interest in this innovative approach amongst communities and authorities and significant potential for CLTs to move from a niche model to a mainstream option for housing supply and urban renewal. To achieve that the project aims to 1) prove the concept; 2) create a supportive local, regional and national policy, funding and regulatory environment for CLTs, and 3) build a movement across the region. The main outputs of the project will be: 1) four successfully established pilot CLTs; 2) a voucher scheme leading to the start-up of 33 new urban CLTs; 3) a shared online platform and, 4) a policy paper on financial gaps and a financial guide for CLTs. The long-term effect of the project will be achieved through a supportive funding and policy environment in all parts of the region, a growing widespread awareness of CLTs, and an infrastructure of support for new CLTs. That will ultimately lead to 500 urban CLTs, 7.000 urban CLTs homes delivered and 21.000 people housed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOA Research CLG (Ireland)</li> <li>• Fonds Mondial pour le Développement des Villes / FMDV (France)</li> <li>• Community Land Trust Bruxelles (Belgium)</li> <li>• London Community Land Trust (United Kingdom)</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2021</p>
<b>SECAP</b>	<b>INTERREG V-A Italy – Slovenia 14-20</b>	<b>Specific Objective:</b>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 2.940.351,30 €</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Total EU funding:</b> 2.499.298,58 €</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Support for energy and climate adaptation policies</b></p>		<p>Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>The common challenge of the project is to offer practical support to the municipalities of the partner area for the implementation of sustainable energy and climate adaptation policies, which are reflected in the transition from SEAPs to SECAP. The main objective of the project is to improve energy planning by local operators, focusing on energy saving, renewable energy, reduction of CO2 emissions and mitigation measures related to climate change. The change that we want to bring about comes from choosing a transnational strategic approach, which will lead to the development of timely adaptation measures, ensuring consistency between different sectors and levels of governance, in order to understand the impacts of climate change and implement policies for optimal adaptation, through the development of regional and local strategies, consistent with those at national level. The presence of Slovenian Ministries as associated partners and the FVG Region ensures that choices will be shared with governance bodies, guaranteeing the coherence</p>	<p>• <b>Co-financing sources: ERDF:</b></p> <p>2.499.298,58 €</p> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regione Fvg Direzione Centrale Ambiente ed Energia (Italy)</li> <li>• Golea - Agenzia Per L'energia Di Nova Gorica (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Leag - Agenzia per l'energia della Gorenjska (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Rra Lur (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Občina Pivka (Slovenia)</li> <li>• UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE (Italy)</li> <li>• Area Science Park (Italy)</li> <li>• CITTA' METROPOLITANA DI VENEZIA (Italy)</li> <li>• Universita' Iuav di Venezia (Italy)</li> <li>• Unioncamere del Veneto (Italy)</li> </ul>
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		<p>of the strategy with national and regional action plans and development policies. The results will be a unified cross-border strategy, supporting the transition to a green economy, and creating new job opportunities; training sessions for municipalities and raising public awareness; transition of some SEAPs to CFSP; other pilot actions aimed at defining methodologies for a CFSP adapted to local needs, as well as small infrastructure investments to monitor emissions into the atmosphere and energy consumption.</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>The common challenge that the project set itself was to offer practical support to the municipalities of the partner area for the implementation of sustainable energy and climate adaptation policies, which are reflected in the transition from SEAP to SECAP. The main objective of the project is to improve energy planning by local operators, focusing on energy saving, renewable energy, the reduction of CO2 emissions and mitigation measures related to existing climate changes. The change, which we wanted to implement, derives from the choice of a strategic transnational approach, which led to the development of timely adaptation measures, which guarantee</p>	<p><b>Period of Implementation:</b></p> <p>2017 - 2021</p>
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		<p>coherence between the different sectors and levels of governance, in order to understand the impacts of climate change and to implement policies for optimal adaptation, through the development of regional and local strategies, coherent with national ones. The presence of Slovenian Ministries, as associated partners, and the FVG Region ensures the sharing of choices with governance bodies to ensure consistency of the strategy with action plans and with national and regional development policies. The results were a unitary cross-border strategy, for the transition to a green economy, proposing new job opportunities; training sessions for municipalities and public awareness; transition of some SEAPs into SECAPs; other pilot actions aimed at defining methodologies for a SECAP adapted to local needs, as well as small infrastructural investments to monitor atmospheric emissions and energy consumption.</p>	
<p><b>ROBUST</b></p> <p><b>Rural-Urban Outlooks:</b></p> <p><b>Unlocking Synergies</b></p>	<p><b>HORIZON 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>Mutually beneficial relations along rural – peri-urban – urban trajectories can contribute substantially to Europe’s smart, sustainable and inclusive growth agenda. Success in creating synergies is largely determined by decisions made at local and</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 5.999.937,50 €</p> <p><b>Total EU funding:</b> 5.999.934 €</p> <p><b>Co-financing sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RIA - Research and Innovation</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> 5.999.934 €</p>

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		<p>regional levels. Well-designed governance arrangements can be conducive to decisions that strengthen beneficial relations between rural and urban areas. Central to ROBUST is a place-based case study approach in which the case studies focus on thematic functional linkages cutting across rural-urban areas. The content and governance of these functional linkages are analysed in diverse case study areas that represent the main types of rural – peri-urban – urban settings across Europe. ROBUST will identify and strengthen policies, governance systems and practices that can contribute more effectively to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Particular attention will be paid to the capacities of municipal and regional governments, the related administrations and other stakeholders to deliver and enhance mutually beneficial relations. ROBUST aims to provide practice-oriented information about successful governance models applicable to different settings as well as related communication and training material. In ROBUST, the questions and research needs of practice partners will guide the research process. Researchers will support the related multi-actor consultations through data collection and analysis, by providing suitable platforms and through facilitation. The</p>	<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY (Netherlands)</li> <li>• 23 partners (public, private, academic) from 10 countries</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2021</p>
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		<p>insights co-generated by research and practice partners and stakeholders will be translated into tools, including scenario development, as well as training materials and capacity building measures. ROBUST will in this way contribute to a better understanding of rural-urban interactions, and it will at the same time enhance the capacity of relevant actors and institutions to foster mutually beneficial relations along rural – peri-urban – urban trajectories.</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Rural and urban areas have traditionally been seen as separate entities. However, both can provide advantages to one another and facilitate inclusive development, which is crucial for a sustainable Europe. This necessitates strong collaborations and policies that support both agricultural and urban areas. To address these goals, the EU-funded ROBUST project will explore the mutual interactions between rural and urban areas in an effort to discover effective governance arrangements that promote rural-urban cooperation. A key premise is that communities can be more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient if well-being is prioritised over economic growth. The project will also generate valuable insights and best practices for</p>	
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		<p>polymakers, planners, and practitioners, and make these available through its "Rural-Urban Learning Hub".</p>	
<p><b>MatchUP</b></p> <p>MAximizing the UPscaling and replication potential of high level urban transformation strategies</p>	<p><b>HORIZON 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>MAchUP project aims at strengthening the planning processes for urban transformation, consolidating the benefits of deploying large scale demonstration projects of innovative technologies in the energy, mobility and ICT sectors, by means of substantially improved models for replication and upscaling, based on impacts evaluation, and ensuring the bankability of the solutions by means of innovative business models, which lead to achieve real deployment further than the pilots carried out in the lighthouse cities. With this, it is sought a high penetration of the validated technologies in those cities less prepared to adopt very innovative solutions and formalize it in a standard commitment, accompanied by capacity building strategies, to guarantee at least medium-term implementation.</p> <p>The expected results will be achieved working in parallel in demonstration and upscaling/replication levels, so the lighthouse cities (Valencia-Spain, Dresden-Germany and Antalya-Turkey) and followers (Ostend-Belgium, Herzliya-Israel,</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 19.425.922,74 €</p> <p><b>Total EU funding:</b> 17.418.339 €</p> <p><b>Co-financing sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IA - Innovation Action:</b> 17.418.339 €</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AYUNTAMIENTO DE VALENCIA (Spani)</li> <li>• 37 partners (public, private, academic) from 8 countries</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2023</p>

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		<p>Skopje-FYROM and Kerava-Finland) will assume a huge commitment in this project in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- deploy innovative solutions in the energy, mobility, and ICT sectors with a strong monitoring programme to validate all of them,</li> <li>- develop very rigorous upscaling and replication plans that will be the basis to update at least the SEAPs/SECAPs, that are the major standard commitment at European level that a city can assume in terms of city transformation, and other existing city plans as Sustainable Mobility Plans or Digital Agendas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Citizens at the centre of urban transformation.</p> <p>Providing the right services, tools and technologies that target citizens and their urban environment can enhance quality of life and boost local economies. An effective approach is creating and adopting solutions that turn urban problems into smart opportunities. To serve local communities, the EU-funded MATCHUP project aims to transform cities by deploying novel solutions and technologies, focusing on the energy, mobility, and ICT sectors. The project will also develop very rigorous upscaling and replication plans. Ultimately, the outcomes should lead to</p>	
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		greener, more liveable, and more efficient cities that are more attractive for citizens as well as businesses.	
<b>BRODISE</b> <b>BROWNFIELD</b> Decontamination In Southern Europe. Preparing PCP to R+D for efficient, cost effective and innovative solutions for brownfields decontamination	<b>HORIZON 2020</b>	<b>Specific Objective:</b> Public procurement represents +/-19 % of the EU's GDP. Historically a small and slower uptake of innovations has been witnessed along with the fragmentation of public demand. PE represents a fundamental driver of innovation and competitiveness. Urban regeneration conducted by Bilbao confirms that the development of mixed formulas public - private for projects of mutual interest entails higher quality, effectiveness + efficiency in the management of public services. Innovation procurement of products and services can (i) be used to deliver societal objectives requiring new solutions not available on the market or too expensive (ii) solve problems related the commercialization of innovative solution (iii) improve quality + efficiency of public services with better value. It is clearly set by the BRODISE project. Objectives: Mobilize public + private purchasers + cities networks of cities in SD, , to understand in-depth the technology state of the art and the innovation gap to be addressed by significant R&D, Structure + design a pcip initiative, leveraging the complementarity of the partners for	<b>Total budget:</b> 1.310.755 € <b>Total EU funding:</b> 1.310.755 € <b>Co-financing sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CSA – Coordination and Support</b></li> </ul> <b>Action:</b> 1.310.755 €  <b>Partnership:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AYUNTAMIENTO DE BILBAO (Spani)</li> <li>• 11 partners (public, private, academic) from 3 countries</li> </ul> <b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2023

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		<p>bringing together the demand so create a critical mass for acquire cost-effective solutions, whilst creating new jobs and opportunities for business growth in Europe, specially SMEs. The driver is essentially economic. A complex challenge-based approach has been assumed by the consortium to: Confirm and describe a real technological demanding problem that impact negatively on the PE and on quality of life for all; Avoid the hyper-fragmentation of PP, pre-determine the condition for the development of new EU standard; Predetermine a competitive market, also enabling and preparing the participation of new players, Enable knowledge sharing. At the end the procurers will be able to lunch PCP and an earlier reality check of industry R&amp;D Undertake efficient solutions for brownfields SD through PCP are: Decontaminate the entire brownfield, coordinate resources, use the most advanced innovative decent techniques.</p>	
<p><b>IRIS</b></p> <p>Integrated and Replicable Solutions for Co-Creation in Sustainable Cities</p>	<p><b>HORIZON 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Specific Objective:</b></p> <p>The IRIS project supports the Lighthouse cities of Utrecht (NL), Göteborg (SE) and Nice Côte d’Azur (FR) and their Follower cities Vaasa (FI), Alexandroupolis (GR), Santa Cruz de Tenerife (ES), and Focsani (RO) to address their urgent need to deliver energy and mobility services in their cities that are cheaper, better accessible,</p>	<p><b>Total budget:</b> 20.810.612,77 €</p> <p><b>Total EU funding:</b> 17.996.569,05 €</p> <p><b>Co-financing sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IA – Innovation Action:</b></li> <li>17.996.569,05 €</li> </ul>

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		<p>reliable, and that contribute to a better and more sustainable urban quality of life. By demonstrating smart solutions that integrate energy, mobility and ICT, rooted in a City Innovation Platform, IRIS quantifies their value, and connects interests of many different stakeholders in innovative business models, allowing for upscale and replication of integrated solutions for sustainable cities across Europe and world-wide. To achieve this, IRIS works along five Transition Tracks based on common challenges, encompassing 16 integrated solutions that cities can mix and match according to their characteristics and district specific needs. Track 1, 2 and 3 enhance energy efficiency and utilize grid flexibility by balancing supply and demand dynamically and by 2nd life battery and V2G storage, to allow increase of renewable energy production and roll-out of e-cars and e-buses. Track 4 supports this by data sharing, a common architecture, use of standards, and governance practices accelerating innovation, standardization and implementation of affordable smart applications. Track 5 integrates interdisciplinary citizen engagement and co-creation in Tracks 1 to 4, connecting the needs of end-users with those of other stakeholders, in further support of innovative business models. The expected impacts of</p>	<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEMEENTE UTRECHT (Netherlands)</li> <li>• 56 partners (public, private, academic) from 8 countries</li> </ul> <p><b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2017 - 2023</p>
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		IRIS are an open innovation ecosystem motivating citizens to act as prosumers; more effective urban planning and governance of integrated solutions; exploitation of validated innovative business models based on multi-stakeholder collaboration; more stable, secure and affordable energy and mobility services for citizens, with improved air quality.	
<b>DUT</b> European Partnership Driving Urban Transitions	<b>HORIZON EUROPE</b>	<b>Description:</b> Translating global strategies into local actions. With so many urban challenges that need to be addressed, it's time to step up the game. R&I programmes, backed by local authorities, municipalities, businesses and citizens, can be mobilised to transform global strategies into local action. With partners from 27 countries, the EU funded DUT programme of JPI Urban Europe will develop and implement a transformative R&I programme to strengthen urban transitions towards climate-neutral, inclusive, and sustainable urban areas. The focus will be on three critical urban sectors, energy, mobility and circular economy, and their interrelations. Also, three transition pathways (Positive Energy Districts, the 15-minute city, and Circular Urban Economies) will be addressed with a long-term perspective.	<b>Total budget:</b> 177.266.253,99 € <b>Total EU funding:</b> 37.000.000 € <b>Co-financing sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HORIZON Programme Cofund</b>  <b>Action:</b> 37.000.000 €</li> </ul> <b>Partnership:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR KLIMASCHUTZ, UMWELT, ENERGIE, MOBILITÄT, INNOVATION UND TECHNOLOGIE (Austria)</li> <li>• 51 partners (public, private, academic) from 27 countries</li> </ul> <b>Period of Implementation:</b> 2022 - 2028

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#### IV. Norwegian Financial Mechanism (NFM)

Legal basis: Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursuant to Article 10.5 of the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021 on 23 September 2016, as amended on 25 October 2021

The **Norwegian Financial Mechanism** has played a pivotal role in supporting urban development projects across **Central and Eastern Europe**, with a focus on fostering **sustainable urban growth, energy efficiency, environmental protection, and social inclusion**. These projects, which span countries including **Slovenia, Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Moldova, Bulgaria, and Croatia**, are designed to address local urban challenges while contributing to broader **EU sustainability goals**. The financial contributions from the NFM typically range from **1,5 M € to 5 M €**, although some larger initiatives, especially in areas such as urban regeneration, energy efficiency, and transportation, have received higher funding allocations up to **12 M €**.

The projects in **Slovenia** have had significant and lasting impacts on **urban development, infrastructure improvement, and environmental sustainability**, particularly between **2014 and 2020**, with some still undergoing adjustments in subsequent years. NFM funding has been critical in supporting projects that contribute to Slovenia's efforts to meet EU sustainability and climate targets, including initiatives such as **social housing renovation, sustainable mobility solutions, and public building retrofitting**. The **Port of Koper**, for example, benefited from **NFM funding** to modernize its infrastructure, showcasing the synergy between local, national and EU funds.

The collaborative nature of these projects, involving both **NFM** and local government or private sector co-financing, has been central to enhancing urban resilience, improving public services, and promoting **environmental sustainability**. These efforts also demonstrate the value of international financial cooperation in addressing urban challenges, improving the quality of life for residents, and advancing the **EU's vision for greener, more resilient cities**. Through these investments, Norway has made a critical contribution to the transformation of urban spaces in Eastern Europe, ensuring that these cities are better prepared to face future environmental and social challenges.

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**Project examples NFM and EEA Grants:**

Project title	Funding instrument	Topic	Funding
<b>SLOVENIA</b>  <b>Solar Power for Reducing Emissions (SOPOREM)</b>	EEA Grants	<p><b>Programme area:</b> Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Increased renewable energy production</p> <p><b>Output:</b> Energy production from less established renewable sources installed</p> <p><b>Main project results:</b> Increased production of energy from renewable sources in the Port of Koper and in the Municipality of Koper.</p> <p><b>Project summary:</b> Production of energy from renewable sources plays an important role in tackling climate change and environmental challenges; above all, it holds an enormous untapped potential. While electricity consumption in logistics and port operations is high, exploitation of solar energy offers an opportunity to reduce both energy costs and CO2 emissions. The project focuses on kick-starting renewable energy production in the Port of Koper and Municipality of Koper through construction of two solar power</p>	<p><b>Total eligible project expenditure</b> <b>3.556.432,50 €</b></p> <p><b>Project grant: 2.128.623,58 €</b></p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> Port of Koper, port and logistic system, Plc</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Municipality of Koper Partner 2: Greenstat ASA (NOR)</p> <p><b>Start of the project: 01/05/2022</b> <b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>

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		<p>plants which will help reduce carbon footprint and bring down greenhouse gas emissions. With the support of the Norwegian project partner, the project explores the best possible solution for the use of renewable energy sources, providing insights and giving directions for the future. The project will enable an exceptional 14-percent increase in the current cumulative capacity of solar power plants in the entire Coastal-Karst region. It will also ensure greater energy self-sufficiency of the only Slovenian cargo port and help lower dependence on price fluctuations in the electricity market. Furthermore, the project will contribute to the increased use of solar energy in Slovenia's most sun-rich region. In the initial phase, the project will address various aspects of solar energy utilization, including the construction of solar power plants, the selection of the best locations for the installations, the selection of photovoltaic panels, energy consumption options and storage of its surpluses. Justification will be given for the investment in the construction of solar power plants compared to other ways of exploiting renewable sources (wind farms, geothermal energy etc.) at the selected location. The overall goal of the project is to increase the production of energy from renewable sources.</p>	
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<p><b>SLOVENIA</b></p> <p><b>Pilot Geothermal Power Plant on an Existing Gas Well Pg-8, pilot project (SI-Geo-Electricity)</b></p>	<p><b>EEA Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme area:</b> Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Increased renewable energy production</p> <p><b>Output:</b> Energy production from less established renewable sources installed</p> <p><b>Main project results:</b> An innovative pilot geothermal power plant with the capacity of 50 kW operating on the basis of a patented Slovenian technology of extraction of geothermal energy of unproductive oil and gas wells with the use of a geothermal gravity heat pipe.</p> <p><b>Project summary:</b> With its climate strategy building on sustainable development principles Slovenia sets a clear goal of achieving net zero emissions or climate neutrality by 2050. Fossil energy sources will need to be increasingly replaced by electricity produced from renewable sources. Geothermal energy is reliable and available all year; it is an enormous but underused source of renewable energy. Slovenia has already identified its potential but still lacks production of this energy form. The aim of the project is to</p>	<p><b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>900.210,98 €</b></p> <p><b>Project grant: 732.573,70 €</b></p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> Hydropower company Dravske elektrarne Maribor, Ltd</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Petrol Geo, production of hydrocarbons, Ltd Partner 2: University of Maribor Partner 3: Geological Survey of Slovenia</p> <p><b>Start of the project: 01/05/2022</b></p> <p><b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>
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		<p>increase the production of renewable energy by exploiting the potential of geothermal energy available in Slovenia. The pilot project serves as a demonstration project showcasing good practice and promotes increased use of geothermal energy. It is based on the use of a completely new method of electricity generation with a geothermal gravity heat pipe (Slovenian patent). A special feature of the geothermal gravity heat pipe is the closed refrigerant circuit which requires only one dry well to operate. Thus, the power plant does not produce greenhouse gas emissions as opposed to conventional binary cycle geothermal power plants' fluid circulation which requires the injection well and a reinjection well. The pilot project, which is planned to be implemented in municipality of Lendava, builds on exploitation of an existing unproductive Pg-8 well. The pilot geothermal power plant with zero carbon footprint contributes to the reduction of CO2 emissions. Furthermore, the project helps strengthen knowledge and acquire new experience and capacities in the field of geothermal energy exploitation, both in Slovenia and at the wider European level, and is an interesting demo concept for donor states as well. It provides the basis for existing and future partnerships that connect research findings with companies and</p>	
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		organizations able to operationalize this knowledge to achieve the set goals of decarbonization.	
<b>SLOVENIA</b> <b>Regional Centres of</b> <b>Mobility (ReMOBIL)</b>	<b>EEA Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme area:</b> Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Enhanced sustainable mobility management</p> <p><b>Output:</b> Measures to improve regional sustainable mobility</p> <p><b>Main project results:</b> Regional sustainable mobility management model with recommendations for harmonizing the relevant legislation, and replication of the model in other Slovenian regions; established pilot network of six regional mobility centers in partner regions; improved level of qualifications of project target groups in the field of introducing sustainable mobility at national, regional and (inter)municipal level; increased awareness of the general public about the importance of sustainable mobility.</p> <p><b>Project summary:</b> Slovenia has no regional government or administration, which may be seen as weakness in terms of mobility planning and management. Practices from abroad confirm the usefulness of</p>	<p><b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>1,867.965,72 €</b></p> <p><b>Project grant: 1.867.965,7 €</b></p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> Soča Valley development centre</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Regional development agency of the Ljubljana urban region Partner 2: BSC, Business Support Centre, Ltd, Kranj – Regional development agency of Gorenjska Partner 3: Regional Development Centre Koper Partner 4: Regional development agency for Podravje – Maribor Partner 5: RDA Koroška, the Regional Development Agency for Koroška, Ltd Partner 6: AMZS, joint-stock company,</p>

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		<p>transferring certain competences and responsibilities to the regions. This improves information flows and the speed with which the local authorities and the state adapt its action but requires a corresponding adaptation of the system and revision of the legislation. The main objective of the project is to reduce negative environmental impacts of transport due to lack of sustainable mobility solutions at local, regional and national level. To this end, six regional mobility centres will be designed and tested, experts will participate in training, and awareness-raising campaigns will be held. Another important aspect will be close cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure which is necessary to secure any systemic changes. SOs will thus include an improved sustainable mobility planning and management system, acquired professional capacity, cooperation and involvement of key stakeholders, and a higher level of awareness of the importance of sustainable mobility among public. The project will address the challenges with a set of planned activities through learning, testing, disseminating and policy change. A dedicated Strategic Council will be established and regular consultation with the Ministry of Infrastructure will be in place in</p>	<p>service provider for members of national automobile association and other users of roadside assistance</p> <p>Partner 7: Urban institute of Ljubljana</p> <p>Partner 8: Viken County Council (NOR)</p> <p><b>Start of the project: 01/05/2022</b></p> <p><b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>
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		order to transfer knowledge to other areas in Slovenia and introduce systemic changes.	
<b>SLOVENIA</b>  <b>Smart Mobility</b>  <b>Measures for</b>  <b>Sustainable Mobility in</b>  <b>Slovenia (SmartMOVE)</b>	EEA Grants	<b>Programme area:</b> Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation  <b>Outcome:</b> Enhanced sustainable mobility management  <b>Output:</b> Plans for sustainable mobility management at high-volume traffic locations developed  <b>Main project results:</b> Increased awareness of the importance of sustainable mobility among employers and employees and the relevant paperwork connected with the procedure for obtaining a special sustainable mobility certificate; design of methodology and development of sustainable mobility plans for organizations that employ a large number of people and are located at high traffic density junctions; trialling of a sustainable mobility solution involving dynamic shuttle transportation for commuters in the Ljubljana Urban Region; formulation of recommendations for the relevant authorities regarding the strategic directions in the field of sustainable mobility, and drawing up of proposals for improving	<b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>1.609.166,79 €</b>  <b>Project grant: 1.609.166,79 €</b>  <b>Project Promoter:</b> Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region  <b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Jožef Stefan Institute Partner 2: Urban Institute of Ljubljana Partner 3: Association of Employers of Slovenia Partner 4: GoOpti Ltd Partner 5: Institute for Spatial Policies Partner 6: Center of Energy Efficiency Solutions Partner 7: Nordland Research Institute (NOR)

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		<p>and upgrading the existing Integrated Transport Strategy of the Ljubljana Urban Region.</p> <p><b>Project summary:</b></p> <p>The project addresses the challenge of sustainable mobility at high-volume traffic locations, i.e. the Ljubljana Urban Region with the capital city of Ljubljana which is the primary destination of daily migration flows in Slovenia. Ljubljana is home to over 220,000 jobs, which accounts for over 25% of all jobs in Slovenia; as a result, over 120,000 people flock to Ljubljana daily from elsewhere. The Ljubljana Urban Region has become the most congested area in Slovenia recording the largest negative externalities of transport, which underlines the structural challenges of sustainable mobility in Slovenia. The project addresses sustainable mobility challenges in Slovenia (focusing particularly on Ljubljana), including the number of passengers in urban and road public transport that has been declining since 2017, a 41-percent drop in passengers carried by rail and a 10-percent increase in the number of passenger cars over the last decade. It further addresses the share of carpooling that stands at 7% and is lower than the EU average and tries to come up with solutions for Ljubljana which is the busiest traffic hub in the</p>	<p><b>Start of the project: 01/05/2022</b></p> <p><b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>
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		country. The main goal of the project is to limit the negative environmental externalities resulting from unsustainable forms of mobility. To this end, the project aims to develop mobility plans for sustainable mobility management in high-traffic locations and through improved sustainable mobility management in Slovenia.	
<b>SLOVENIA</b>  <b>Supporting Efficient Cascade Use of Geothermal Energy by Unlocking Official and Public Information (INFO-GEOTHERMAL)</b>	EEA Grants	<b>Programme area:</b> Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security  <b>Outcome:</b> Increased renewable energy production  <b>Output:</b> Improved capacity to develop less established renewable energy sources  <b>Main project results:</b> Impact on one national policy and law; two proposals in the field of legislation: a report on the necessary changes to the legislation for the establishment of geological risk insurance systems and a report on the necessary changes to the legislation for support schemes for reinjection, cascading and geothermal electricity; experts in the field of geothermal energy qualified.  <b>Project summary:</b>	<b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>1.073.529,41 €</b>  <b>Project grant: 1.073.529,41 €</b>  <b>Project Promoter:</b> Geological Survey of Slovenia  <b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy Partner 2: Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning Partner 3: Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia Partner 4: Reykjavik University, Iceland School of Energy (ISL)

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		<p>Increased and more energy-efficient use of thermal water for geothermal energy (GE) production can make a significant contribution to achieving Slovenia's climate and energy goals. It is a local renewable energy source , its use significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and can replace the use of fossil fuels in areas with the most favourable potential, which are mainly in the eastern part of the country, in the cross-border Pannonian Basin. The proposed approaches make it necessary and possible to move from the near stagnation of GE energy production, the reduction in the number of district heating systems, the limitations on thermal water extraction due to the lack of reinjection wells, and the less coordinated management of the use of GE, as it is handled by two ministries, to the accelerated and environmentally friendly extraction of thermal energy from the deep underground. The project aims at innovative strengthening institutional capacities of national authorities involved in managing geothermal energy use, of local authorities who provide spatial framework for investors, and biggest players in exploration of deep geothermal potential in Slovenia. From transferring knowledge from the worldwide leading geothermal</p>	<p><b>Start of the project: 01/09/2022</b> <b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>
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		country Iceland, joint activities will result in significantly improved formal support schemes for investments.	
<b>SLOVENIA</b> <b>Heritage School for New Generations: Recognition and Understanding of Local Cultural Heritage and Restoration Skills in Primary School Education Using New Teaching Methods for New Generations of the 21st Century and Beyond</b>	<b>Norway Grants</b>	<b>Programme area:</b> Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship <b>Outcome:</b> Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of education (formal and informal) <b>Output:</b> New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed and knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competencies in education <b>Main project results:</b> Inter-institutional environment established; developed and in schools verified new practices of teaching various subjects at the base of the school through examples of cultural heritage and the use of renovation skills. <b>Project summary:</b> In Slovenia, the level of public awareness about the relevance of cultural heritage is low. This is most reflected in the physical environment where immovable heritage continues to disappear	<b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>478.510 €</b> <b>Project grant: 478.510 €</b>  <b>Project Promoter:</b> The Association of Historic Towns of Slovenia <b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: University of Primorska Partner 2: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia Partner 3: Elementary School Ivan Grohar Partner 4: Municipality of Škofja Loka Partner 5: MAGMA Geopark AS (NOR) Partner 6: School Center Škofja Loka  <b>Start of the project: 01/06/2022</b> <b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b>

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		<p>right before our eyes. Systematic change of community's attitude towards cultural heritage as a value for life, and the skills for its renovation as competence for work in the 21st century is possible only through the education of new generations. In this respect, the project addresses Slovenia's needs at the right moment, as it establishes an inter-institutional environment and learning practices for a better planned education of young people at primary school level about cultural heritage and its renovation. The project addresses four challenges: weak presence of cultural heritage content in primary school curricula; shortage of craft and technical occupations, which will be among the most sought-after on the labour market in the coming decades as well; poor teachers' skills due to the dimension of cultural heritage and the untapped opportunity for inter-institutional cooperation and interdisciplinary treatment, learning in the local environment and the introduction of modern didactics. In the project, a new teaching practice is developed, tested, and evaluated on a pilot basis, which enables immediate and easy integration of examples from cultural heritage and renovation skills into teaching certain selected contents of the existing lesson plans of subjects and</p>	
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		activity days, which at the class and subject level can be treated with the help of cultural heritage.	
<b>SLOVENIA</b> <b>Development of a Comprehensive Approach for Enhancing Work-life Balance of Professional and Private Life in Rural Areas, Based on the Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Regional Systems and Local Partnerships (TERA)</b>	<b>Norway Grants</b>	<b>Programme area:</b> Work-life Balance <b>Outcome:</b> Improved work-life balance <b>Output:</b> Local systems that support work-life balance established <b>Main project results:</b> Improved understanding of men and women in rural areas of the issue of gender stereotypes, traditional gender roles, challenges of work-life balance and importance of gender equality; increased awareness of local and national stakeholders and decision-makers of the issue of work-life balance in rural areas; empowering rural men and women through measures to balance professional and personal life; stronger role of advocacy organizations to improve the situation of women in the countryside and foster sustainable development of the countryside; increased awareness of men living in rural areas of the harmful effects of traditional gender roles and about the importance of their active involvement in the challenges of	<b>Total eligible project expenditure:</b> <b>499.750 €</b> <b>Project grant: 499.750 €</b>  <b>Project Promoter:</b> Development Centre Murska Sobota <b>Project Partners:</b> Partner 1: Regional Development Agency Posavje Partner 2: Gender Equality Research Institute Maribor Partner 3: Slovenian Rural Youth Association Partner 4: Center for the Development of Sustainable Society, cooperative Partner 5: Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (NOR)  <b>Start of the project: 01/06/2022</b>

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		<p>balancing professional and personal life; increased awareness of the role and position of women and men in rural areas (including the state as regards gender equality in rural areas) among the general public.</p> <p><b>Project summary:</b></p> <p>The project addresses work-life balance in rural areas. The multifaceted nature of burden on women, accompanied by the non-recognition of their role and contribution to the households, farming responsibilities and the wider community on the one hand, and the deep-rooted gender stereotypes among men in rural areas on the other, account for high absence of women in rural socio-economic life. Research shows, among other things, that the share of women in Slovenia who as breadwinners and family members participate in work on agricultural farms stands at 46%, which is higher than the EU average; however, the share of women who own a farm amounts to only 10%. In this context, the project addresses the challenges of work-life balance in rural environment, namely: low awareness among women and men in rural areas of the possibilities of balancing professional and personal life; marked economic dependence of women in rural areas; fragmentation of regional stakeholders addressing the</p>	<p><b>End of the project: 30/04/2024</b></p>
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		challenges of work-life balance; physical remoteness of people living in rural areas and difficult access to (public) services. Thus, the main goal of the project is to empower men and women in the countryside to effectively deal with the challenges of work-life balance, with which the project establishes local systems and partnerships in Posavje and Pomurje to foster work-life balance.	
<b>SLOVAKIA</b> <b>Inclusive</b> <b>neighborhoods</b>	<b>EEA and Norway</b> <b>Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Local development and inclusion</p> <p><b>Region of the Project Implementation:</b> Košický</p> <p><b>District of the Project Implementation:</b> Košice-okolie</p> <p><b>Project description</b></p> <p>The project focuses on selected localities - municipalities located in the Košice region - Kecerovce, Vtáčkovce, Boliarov, Bačkov, Veľká Ida and Bôrka, in which Roma live in segregated concentrations affected by deep poverty. Characteristic is the high unemployment rate, low level of education, catastrophic housing conditions and the frequent occurrence of socio-pathological phenomena. The Inclusive Neighbourhoods project is based on the idea that an effective and sustainable housing solution for vulnerable groups requires a holistic approach to all important areas of life. It is also based on an approach in social work called "housing ready". Providing physical living space is</p>	<p><b>Project Grant Approved:</b> 931.087 €</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> nezisková organizácia Projekt DOM.ov</p> <p><b>Estimated Date of Project Completion:</b> 13.08.2023</p>

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		combined with targeted social work and education. The main goal of the project is to increase the quality of life of MRC residents through the creation of new functional neighbourhoods. The project implements inclusive measures in basic areas of life, namely housing, employment and education. The cross-cutting theme is non-discrimination.	
<b>SLOVAKIA</b> <b>Centres of Renewal in</b> <b>Gemer</b>	<b>EEA and Norway</b> <b>Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Local development and inclusion</p> <p><b>Region of the Project Implementation:</b> Banskobystrický</p> <p><b>District of the Project Implementation:</b> Rimavská Sobota</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The aim of the project is to expand the experience and create two more centres that bring together local initiatives in the Gemer region. The centres aim to create space for the restoration of the local heritage: they aim at expanding the already ongoing reconstruction activities, training and improving the job skills of the unemployed from the marginalized Roma community in the field of restoration of monuments. The project includes the creation of tools, and workshops for the public, which are available free of charge to people living in the surrounding villages. These tools can be used by local community residents to repair their homes, and in individual or community projects.</p>	<p><b>Project Grant Approved:</b> 1.059.274 €</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b></p> <p>Obnovme Gemer, nezisková organizácia</p> <p><b>Estimated Date of Project Completion:</b></p> <p>30.04.2024</p>

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		Complementary activities are activities to the out-of-school education system for children from local communities and practical education for the training of the local unemployed. The centres are also available for tourists, they are equipped with information materials about the sights of Gemer, to make the architectural gems of the region and the Gothic Way accessible to the general population.	
<b>SLOVAKIA</b> <b>City Hall open to communities (City Hall)</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Culture</p> <p><b>Region of the Project Implementation:</b> Prešovský</p> <p><b>District of the Project Implementation:</b> Levoča</p> <p><b>Information in a nutshell:</b></p> <p>One of the dominating features of the Master Paul Square in Levoča is the historical building of the Renaissance city hall. The city hall was built in the 15th century and since then it has undergone many construction adaptations. The last comprehensive reconstruction of the object occurred on the verge of the 19th and 20th century and it was completed with a construction of a new-Renaissance top floor. 1950s were marked with a brute intervention that has finally led to architectural devaluation of the object. Currently, the city hall hosts an exposition dedicated to the history of the City of Levoča since its</p>	<p><b>Project Grant Approved:</b> 849.955 €</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> City of Levoča</p> <p><b>Estimated Date of Project Completion:</b> 30.04.2024</p>

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		<p>beginnings up to the present and it is one of the most visited expositions in Levoča. On the second floor of the city, the museum presents abundant artistic collections ranging from the Gothic over Renaissance to Baroque bound to the region of Spiš. In 2001, a long-term exposition of ethnographic nature was opened with the title “Krása z nití utkaná/ Beauty woven from threads”, which represents folk textile and blueprint in Spiš.</p> <p><b>Project description</b></p> <p>The subject of the project is the reconstruction and revitalization of the national cultural monument – The City Hall. However, the project also aims to raise awareness of cultural and social issues, contribute to their solution, support the creative industries, and establish international cooperation. The primary goal is the revitalization and reconstruction of the national cultural monument in the monument reserve located in the heart of the city, but also the strengthening of soft activities and cultural life of municipality. They can be divided into four main categories. The first presents cultural and social activities and festivals. Another covers educational seminars for local students and pupils on entrepreneurship in the creative industries. The third category belongs to compulsory dissemination, in which three</p>	
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		main conferences will take place, accompanied by a series of cultural events and press conferences. A seminar on the protection of cultural heritage will be held for the general public, underlining the importance of the inscription of Levoča in the UNESCO list. Finally, modernization activities with Norwegian and Polish partners, local and national influencers and bloggers aimed at brainstorming activities promoting Levoča as a "City you cannot miss".	
<b>SLOVAKIA</b>  <b>Renovation and Revitalization of the Historical Park in Lednické Rovne</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Culture</p> <p><b>Region of the Project Implementation:</b> Trenčiansky</p> <p><b>District of the Project Implementation:</b> Púchov</p> <p><b>Information in a nutshell</b></p> <p>The historical park in Lednické Rovne with the area of 18.5 ha is situated on the right bank of the Váh River, it has natural – landscape character and it is completed with remains of romantic construction features that can be seen even today. The historical park was built based on English pattern at the end of the 18th century by Earl Johann Gobert Aspremont-Linden and it is situated at the Lednické manor house. The park was built as natural landscape park and, for its undoubted value, it was declared a national cultural landmark in 1963. In 2006, the World</p>	<p><b>Project Grant Approved:</b> 999. 789 €</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> Town of Lednické Rovne</p> <p><b>Estimated Date of Project Completion:</b> 30.04.2024</p>

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		<p>Monuments fund in New York put this park to the list of 100 most threatened landmarks in the world.</p> <p><b>Project description</b></p> <p>The project is focused on the partial restoration of the national cultural monument - a historical park and museum, which is located in the area of the manor house in Lednické Rovne. The implementation of the project will renew and reconstruct a part of the road network of sidewalks, a hypodrome (riding meadow), a new entrance gate to the park, the felling of trees and the planting of 220 new trees. At the same time, new furniture will be installed and three rest areas will be created. Renewed will be also the interior of the glass museum and gallery. Within the glass symposium in cooperation with the Slovak partner Rona, a.s. and the Norwegian partner S12 Galleri og Verksted, a glass work of art will be created, which will be installed in the hypodrome area after completion. After the reconstruction works, cultural and social events will be held in the park and museum, such as exhibitions of glass and ceramics, Day of Local Products and Crafts, Day of Jewish and Roma Culture, Weekend of Open Parks and Gardens, Fairytale Park, or Liberation Run.</p>	
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<p><b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>Cities</b></p>	<p><b>EEA and Norway Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Culture</p> <p><b>Region:</b> National coverage</p> <p><b>Target group:</b> General public, researchers, scientists, artists</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The aim of the project is to open contemporary arts to the public by establishing a media platform. Within the Czech media landscape there is not any website that would address the actual issues of contemporary architecture, urban planning and other related fields on regular basis. The project is based on a partnership of 4AM, which guarantees proposed themes with respect to expertise, and CMED, which participates in publishing online Daily Referendum and thus possesses the knowledge of journalistic discipline. Within the project the unit called “Cities” will be established, as part of both Daily Referendum’s website and 4AM website. Within the latter it will serve as a multimedia platform. Both platforms will be focused on interdisciplinary approach, which perceives contemporary architecture and art in relation to physical space, culture and politics. The unit “Cities” will provide space for critics to express themselves and enable them to address broader audience. Professional journalistic leadership will encourage them and provide them with new skills,</p>	<p><b>Total Eligible Costs:</b> 54.929 €</p> <p><b>Grant :</b> 49.436 € (90 %)</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b> 4AM z.s.</p> <p><b>Project Partner from Donor State:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Czech Partner:</b> Center for Media, Ecology and Democracy</p> <p><b>Project duration (phase of the project):</b> 01/2021 – 01/2022</p>
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		<p>especially with the knowledge of comprehensible language with respect to the public. The project will also directly approach both expert and non-professional audience by themed web platforms, international workshop, newsletters, online discussion forum and communication activities. During the initial workshop the participants selected from number of critics will share their experience and views across the various fields and compare them with their European colleagues. Foreign experience will be also used during the creation of the content of both units. The project will manage to strengthen the society's relation to cultural institutions, because it will provide the broader public with critical insight on functioning of those institutions and give an update on actual affairs. The proposed unit will also contribute to sustainable development of cities by publishing articles focused on urban planning.</p>	
<p><b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>Periurban park - a tool to climate adaptation</b></p>	<p><b>EEA and Norway Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Environment</p> <p><b>Region:</b> Prague</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The aim of the project is through the support of a concrete solution – conceptualization of the Periurban Park Confluence the aim of this project is to support Prague achieve its key</p>	<p><b>Total Eligible Costs:</b> 447.489,89 €</p> <p><b>Grant:</b> 402.740,90 € (90 %)</p> <p><b>Project Promoter:</b></p> <p>Prague Institute of Planning and Development</p>



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		commitment to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 40% percent until 2030 and increase its resistance to the effects of climate change. Applying parks in peri-urban areas is Prague's strategic measure to ensure coordinated management of this area and sustainable development applying this multifunctional system of green infrastructure.	<b>Project Partner from Donor State:</b> Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo (AHO) The EUROPARC Federation  <b>Status:</b> In realisation (till 04/2024)
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b> <b>Brownfield park U Vody</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<b>Programme:</b> Environment <b>Region:</b> Prague <b>Project description:</b> The aim of the project is the revitalization of the U Vody park brownfield in Prague's Holešovice. The subject of the project is the transformation of the former transshipment yard formed by concrete objects, areas and ramps, which was a part of the Holešovice port into a nature park close to nature, which it will connect.	<b>Total Eligible Costs:</b> 896.039,16 € <b>Grant:</b> 806.435,24 € (90 %)  <b>Project Promoter:</b> City district of Prague 7  <b>Status:</b> In realisation (till 04/2024)
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b> <b>Adaptation Strategy of the Voluntary Union of Municipalities Clean Southeast for Climate Change</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<b>Programme:</b> Environment <b>Region:</b> South Moravian Region <b>Project description:</b> The aim of the project is to create an adaptation strategy for the territory falling under the Voluntary Union of Municipalities of the Clean South-East. The strategic goal of the project is to	<b>Total Eligible Costs :</b> 21.615,39 € <b>Grant :</b> 19.453,85 € (90 %)  <b>Project Promoter :</b> DOBROVOLNÝ SVAZEK OBCÍ ČISTÝ JIHOVÝCHOD

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		maintain and reduce in a timely manner the vulnerability of systems and increase their resilience to direct and indirect impacts of climate change, without compromising the quality of the environment, the safety of the population and the economic and social potential of society.	<b>Czech Partner:</b> Svaz moderní energetiky, z.s.  <b>Status:</b> In realization process since 09/2020
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>  <b>Public involvement in city development</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<b>Programme:</b> Good Governance <b>Region:</b> National coverage <b>Target group:</b> elderly, general public, women <b>Project description:</b> <p>The aim of the project is to introduce public involvement processes in the preparation and implementation of development plans and the creation of strategic documents at the local level in the participating partner cities, including the implementation of public involvement activities.</p> <p>The town of Otrokovice, as well as other partner municipalities, creates concept documents and commission studies to find the best solutions that contribute to the improvement of life in cities. However, it is not possible to involve the public to participate more in the search for solutions and the implementation of activities that impact city life.</p>	<b>Total Eligible Costs:</b> 183.767 € <b>Grant:</b> 183.767 € (100 %)  <b>Project Promoter:</b> Town of Otrokovice <b>Project Partner from Donor State:</b> Town of Fredrikstad (Norway) <b>Czech Partner:</b> Town of Jeseník Town of Kopřivnice Town of Kutná Hora Town of Říčany Town of Turnov Town of Uherský Brod Town of Valašské Meziříčí Microregion Ivančicko Town of Halenkovice

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		The key activities of the project focus on gaining experience from a foreign partner who has experience in involving the public, implementing educational activities and sharing experience focused on elected representatives and employees of the applicant and Czech partners, and on implementing communication processes with the public and public involvement, which will be implemented by the applicant and all Czech partners.	Town of Kurovice Town of Nová Dědina Town of Žlutava
<b>POLAND</b>  <b>Forests as a common good, ensuring civil society' right to participation</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> civic sector development</p> <p><b>Outreach:</b> international</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>80% of Poland's forests are publicly owned, yet 75% of citizens want to reduce the areas where trees are cut down in a systemic way. Nevertheless, recent practices of public institutions undermine civil society's ability to monitor the way forestry management is done. Inquiries and comments submitted at the stage of public consultations of Forest Management Plans, are not binding, and thus almost always ignored. Moreover Decisions approving FMPs are not the subject to appeal in court. The purpose of the project is to increase public participation in the decision-making processes related to the management of</p>	<p><b>Project cost:</b> 138.764 €</p> <p><b>Funding:</b> 137. 494 €</p> <p><b>City (headquarters):</b> Bystra</p> <p><b>Voivodeship (headquarters):</b> śląskie</p> <p><b>Partners:</b></p> <p>Forests and Citizens Foundation, Warszawa, Poland</p> <p>Civic Monitoring of Trees, Bydgoszcz, Poland</p> <p><b>Implementation dates:</b></p>

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		<p>publicly owned forests in Poland. That's why we will take action at local, national and EU level. The project will be implemented in partnership with two organizations experienced in public participation, activism as well as watchdog activities related to publicly owned forests management. As part of the project, we will monitor local government practices in making decisions concerning public forests as well as analyse urban forest regulations in this field. Based on that, we will draft catalogue of best practices related to cooperation of local governments with stakeholders which will influence the citizens to take action and engage in deciding about the fate of public forests. In exercising our right of access to public information, we will examine the comments submitted in the forest management plans consultations. In case of refusal to provide necessary information, we will take legal action. The following areas of advocacy work have been identified in the scope of this project: ensuring the implementation of the law to information; strengthening the instruments at local government level; ensuring EUs forest policies' support for civil society's participation. The project's implementation will increase the influence of pro-environmental</p>	01-09-2021 to 31-08-2023
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		organizations in making decisions concerning public forests and strengthen the legal framework in this area in a long term.	
<b>POLAND</b> <b>Direction Future –</b> <b>project of the Town of</b> <b>Starachowice</b>	<b>EEA and Norway</b> <b>Grants</b>	<b>Programme:</b> Local development <b>Project coverage:</b> Starachowice, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship <b>Project description:</b> <p>In Starachowice, the future happens today. Starachowice is a town that is losing its socio-economic functions. As the project developers themselves point out, the town can lose a third of its population over the next 30 years. Empty neighbourhoods, closed schools, budget problems, lack of investment, lack of manpower – these are the challenges faced by the authors of the project funded from the EEA and Norway Funds. The main objective of the project is to improve the standard of living of residents through the implementation of programmes and initiatives of a social, educational, environmental, economic and institutional nature. The most important elements of the project are two investments: the redevelopment of a dilapidated building known as the ‘Mansion’ and the creation of a Social Thought Incubator (the so-called Impact Hub) there, and the preparation of Primary School no. 11 for the creation of an Environmental Education Centre. ‘Impact Hub’ in the Mansion: Mansion was</p>	<b>Funding awarded: 3.819.426,48 €</b>  <b>Beneficiary:</b> Town of Starachowice <b>Partner:</b> City of Bergen, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Warsaw University of Technology, Nasze Zdrowie Foundation, University of the Third Age in Starachowice, Starachowice District  <b>Project period:</b> 21 December 2021 – 30 April 2024

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		<p>built in 1922 for the director of the Starachowice Ammunition Factory. After World War II, it was gradually declining and was used by various institutions, including the Municipal Kindergarten, which was based here for nearly a quarter of a century until it closed in the early 1990s. Since then, the building remains abandoned and is deteriorating – which is why a significant amount of the project’s funding was used to redevelop it. The planned redevelopment will create new space in the building. The historic part is supposed to include technical rooms, a café with an orangery, an information desk, an office and exhibition room, as well as rooms for NGOs and offices. The new part on the ground floor is planned to include a conference and lecture hall, facilities, a foyer and a cloakroom. On the first floor there will be communication premises and rooms for rent. The entire building will be accessible to people with disabilities. Environmental Education Centre at Primary School No. 11: The Environmental Education Centre will include, among other things: an educational wall with a map of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, special educational rooms, laboratories, a Green Relaxation Zone – an ideal place for children to calm down, an ECO-garden with a Jungle Gym. Moreover,</p>	
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		<p>young people, led by the Starachowice Youth Town Council, play a very important role in the project. They organised initiatives such as a workshop on disinformation (October-November 2023) or the 'School Eco-Budget', an initiative where pupils can vote themselves what green investments the school will make.</p> <p>Examples of effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• redevelopment of the Mansion and creation of the so-called Impact Hub in its place,</li> <li>• establishment of an Environmental Education Centre at Primary School no. 11,</li> <li>• introduction of a new visual identity for the town,</li> <li>• workshop for young people on disinformation (October-November 2023),</li> <li>• Social Activity Centre on the Wzgórze estate with a wide range of animation, environmental and day-care activities for children and their parents.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>POLAND</b></p> <p><b>City energy generator a source of success for Konin – project of the City of Konin</b></p>	<p><b>EEA and Norway Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Local development</p> <p><b>Project coverage:</b> Konin, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>City of the Green Energy: Konin is a post-industrial city that is currently undergoing a process of transformation caused by the</p>	<p><b>Funding awarded:</b> 3.666.679,39 €</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> City of Konin</p>

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<p><b>Project information</b></p>		<p>closure of large lignite mining plants, low levels of entrepreneurship, high unemployment and the depopulation of the city. The project funded from the EEA and Norway Funds aims to help meet these challenges. Its aim is to put Konin on a new path of development so that it becomes the City of Green Energy. An important aspect of the project is to improve the management of the city. The project developers want to create an administration that is open to broad participation, engaging, friendly, with modern technology and highly competent staff. Key investments of the project are aimed at improving energy standards in municipal buildings. Also important for ecological purposes is the construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge from Pocijewo Island to the right bank of the city. The project also includes a campaign for young people entitled 'Be an entrepreneur'. As part of the campaign, pupils from local schools had the opportunity to come up with their own business ideas.</p> <p>Examples of effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of an app to allow people with special needs to navigate safely in urban spaces,</li> <li>• introduction of an integrated IT system for managing public administration units and development of new e-services,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partners:</b> Municipal Road Administration in Konin, Municipal and Housing Enterprise in Konin</p> <p><b>Project period:</b> 23 November 2021 – 30 April 2024</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modernisation of tenement houses in the Konin's old town (ul. Wiosny Ludów 11 and 13),</li> <li>• construction of a footbridge over the Ulga Canal from Pocijewo Island to the right bank of Konin, together with the construction of a bicycle path and associated infrastructure.</li> </ul>	
<b>LATVIA</b>  <b>Remediation of the historically polluted site at the Liepaja Port Karosta Canal</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Climate and Environment</p> <p><b>Selection:</b> Open project</p> <p><b>Competition title:</b> Mitigation of Risks Related to Historically Contaminated Sites</p> <p><b>Implementation place:</b> Kurzeme</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The project aims to reduce the negative impact of historically polluted sediments of the Karosta Canal on the environment, human health, and facilitate the good ecological status of the Baltic Sea. Project implementation time in months: 29 months.</p> <p>The role of the Norwegian partner is to demonstrate and provide examples of the implementation of remediation work, to provide knowledge to the Latvian partners, and to provide practical advice about tasks to be performed.</p>	<p><b>Total eligible costs:</b> 5.117.647 €</p> <p><b>Grant financing:</b> 3.697.500 €</p> <p><b>National co-financing:</b> 652.500 €</p> <p><b>Project promoter co-financing:</b> 767.647,05 €</p> <p><b>Project promoter:</b> Liepaja Special Economic Zone Authority</p> <p><b>National project partner:</b> Association "Baltijas krasti"</p> <p><b>Donorstate/international project partner:</b> The Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA)</p> <p><b>Start of project eligibility:</b> 01.08.2021</p> <p><b>Project end:</b> 31.12.2023</p>

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<p><b>LATVIA</b></p> <p><b>Facilitation of inter-municipal cooperation and enhancement of good governance principles in Latvian local governments</b></p>	<p><b>EEA and Norway Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Local Development and Culture</p> <p><b>Selection:</b> Pre-defined project</p> <p><b>Competition title:</b> Facilitation of inter-municipal cooperation and enhancement of good governance principles in Latvian local governments</p> <p><b>Implementation place:</b> Visa Latvija</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>Objective: Improved inter-municipal cooperation and strengthened good governance to improve quality and effectiveness of public services. Results: 1. Research on efficiency and effectiveness of inter-municipal cooperation in Latvia 2. Five regional networks of local governments established and in-depth analysis of current inter-municipal cooperation practice in Latvia and its enhancement possibilities performed within the framework of the networks. 3. Five pilot actions implemented enhancing inter-municipal and intra-municipal cooperation. 4. Recommendations for further development of inter-municipal and intra-municipal cooperation in Latvia developed. 5. Good governance guidelines and a self-assessment tool of ethical conduct for local governments elaborated. 6. Training seminars organized in five regions on implementation of good governance</p>	<p><b>Grant financing:</b> 1.062.500 €</p> <p><b>National co-financing:</b> 187.500 €</p> <p><b>Project promoter:</b> Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments</p> <p><b>National project partner:</b> Association of Major Cities of Latvia</p> <p><b>Donorstate/international project partner:</b> Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities</p> <p><b>Start of project eligibility:</b> 21.06.2021</p> <p><b>Project end:</b> 20.04.2024</p>
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		<p>principles in local governments. 7. Study visits performed to Norway, Poland and Finland providing experience exchange on proven solutions in different countries of the Baltic Sea region on inter-municipal cooperation and good governance in local governments. 8. The operational strategy of state cities until 2027 including recommendations for attracting investment for state cities and proactive representation of their interests. 9. Discussion platform established for positioning city views on the national long-term and mid-term development planning documents and legal regulations. 10. Strengthened network of experts of the AMCL and enhanced capacity of Latvian cities to deal with new dimensions of urban development challenges.</p>	
<p><b>ROMANIA</b></p> <p><b>Iosefin Water Tower reconversion to Cultural Center</b></p>	<p><b>EEA and Norway Grants</b></p>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Culture</p> <p><b>Location for project implementation:</b> Timișoara (Romania)</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The project aims to activate a neglected area and reclaim the historical-industrial heritage by transforming the Iosefin Water Tower into a permanent cultural space. The first phase consists in the execution of the works for putting in use of the historical monument Iosefin Water Tower, which is part of the list of Historical Monuments of Timis county. The project proposes to</p>	<p><b>Total project value:</b> 10.921.581,94 lei (2.256.758,33 €)</p> <p><b>Grant value (85 % EEA Grants and 15 % national budget):</b> 8.656.979,58 lei (1.788.816,94 €)</p> <p><b>Project promoter:</b> Timișoara Municipality</p>

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		<p>carry out interventions for obtaining spaces for exhibitions and cultural events. The external layout involves a ramp to the tower and a small which together will constitute a complex access to the tower allowing to observe the building from the outside and which can be used as an exhibition space. The inside works will consist in: restoration of the stairs, keeping and renovation of tank 1 with a metallic floor placed inside, tank 2 will be redesigned by making holes for natural light, new interior stairs will be realized, the exterior carpentry will be replaced, the metal access door will be replaced with a glass one, the existing finishes will be cleaned as much as possible, also new interior finishes will be made. The second phase of the project consists in capitalizing on the monument, even from the construction phase, by organizing promotion events, tours and site visits addressed to students from technical colleges and university to view the procedures and techniques of the restorative process and to complete their vocational training. On the other hand, the project involves research activities regarding the architectural heritage of the Iosefin historical neighbourhood which will be promoted by arranging a permanent exhibition, exposing the historical and architectural details, including arranging large three-dimensional</p>	<p><b>Project partners:</b> PRIN BANAT Association (Romania)</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 41 months</p>
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		models for the visually impaired. Evening events will be organized together with local actors (theatre, music, sculpture, architecture, etc.) to promote local artists and initiatives. Although the title of the monument at present is "Water Tower", for promotion purposes, the term "Water Castle" will be used.	
<b>BULGARIA</b>  <b>Implementation of innovative measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change in municipalities in Bulgaria</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants</b>	<p><b>Programme:</b> Environmental protection and climate change</p> <p><b>Selection:</b> Pre-defined project</p> <p><b>Project description:</b></p> <p>The project "Implementation of innovative measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change in municipalities in Bulgaria" is predefined and implemented by the National Trust Ecofund in partnership with the municipalities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Kardzhali, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Sliven together with a Norwegian partner- Norwegian Association of the Local and Regional governments (KS). The innovative project aims to improve the capacity of local authorities to plan, monitor and implement specific measures to mix impacts and adapt to climate change. The project will support the 8 (eight) municipal authorities to assess their strategic plans and programmes and applied measures so far for mixing and adapting to climate change, while identifying gaps and potential risks. These are the</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 2.800.000 €</p> <p><b>Total amount of financial assistance:</b> 2.800.000 €</p> <p><b>Project promoter:</b> National Trust Ecofund</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b></p> <p>Municipalities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Kardzhali, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Sliven;</p> <p>Norwegian Association of the Local and Regional governments (KS)</p> <p><b>Start of implementation:</b> 04.02.2021</p> <p><b>Project duration:</b> 42 months</p>

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		<p>municipalities with the highest risk of natural disasters such as floods, elevations, fires, or high temperatures, combined with elevations that cause stress. As a result, it will be possible to apply the most advanced knowledge, experience, and pilot innovative urban planning measures. Also, the results and good practices will be widely disseminated in other Bulgarian municipalities.</p>	
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## ANNEX E: Climate proofing

Objective: Good practices, guidelines, and implementation practices

### I. Example ERDF/IJG programme 2021-2027 Austria

Complex and comprehensive documentation can be provided FOR INTERNAL USE, including:

Description of the methodology for the implementation of assessment for climate compatibility of planned infrastructure

Assessment tool for climate compatibility of planned infrastructure – climate change adaptation (vulnerability analysis – sensitivity and exposition to climate hazards: floods, drought, heat)

### II. Feedback by Slovene experts

The Ministry for the Environment, Climate and Energy prepared a form on climate proofing. It was too late for the first ITI call, but it is available now.

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## ANNEX F: Do No Significant Harm Principle

Objective: Good practices, guidelines, and implementation practices

### I. Guidelines and methodology used by ERDF/IJG programme 2021-2027 Austria

Separate document available for internal use. Short excerpt from the document is provided:

“When drawing up the ERDF/IJG & JTF programme 2021-2027 (hereinafter “programme”), the “Do No Significant Harm” (DNSH) principle mentioned in the CPR must be fulfilled:

- Recital 10 Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Funds should contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of 30% of the Union budget expenditure supporting climate objectives. In that context, the Funds should support activities that would respect the climate and environmental standards and priorities of the Union and would do no significant harm to environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Adequate mechanisms to ensure the climate proofing of supported investment in infrastructure should be an integral part of programming and implementation of the Funds.
- Article 9 "Horizontal Principles"

The objectives of the Funds shall be pursued in line with the objective of promoting sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the DNSH principle.

The presented document explains the extent to which the DNSH principle is complied with by the programme. The document was created internally by ÖROK and is divided into an introductory description of the methodology and an evaluation section.

The basis for the evaluation is the draft programme of 21s October 2021, which was submitted to the EC.

The results of the Strategic Environmental Assessment were also used, which are based on the draft programme of July 12, 2021, but are still valid.



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## Background documents

Various background documents were used for the DNSH assessment, which are referred to below using the capital letters:

- A. Commission explanatory note – “Application of the DNSH principle under Cohesion policy during programming
- B. EC Guidance on DNSH for the RRF (Technical Guidelines for the application of the DNSH principle in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation, 2021/C 58/01)
- C. Annex 1 of the Austrian Recovery and Resilience Plan 2020-2026 – Annex 1, 30 April 2021, BMF (The DNSH principle was examined for all measures of the Austrian RRF, all measures were assessed as compatible with the principle. The examinations are presented in Annex 1.)
- D. Taxonomy Regulation 2020/852
- E. Technical Annex of the Taxonomy Regulation
- F. Strategic environmental assessment of the ERDF/IJG & JTF programme Austria 2021-2027<sup>4</sup>

## Methodology

### Audit principles:

- The audit will be carried out using the methodology used in the RRF Guidance (Document B).
- Regarding the interpretation of the guidance and the level of detail, this document is based on the Austrian RRF (Document C).
- The assessment takes place at the level of the SOs, as is the case with the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the programme (Document F). This assessment level was chosen by the Strategic Environmental Assessment because the environmental impacts of the underlying measures are similar in the assessment of the environmental impacts.

According to the Commission explanatory note (Document A), there are the following possibilities for an activity to be classified as compatible with the DNSH principle:

- No significant negative environmental impact due to their nature
- Assessed as compatible under the RRF

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- Assessed as compatible under the RRF guidelines
- Assessed as compatible according to Member State's methodology

The following successive assessment is therefore carried out:

- Level 1: Has the activity/a similar activity been assessed in the RRF (Document C) and classified as compatible with the DNSH principle?
  - If yes: compatible
  - Conclusion: “assessed as compatible under the RRF”
- Level 2: If no, check the activity based on the RRF Guidance (Document B)
  - Part 1 of the checklist according to the RRF Guidance (see assessment tables below):  
Review of the six environmental objectives, whether/for which environmental objectives a more detailed review is necessary
  - Part 2 of the checklist according to RRF Guidance: Is completed if a more detailed assessment is necessary for certain environmental objectives according to Part 1
  - Conclusion: “Assessed as compatible under the RRF guidelines”

### Significant harm

Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation (Document D) defines significant harm for the six environmental objectives as follows:

- a. Climate change mitigation: if this activity leads to significant greenhouse gas emissions
- b. Adaptation to climate change: if this activity exacerbates the adverse impacts of the current and expected future climate on the activity itself or on people, nature or assets
- c. Sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources: if this activity i) endangers the good status or good ecological potential of water bodies, including surface waters and groundwaters; or (ii) damages the good environmental status of marine waters
- d. Circular economy, including waste prevention and recycling: where (i) that activity leads to significant inefficiency in the use of materials or in the direct or indirect use of natural resources such as non-renewable energy sources, raw materials, water and soil in one or more

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stages of the life cycle of products, including durability, repairability, retrofitability, reusability or recyclability of products; (ii) that activity leads to a significant increase in the generation, incineration or disposal of waste, with the exception of the incineration of non-recyclable hazardous waste, or (iii) the long-term disposal of waste may cause significant and long-term damage to the environment

- e. Pollution prevention and control: where that activity leads to a significant increase in emissions of pollutants into air, water or soil, compared to the situation before the activity starts
- f. Protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems: where that activity: (i) causes significant damage to the good condition and resilience of ecosystems, or (ii) causes damage to the conservation status of habitats and species, including those of Union interest.”

## II. Guidelines Italy

Two Word documents summarizing in English the content of relevant and recently updated operational documents regarding the application of the DNSH principle in Italy can be provided. The files contain the links to the relevant institutional webpages to consult and download the original documents in Italian. In particular:

The first document is from Ministry of Economy and Finance, State General Accounting Office -Circular of 14 May 2024, n. 22 **Update of the Operational Guide for compliance with the principle of DNSH to the environment.**

The second document is from Institute for Local Finance and Economy (IFEL) - **DNSH Vademecum: Annex 2 "Support guidelines for climate risk analysis and adaptation solutions for National Recovery & Resilience Plan NRRP** (PNRR – acronym in Italian) projects (07.05.2024).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.efre.gv.at/downloads/vorbereitung-periode-2021-2027>