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ITALY - SLOVENIA
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Annual Implementation Report

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PART A

DATA REQUIRED EVERY YEAR ('LIGHT REPORTS') (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	2014TC16RFCB036
Title	INTERREG V-A ITALY-SLOVENIA
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2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

After the EC approval of the **Cooperation Programme** by Decision C (2015) 9285 of 12th December 2015 and the official notification of approval through SFC2014 on 21st December 2015, some Programme modifications were discussed during the 1st Monitoring Committee (hereinafter MC) on 8th March 2016.

The MC's approved changes were:

- amendments of 122 clerical errors;
- definition of the baseline of the result indicator of the TO11 (*Annex IX Methodology for measuring result and output indicators* integrated with the valorization of the baseline of the TO 11 ETC result indicator, further approved with the 2nd Written Procedure (WP), 14th June 2016). For the definition of this baseline, the 1st MC decided to launch an online survey to more than 200 stakeholders.

Slovene delegation requested two additional modifications as such:

- to insert in paragraph 5.3.2.a of the CP "Western Slovenia Cohesion Region and Eastern Slovenia Cohesion Region" as specification of the "two Slovenian" partners as minimum partnership requirement for strategic projects;
- to modify the Programme Financing plan with reference to Axis 5 (TA) changing the Slovene national co-financing up to 50%.

The two modifications requested by Slovenia were not approved and needed further discussion in following MCs, with more detailed supporting documentation on justification of the two requested modifications to be provided by Slovene delegation and MA to allow an informed decision.

An amended version of the Cooperation Programme (hereinafter CP) was published on the Programme website www.ita-slo.eu with a warning disclaimer. It was also decided that modified documents (CP, Annex IX) should be transmitted to the EC when the baseline of the result indicator within TO 11 is defined, without prejudice to starting implementation of the call for projects.

In order to provide to the potential beneficiaries information on the set of Programme indicators and its methodology, the Managing Authority (hereinafter MA) published on the Programme website in June 2016 the Annex IX, including the valorization of the baseline of the TO 11 ETC result indicator.

During the 1st MC meeting, the MC membership was defined and the Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee adopted.

With regard to the setup of the **Joint Secretariat** (hereinafter JS), the negotiation among Programme partners took place from the first half of 2015 to January 2016. The notices for JS selection were published on the Official Bulletin of the Autonomous Region FVG No. 4, January 27, 2016 and the ranking lists on the FVG Region official website on 3rd May 2016. The JS staff were contracted in May-June 2016 (3 units as Economic and administrative Assistants and 2 units as Economic and administrative Specialists).

The main activity in 2016 concerned the process for the publication of the first call for **standard project** proposals (in total 4 calls were launched, 1 call per Priority Axis) with the elaboration of different documents which compose the Application Package.

The steps for the drafting, approval and publication of the first calls were as follows:

- Selection criteria were broadly discussed in seven Working Groups from December 2015 to March 2016 (two in 2015 and five in 2016);
- The first set of documents of the Application Package was presented to the first MC meeting (8th March);
- The text of the four calls, the selection criteria and whole Application Package were approved at the second MC meeting (20th May);
- Translation and publication procedure;
- Publication of calls on the Programme website (15th June 2016);
- Management of the e-application procedure and assistance to beneficiaries (June-September);
- Calls closure (30th September 2016).

The **Assessment process of standard projects** was divided into three phases: administrative check, eligibility check and quality assessment. For the quality assessment a notice for the selection of independent experts (assessors) was published by the MA on the Programme website on 7th November 2016. After the administrative and eligibility check was finished on 12th December 2016, the selected assessors started the third phase of quality assessment of the 160 standard project proposals. This assessment phase is still ongoing.

With regard to the **strategic projects** procedure the main steps in 2016 were:

- Set up of a Working Group at the 2nd MC meeting (20th May);
- First Working Group meeting (22th November): the Programme partners drafted and agreed on the procedures of the strategic project selection.

In order to implement the Programme's provisions on the ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) approach (Article 36, Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), the main steps undertaken in 2016 were the following:

- Set up of a Working Group on ITI at the 2nd MC meeting (20th May);
- Three meetings of working group on ITI were held on July 7th, August 8th, and September 7th, 2016;
- Agreement and fine-tuning of the documents related to the ITI implementation and Confirmation of Italian national co-financing to ITI projects (November 2016).
- Approval of the Application Package for "ITI EGTC" through the 4th Written Procedure (13rd December)
- Presentation of the Description of management and control System to the Audit Authority (16th December 2016)
- Signature of the Agreement between the MA and the EGTC GO Office Intermediate Body for the delegated functions as Intermediate Body for ITI projects (19th December 2016)
- Launch of the invitation to the EGTC GO to present project proposals as Sole Beneficiary (21st December 2016).

Other efforts of the MA in line with MC decisions for the implementation of the Programme were:

- **E- cohesion:** the front end for e-application (FEG) for the first calls for standard projects opened on 15th June 2016;
- **Communication main events:** Kick-off meeting in Udine (9th June 2016), Local event in Venice (29th June 2016), Info Day in Postojna (14th July 2016);
- **Programme Evaluation:** the service for Programme Evaluation was awarded in August 2016 and the Programme evaluators were contracted in December 2016;
- **State Aid Programme Scheme:** the 2nd MC meeting (20th May) delegated the MA to draft a Block Exemption Scheme approved through the 5th WP (20th December) and notified to the Commission through SANI2 system and registered with n. SA.47280. The Umbrella Scheme was published on Programme website in both language versions on 16/01/2017, date of its entry into force (expiring date is 30/06/2021);
- **Designation Procedure** launched on 16th December 2016 with the submission of the designation package (Description of Management and Control System of the Programme, Description of Management and Control System for the ITI, the Agreement between the MA and the IB, Manual of procedures of the MA and Manual of the Italian FLC) to the Audit Authority. The WG on risk analysis was set up through the WP No.4, on December 28th, 2016.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

3.1. Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1.1	Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area	The Programme was approved in December 2015. The first call for standard projects was published in June 2016. 62 project proposals on the Priority axis 1 were submitted. The project assessment is still ongoing. Therefore, it is not possible to report on key developments and significant problems. The Joint Secretariat had an insight into the implementation of this priority through the assistance to applicants and the applications submitted during the first calls.
2.1	Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans	The Programme was approved in December 2015. The first call for standard projects was published in June 2016. 13 project proposals on the Priority axis 2 were submitted. The project assessment is still ongoing. Therefore, it is not possible to report on key developments and significant problems. The Joint Secretariat had an insight into the implementation of this priority through the assistance to applicants and the applications submitted during the first calls.
3.1 3.2 3.3	<i>Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources</i>	The Programme was approved in December 2015. The first call for standard projects was published in June 2016. 63 project proposals on the Priority axis 3 were submitted (43 for investment priority 6c, 10 for 6d, 10 for 6f). The project assessment is still ongoing. Therefore, it is not possible to report on key developments and significant problems. The Joint Secretariat had an insight into the implementation of this priority through the assistance to applicants and the applications submitted during the first calls. Also the ITI project Isonzo-Soca is to be implemented under this PA.
4.1	Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance	The Programme was approved in December 2015. The first call for standard projects was published in June 2016. . 22 project proposals on the Priority axis 4 were submitted. The project assessment is still ongoing. Therefore, it is not possible to report on key developments and significant problems. The Joint Secretariat had an insight into the implementation of this priority through the assistance to applicants and the applications submitted during the first calls. Also the ITI project on Health is to be implemented under this PA.
5.1	Technical Assistance	Following the awarding procedure concluded with the signature of the contract in December 3, 2015, the group of external TA experts officially started their support to the Programme in January 2016, in order to speed up the publication of the first four calls for project proposals. The online Monitoring tool "on line FEG" (Front-End Generalizzato), based on INTERACT tool, was used to implement the Programme information system, in order to draft and submit

		<p>applications. All the work for the elaboration of the on-line project applications started in December 2015 and the front-end application was completed in view of the launch for the first four calls for proposals in June 2016. As the system faced some technical challenges, the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat provided all the necessary support to the potential beneficiaries and informed them on the correct software solutions.</p>
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3.2. Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Data for common and programme-specific indicators by investment priority transmitted using the tables 1 to 2 below.

Table 1: Result indicators (by priority axis and specific objective); applies also to technical assistance priority axis

Automatic from SFC						ANNUAL VALUE										Observations (if necessary)
ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
1.1	Level of cross/border cooperation among key actors of the Programme area	Gross value added at basic prices in millions of Euro	6.519,11	2014	7.758,86	6.519,11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>The CP was approved in December 2015. The 1st four Calls for standard projects were launched in June 2016. The assessment of the project proposals is still ongoing.</p> <p>The baseline for RI 4.1 is missing because the revised CP and its Annex IX have not been yet sent to the EC.</p>
2.1	Level of capacities of municipalities in decreasing energy use	Municipalities in SEAP	43	2014	47	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3.1	Level of Cross-border cooperation in the sustainable valorization of cultural and natural heritage	Number of visitors	4.012.237	2014	5.793.754	4.012.237	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3.2.A	Level of preservation of status of habitats	Status conservation of (Habitats) *	1.986,00	2014	1.999,00	1.986,00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3.2.B	Level of preservation of status of species	Status conservation of (Species)*	1.851,00	2014	1.869,00	1.851,00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3.3	Level of cross-border application of green technologies or processes	Total number of application	5,76	2014	6,09	5,76	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4.1	Increased capacity of public authorities and stakeholders in cross-border cooperation and governance	%	To be calculated	2016	+10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators (by priority axis, investment priority); applies also to technical assistance priority axes

	ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value ⁽¹⁾ (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUE										Observations (if necessary)	
					2014	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO26	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions (Common Indicator)	Enterprises	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The CP was approved in December 2015. The 1st Call for standard projects was launched in June 2016. The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO42	Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects (Common Indicator)	Organizations	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	1.1.1	Number of innovative services, products and tools transferred to enterprises	Number	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	2.1.1	Number of implemented actions towards the decrease of annual primary energy consumption in existing public buildings	Number	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	2.1.2	Pilot implementation of innovative services for smart low carbon mobility	Number	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO09	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	20.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.1.1	Number of investments implemented or services/products created supporting preservation/restoration of natural and cultural heritage	Number	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[actual achievement]																	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.1.2	Km bicycle path/lane completed	Km	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO23	Surface area of habitats supported in order to attain a better conservation status (Common indicator)	Hectares	6.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.2.1	Tools and services developed for assessing and promoting ecosystem services	Number	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.2.2	Cross-border pilot actions to support biodiversity	Number	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.2.3	Participants to educational and divulgative events	Number	8.500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	CO20	Population benefiting from flood protection measures (Common indicator)	Persons	1.111	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	3.3.1	Number of innovative green technologies tested and implemented	Number	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations	3.3.2	Number of enterprises applying new green innovation solutions	Number	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

[forecast provided by beneficiaries]																	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	4.1.1	Cross-border agreement and protocols signed	Number	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	4.1.2	Joint solutions increasing integration, coherence, harmonization of the Programme area governance (shared politics, legislative frameworks or regulations, joint strategic documents, e-government tools, etc.)	Joint solutions	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	4.1.3	Number of beneficiaries participating in joint training schemes	Number	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	4.1.4	Number of cross-border medical teams full-formed and operational	Number	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	5.1.1	Percentage of projects committed and finished	% of submitted projects	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	5.1.2	Number of major publicity events for beneficiaries and applicants	Publicity Events	6	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations [actual achievement]					0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries]	5.1.3	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	Number	7	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fully implemented operations					0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[actual achievement]																	
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3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) – submitted in annual implementation reports from 2017 onwards

Reporting on financial indicators, key implementation steps, output and result indicators to act as milestones and targets for the performance framework (submitted starting with the report in 2017).

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

Priority Axis	Indicator Type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	2014		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		Observations (if necessary)
Priority Axis 1	Output	CO42	Number of research institutions participating in cross border research projects	Organizations	23	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The CP was approved in December 2015. The 1st Call for standard projects was launched in June 2016
	Financial	F1	Payment certified and declared to the EC	EUR	€ 2.594.680,41	€ 22.003.752	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Priority Axis 2	Output	2.1.1	Number of implemented actions towards the decrease of annual primary energy consumption in existing public buildings	Number	4	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.	
	Financial	F2	Payment certified and declared to the EC	EUR	€ 1.356.969,35	€ 13.752.345,00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Priority Axis 3	Output	CO09	Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attraction	Visits/year	5.000	20.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

	Financial	F3	Payment certified and declared to the EC	EUR	€ 3.342.732,47	€ 32.088.805	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priority Axis 4	Output	4.1.2	Joint solutions increasing integration, coherence, harmonization of the Programme area governance (shared politics, legislative frameworks or regulations, joint strategic documents, e-government tools, etc.)	Number	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Financial	F4	Payment certified and declared to the EC	EUR	€ 2.456.351,35	€ 18.336.460,00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3.4. Financial data (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level as set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 [Model for transmission of financial data] (3)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
The financial allocation of the priority axis based on the operational programme [extracted from Table 18a of the operational programme]						Cumulative data on the financial progress of the operational programme					
Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for the calculation of Union support* (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Total funding (EUR)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%) [column 7 / column 5 × 100]	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%) [column 10 / column 5 × 100]	Number of operations selected
							Calculation			Calculation	
Priority axis 1	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	22.003.752,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priority axis 2	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	13.752.345,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priority axis 3	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	32.088.805,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priority axis 4	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	18.336.460,00	85%	0	0	0	0	0	0

Priority axis 5	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	5.500.938,00	85%	3.406.820,00	61,93%	3.406.820,00	365.250,01	6,64%	1
Total	ERDF	NA	TOTAL	91.682.300,00	85%	3.406.820,00	3,72%	3.406.820,00	365.250,01	0,40%	1
Grand Total	All Funds	NA	TOTAL	91.682.300,00	85%	3.406.820,00	3,72%	3.406.820,00	365.250,01	0,40%	1

Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention (Article 112(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013)

(as set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 [Model for transmission of financial data] and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes)

N/A in 2016

Table 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area

1	2	3	4	5
	The amount of ERDF support ⁽⁴⁾ envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)	Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority (EUR)	Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
All or part of an operation outside the Union part of the programme area ⁽⁵⁾	<type='N' input='M'>	<type='P' input='G'>	<type='N' input='M'>	<type='P' input='G'>

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the programme that have become available during the previous financial year, including the name and reference period of the evaluation reports used.

In accordance with Articles 56 and 114 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013:

- the Managing Authority presented the document “Guidelines for evaluation report drafting”, during the first Monitoring Committee meeting (8th March 2016);
- on 14th December 2016 the contract n. 9771 was awarded to the Temporary Grouping of Companies composed by Expert for Europe Srl and Ecoter Srl for the evaluation service. The tender was published on the OJEU on 12th April 2016 by the Single Centralised Committee of the autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, with a separate Lot for the Programme Interreg Italy-Slovenia;
- on 15th December 2016 the Managing Authority forwarded to the Programme partner Delegations and to EC representative the draft Evaluation plan for the Programme;
- the Evaluation Plan has been further discussed, amended and finalised through its submission to the 3rd Monitoring Committee and was finally approved through Written Procedure n. 7 (06/04/2017).

No evaluations have been done in the period of this Report.

The first Evaluation report on the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme will assess programme management and implementation, project application and selection procedures, communication strategy, description of the ITI as for implementation of ITI principles in the Programme.

5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN (article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

(a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

Due to the long process of negotiation which finally ended with the approval of the Cooperation Programme (CP) in December 2015, the Programme faced several challenges that affected its performance in the 2016 year, in particular the difficulties in order to catch up the delay in Programme implementation and the applicability of the e-Cohesion concept.

The main challenges for the Programme in 2016 were:

1. to establish an efficient working method to facilitate the agreement and increase the level of trust and cooperation among programme partners;
2. to make the decision making process smoother and faster. Agreement was required in particular to speed up the launch of the first calls for standard projects and the launch of the implementation procedure for the Integrated Territorial Investment for the submission of ITI projects as the first MC meeting did not produce the expected results, thus

- determining a delay in the overall programme implementation (topics put in the MC agenda and documents sent to the MC members were not discussed because of lack of time);
3. The online Monitoring tool "on line FEG" (Front-End Generalizzato), based on INTERACT tool, was created in order to reduce administrative burden for the beneficiaries, to implement the Programme information system and to draft and submit applications. The system faced some technical challenges due, in particular, to the Digital Signature harmonization needed between the different procedures for the Digital signature available in the two Member States;
 4. As concerns the ITI, the setting up of the whole system for management and implementation of the ITI requested a long process and discussion in order to compare different options and adopt most suitable solution. The main topics regarded the issue on Intermediate Body, its role, delegated functions and competences. An intense discussion was made also about the Sole Beneficiary concept, its consequences in terms of FLC procedures, national co-financing, preparation of application package and monitoring system;
 5. Difficulties were faced regarding the designation process;
 6. As regards to the translation service (outsourced contract ending in 2018), the quality of the service has been contested several times and represented an issue;
 7. The above described delays may affect the performance indicators' achievement and the financial targets. Anyhow the MA is fully aware and monitor the situation.

In 2016 the following measures were adopted to foster the implementation process and to overcome the difficulties experienced by the Programme:

1. To facilitate the agreement and increase the level of trust and cooperation among programme partners:
 - i. The enlarged partnership of the Programme was informed about the Calls already during the 1st MC;
 - ii. From JS establishment the Slovene speaking JS units have meetings and email exchanges with Slovene partners when needed.
2. In order to make the decision making process smoother and more efficient, the assessment criteria were discussed starting from December 2015 to March 2016 in 7 WG meetings:
 - i. Those meetings include also a working session organized with INTERACT on 11th January 2016, to have these criteria fine-tuned and presented at the 1st MC;
 - ii. Furthermore, since no decision was reached at the 1st MC meeting, two of the mentioned WG meetings were organised after the 1st MC meeting to facilitate the agreement among the parts prior to their submission and approval;
 - iii. The 2nd MC meeting in May 2016 approved the calls, criteria and application package for the following publication of the calls for standard projects;
 - iv. ITI: a conference call meeting with European Commission representatives and the WG was organised to provide clear guidance on a number of legal issues related to the ITI implementation and the role of the EGTC GO as sole beneficiary and Intermediate body. Several documents were also drafted to highlight the added value of the SB model in the ITI implementation, the Integrated Strategy of the EGTC cross-border area, compare the different options related to the execution of FLC for the ITI projects;
 - v. Setting up of a specific WG for strategic procedures with the involvement of Programme partners to facilitate the agreement among the parts.
3. In the implementation of the online Monitoring tool "on line FEG":
 - i. Digital Signature information: through the FAQs published for the first calls, the applicants were informed about the two digital signature software solutions and procedures (Acrobat Reader and DikeUtil) to be used in order to avoid problems and

- project rejection. Due to the mentioned reasons as described in the 3rd WP approved by the MC, the deadline for the submission of project proposals was extended until September 30th, h. 12.00. Also, due to the technical problems occurred on the web based platform during the 48 hours before the deadline (30th September at 12.00.00 am), the time-limit for submitting the applications was extended for two additional hours, to 2.00.00 pm.
- ii. Partly using of the Harmonized Implementation Tools (HIT) and other projects developed by the INTERACT Programme in cooperation with ETC Programmes in order to simplify and streamline Programme implementation among them.
4. ITI: The whole management and control system needed to be discussed, checked, planned and established, since the approach chosen is new to the program “implementation framework”. This process was carried out in the specific WG, set up in the 2nd MC meeting. In the whole process, many options were checked and discussed, with all stakeholders and decision makers and required three WG meetings, e-mail exchanges among the parts, consultation with the Commission, meetings with the FLC of both Member States.
 5. Some measures were taken to prevent fraud, such as the setting up of the WG on risk analysis (MC’s WP n. 4 concluded on December 19th);
 6. As regards to the translations, taking in consideration that the awarded the society is in charge of the translation, some measures were taken to face this shortcoming:
 - i. revision of texts was requested: glossary of technical terms and expressions and the most relevant documents on the topics were made available;
 - ii. most of the translated documents were also revised by the Programme external TA experts;
 - iii. the JS supervised the services and the quality of translations and is in charge of all the minor translations;
 - iv. lately a close exchange among the JS and the Slovene partner have occurred and Slovene partner translation service has been involved in quality check before formal delivery of some documents to the MC.
 7. Referring to the performance indicators’ achievement and financial targets, the MA has included in the MC’s agendas an updated roadmaps. Also some proposals of faster and more efficient implementation will be taken into account and suggested to the MC in its meeting having in the agenda the approval of the ranking lists of standard projects (following the calls closed in September) and their follow-up.

(b)OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1 (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate

All other issues are included in point 9.1.

6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual implementation report is included as a separate file in the form of annex 1 to this implementation report.

7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Article 46 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the managing authority decided to use financial instruments it must send to the Commission a specific report covering the financial instruments operations as an annex to the annual implementation report

N/A

8. WHERE APPROPRIATE, PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (Article 101(h) and Article 111(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

N/A

8.1. Major projects

Table 7: Major projects

Project	CCI	Status of MP 1.completed2.approved3. .submitted4.planned for notification/ submission to Commission	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification /submission date (if applicable) (year, quarter)	Date of tacit agreement/ approval by Commission (if applicable)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axis/Investment priorities	Current state of realisation – financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)	Current state of realisation – physical progress Main implementation stage of the project 1.completed/in operation;2.advanced construction;3.construction;4.procurement;5.design	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract (6) (if applicable)	Observations (if necessary)
<type='S' input='G'>	<type='S' input='G'>	<type='S' input='S'>	<type='N' input='M'>	<type='N' input='M'>	<type='D' input='G'>	<type='D' input='G'>	<type='D' input='G'>	<type='D' input='G'>	<type='S' input='G'>	<type='P' input='M'>	<type='S' input='S'>	<type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'>	<type='D' input='M'>	<type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'>

Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them.

N/A

Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme

N/A

8.2. Joint action plans

N/A

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans
<type='S' maxlength=3500 input='M'>

Table 8: Joint action plans

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP 1.completed2.> 50 % implemented3Started4.approved5.submitted6.planned	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP 1.normal2.pilot3.YEI	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations (if necessary)
<type='input='G'>	• <type='S' input='S'>	• <type='S' input='S'>	• <type='N' input='M'>	• <type='N' input='M'>	• <type='N' input='M'>	• <type='S' input='G'>	• <type='S' input='S'>	• <type='D' input='M'>	• <type='D' input='M'>	• <type='D' input='M'>	• <type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'>	• <type='N' input='M'>	• <type='S' maxlength=875 input='M'>

Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them
 <type='S' maxlength=3500 input='M'>

PART B

REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEARS 2017, 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

FOR EACH PRIORITY AXIS – Assessment of the information provided above and progress towards achieving the objectives of the programme, including the contribution of the ERDF to changes in the value of result indicators, when evidence is available from evaluations

PRIORITY AXIS 1 - Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area

For the priority axis 1, the first call for standard projects (Call 01/2016 1b) was published in June 2016. The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.

For the definition of the conditions of the first calls and for the identification of the assessment criteria, the guiding principles for selection of operations on the Priority Axis 1 and the cross-cutting issues (ICT, Education, SME, Social Inclusion, Employment) have been taken into account in order to focus on selecting projects that contribute the most to achieving Programme objectives.

In the following table is seen the correlation between specific guiding principles and the specific criteria requested in the first call for proposal for the SO 1.1. *Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area* (PA 1, IP 1b):

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Proved aptitude to develop outcomes and results deriving from capitalization of successful experiences in 2007-2013 period	The project is designed as to develop outcomes and results deriving from capitalization of successful experiences in 2007-2013 period
Aptitude to create new lasting collaboration networks as well as strengthen and widen exiting ones	The project creates new lasting collaboration networks as well as strengthens and widens exiting ones
Focus on practical applications and on readiness of implementation of transferred knowledge	The project focuses on practical applications and on readiness of implementation of transferred knowledge
Synergy with Smart Specialization Strategies	The project develops synergy with Smart Specialization Strategies or deals with topics belonging to overlapping S3

Probable trickle-down effects on the whole Programme-area	The project has probable widespread effects on the whole Programme area
Priority shall be granted to projects dealing with topics belonging to overlapping S3	Project promote transition to green economy and reconciles productivity with sustainable use of renewable resources

An analysis of what the programme has done to achieve its objectives fulfilling the mentioned criteria and guiding principles will be available after assessment, approval and implementation of projects.

PRIORITY AXIS 2 - Cooperating for implementation of low carbon strategies and action plans

For the priority axis 2, the first call for standard projects (Call 02/2016 4e) was published in June 2016. The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.

For the definition of the conditions of the first calls and for the identification of the assessment criteria, the guiding principles for selection of operations on the Priority Axis 2 and the cross-cutting issues (ICT, Education, SME, Social Inclusion, Employment) have been taken into account in order to focus on selecting projects that contribute the most to achieving Programme objectives.

In the following table is seen the correlation between specific guiding principles and the specific criteria requested in the first call for proposal for the SO 2.1. *Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning* (PA 2, IP 4e):

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Contribute to at least one of three types of changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substitutions of unsustainable with sustainable flows • more efficient use of materials and energy • and development of circular chains 	The project contributes to substitutions of unsustainable with sustainable traffic flows
	The project contributes to more efficient use of materials and energy
	The project contributes to development of circular chains

An analysis of what the programme has done to achieve its objectives fulfilling the mentioned criteria and guiding principles will be available after assessment, approval and implementation of projects.

PRIORITY AXIS 3 - Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources

For the priority axis 3, the first call for standard projects (Call 03/2016 6c-6d-6f) was published in June 2016. The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.

For the definition of the conditions of the first calls and for the identification of the assessment criteria, the guiding principles for selection of operations on the Priority Axis 3 and the cross-cutting issues (ICT, Education, SME, Social Inclusion, Employment) have been taken into account in order to focus on selecting projects that contribute the most to achieving Programme objectives.

In the following table is seen the correlation between specific guiding principles and the specific criteria requested in the first call for proposal for the:

- *SO 3.1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage (PA 3, IP 6c):*

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Focus on innovative and sustainable ways for capitalizing on cultural and natural resources	The project implies innovative and sustainable ways for capitalizing on cultural and natural resources
Capacity to express the growth potential of under-exploited sites	The project encourages growth potential of under-exploited sites
Capacity to compensate economic valorization of natural and cultural resources with their conservation, protection, and restoration for future generations, with clear indication of foreseen counter-measures aimed at not increasing tourism pressure on natural and cultural resources as well as GHG emissions	The project shows the capacity to compensate economic valorization of natural and cultural resources with their conservation, protection, and restoration for future generations, with clear indication of foreseen counter-measures aimed at not increasing tourism pressure on natural and cultural resources as well as GHG emissions
Capacity to preserve and build a common natural and cultural heritage regardless of its immediate economic return	The project shows capacity to preserve and build a common natural and cultural heritage regardless of its immediate economic return
Any heritage site or small scale investment receiving Programme support should be publicly accessible	The foreseen heritage site or small scale investment to be financed by the Programme are publicly accessible

The pilot action Isonzo - Soča, under the ITI, will be implemented under Priority Axis 3, Investment Priority 6c.

- *SO 3.2. Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory (PA 3, IP 6d)*

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Clear description of the expected positive effects on environment and biodiversity	A clear description of the expected positive effects on environment and biodiversity is provided
Priority will be given to actions capitalizing on previous successful experiences on the relevant fields and/or with expected lasting results and possibility of further future developments.	Actions capitalizing on previous successful experiences on the relevant fields are described and implemented Expected lasting results and further future developments are highlighted

- *SO 3.3. Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management (PA 3, IP 6f):*

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Focus on practical applications and solutions related to green technologies	The project foresees practical applications of green technologies

Possible trickle-down effects	The project has possible widespread positive effects over the entire Programme area
Actions in line with the national bilateral Water Commission Agenda	Actions in line with the national bilateral Water Commission Agenda are implemented

An analysis of what the programme has done to achieve its objectives fulfilling the mentioned criteria and guiding principles will be available after assessment, approval and implementation of projects.

PRIORITY AXIS 4 - Enhancing capacity building and cross-border governance

For the priority axis 4, the first call for standard projects (Call 04/2016 11ETC) was published in June 2016. The assessment of project proposals is still ongoing.

For the definition of the conditions of the first calls and for the identification of the assessment criteria, the guiding principles for selection of operations on the Priority Axis 4 and the cross-cutting issues (ICT, Education, SME, Social Inclusion, Employment) have been taken into account in order to focus on selecting projects that contribute the most to achieving Programme objectives.

In the following table is seen the correlation between specific guiding principles and the specific criteria requested in the first call for proposal for the SO 4.1. *Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges* (PA 4, IP 11 ETC):

Specific guiding principles (from CP)	Specific Criteria (from Assessment Manual)
Perspectives of lasting relationship networks	The project shows perspectives of lasting relationship networks
Ability of contributing to a more cohesive Programme area	The project contributes to a more cohesive Programme area

The pilot action "Health", adopted under the ITI, will be implemented under Priority Axis 4.

An analysis of what the programme has done to achieve its objectives fulfilling the mentioned criteria and guiding principles will be available after assessment, approval and implementation of projects.

PRIORITY AXIS 5 - Technical Assistance

On the Priority Axis 5, no calls are provided.

The specific objective of the Priority Axis 5 is to ensure the efficient management and implementation of the Programme. The main objective is to guarantee a sound management and control system and the timely and efficient execution of all the key implementation steps, according to the established rules and procedures. According to the Specific Objective 5.1, in order to improve efficiently the management of the Programme, the following actions have been implemented in 2016:

- Setting up the Joint Secretariat in order to support the Managing Authority and to assist the Monitoring Committee in the implementation and day-by-day management of the Programme;
- Preparing and implementing the first four calls for proposals, including the development of guidance documents and setting out the conditions for the projects' technical support;
- Setting-up and implementing procedures for the quality assessment of projects;

- Drafting and implementing the Programme communication strategy, including the setting up and implementation of information and communication measures and tools in line with Article 115 of the Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013;
- Drafting the Programme evaluation plan;
- Setting up a network of national/regional authorities/Info point/ financial controllers, coordinated by the Joint Secretariat, with the purpose of exchanging information and best practices at cross-border level;
- Drafting of information documents for applicants and beneficiaries to guide them in the preparation of applications and the implementation, evaluation, control and communication of approved projects;
- Organizing, information and exchange events (e.g.: training workshop in Trieste, two local events in Venice and Postojna) to strengthen the capacity of applicants to develop applications directly contributing to the Programme specific objectives and expected results;
- Organizing trainings on specific implementation issues such as project and financial management, reporting, control, audit, communication and networking to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries to implement approved operations, new EU legislation on public procurement;
- Developing information and exchange tools (e.g. analytical documents, bilateral meetings, targeted events, etc.) and organization of cross-border and national events to strengthen the involvement of relevant partners in the implementation of the Programme (also including authorities involved in the development or implementation of macro-regional strategies, joint legal bodies operating in the Programme area and umbrella organizations).

9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

For the first calls for proposals launched in June 2016, the respect of the horizontal principles is ensured through the accomplishment of the criteria provided in the quality assessment phase. Broadly, strategic criteria measure the relevance and strategy of the content of the project proposal, determining the extent of the project's contribution to the achievement of the Programme objectives. A strong focus is given to the result-oriented approach with clear demand for visible outputs and concrete results. Strategic criteria also assess the cross-border cooperation approach, the quality of partnership and Programme horizontal principles.

In the Application Form the applicant must provide the following information:

- To indicate the horizontal principle

- To indicate if the project has effect on the horizontal principle: yes/no
- To describe the effect

As the assessment of project proposals is still ongoing, detailed information is not available for the reporting year.

For the Joint Secretariat recruitment, the Managing Authority ensured compliance with the principles of equal treatment, equality between men and women and non-discrimination.

Each public procurement procedure launched by the Programme, in particular the open awarding procedures, has been made in compliance with the principles of equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities.

9.3. Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

In line with section 8.1 *Sustainable development* of the CP, special attention has been paid to the sectors highly affecting environment. The first Calls for standard projects for Priority Axis 3 (IPs 6.c, 6.d, 6.f) and the pilot action *Isonzo - Soča*, under the ITI, concentrated a large amount of Programme resources and demonstrates the choice of the Programme to encourage environment protection and a more sustainable and efficient use of resources, and to promote the development of green growth and technologies and the valorization of natural assets as development and competitiveness drivers.

Furthermore, the Programme has striven to keep the quantity of printed materials as low as possible with a view to an eco-friendly approach as set out in the Programme Communication Strategy. The MA organized conference calls, videoconferences and web-streaming services for numerous meetings and events in order to ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly approach for both Programme partners and beneficiaries.

The horizontal principle of sustainable development has been considered and requested through the first public calls for the generation and implementation of each project.

In the Application Form the applicant must provide the following information:

- To indicate the horizontal principle
- To indicate if the project has effect on the horizontal principle: yes/no
- To describe the effect

As the assessment of project proposals is still ongoing, detailed information is not available for the reporting year.

9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Figures calculated automatically by the SFC2014 based on categorisation data.

In the Assessment Manual published with the first calls for standard projects is foreseen that the representatives of the Environmental Authorities or climate change partners participate in the assessment phase for questions concerning environmental objectives, on request of JS.

In the Application Form the applicant must provide the following information:

- To indicate the environmental principle
- To indicate if the project has effect on the environmental principle: yes/no
- To describe the effect

As the assessment of project proposals is still ongoing, detailed information is not available for the reporting year.

9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

The two Member States agreed to designate an equal number of voting and non-voting members with a transparent approach and the partners invited in the Monitoring Committee were selected in compliance with article 12 and 13 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESI Funds and in compliance with section 5 of the Cooperation Programme, in order to enhance legality, independence, impartiality, transparency and to preserve the confidentiality of its work and to avoid any conflict of interest in the decision making process. The list of voting and non-voting members has been published on the Programme website and the MC members have been asked to signed a Declaration in which they committed themselves to perform ethically and impartially.

In continuity with the programming period 2007-2013, the enlarged partnership approach was applied in line with the principles of partnership and multi-level governance described in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. The Rules of Procedure of the Programme lay down the list of non-voting members, whose representatives are involved during the MC meetings and in the decision-making process: a) the European Commission; b) the representatives of Environmental Authorities; c) the Office of the Intermediate Body (OIB) of the ITI.

The social parties as MC's non-voting members - divided per Member State - are listed in article 2 of the MC's Rules of Procedure approved during its first meeting.

All non-voting members are fully informed and involved in all decision-making processes (e.g. MC meetings, Written Procedures).

All MC members have access to the Programme platform (4 PM - <https://fvq.4pm.si/>) for the exchange of working documents.

The partnership approach continues during the implementation of the Programme, in particular with the set-up of working groups to facilitate Programme decision-making process.

10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (a) AND (b), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013

10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations

On 15th December 2016 the Managing Authority forwarded to the Programme partner Delegations and to EC representative the draft Evaluation plan for the Programme.

The Evaluation Plan was further discussed, amended and finalised through its submission to the 3rd Monitoring Committee and was finally approved through Written Procedure n. 7 (06/04/2017).

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

In 2016 the MA, with the support of the JS and the Slovene Info Point, organized many events targeted to general public in order to raise the awareness about the Programme and its funding opportunities and potential beneficiaries for attracting high-quality projects, as illustrated below.

New Programme Launch Event - The Interreg V-A Italy - Slovenia 2014-2020 Programme was officially launched on June 9th, 2016 at the FVG Autonomous Region headquarter in Udine. This event was attended by Programme key stakeholders, potential beneficiaries, project managers, journalists. A Web streaming service was also provided, which allowed people to follow the meeting remotely. An opening speech was held by Ms Agnès Monfret, Head of Unit of the European Commission DG REGIO "European Cross-border cooperation", who described the main features of cooperation among EU Member States. This meeting was an opportunity to present some projects funded by the previous Programme 2007-2013 and discuss on the new Programme and the upcoming call for standard projects' applications.

Events related to Calls 2016 - In order to help ensure the submission of eligible applications to the new Programme, the MA and the JS have undertaken a number of targeted information and communication activities including the:

- Organization of a training workshop in Trieste (March 16th, 2016) with Programme Partners to introduce the on line system for the submission of project proposals (FEG);
- Organization of two local events after the Programme launch event: on June 29th, 2016 in Venice (Italy) and on July 14th, 2016 in Postojna (Slovenia) Programme partners involved stakeholders/potential applicants of their own territory;
- Co-ordination of 2 separate sectorial training workshops focusing on the on-line system for submitting project proposals (FEG) in Trieste (September 1st, 2016) and Štanjel (September 2nd, 2016);
- Organization of face-to-face meeting with potential applicants in Trieste (19 meetings) and Štanjel (30 meetings);
- Creation and insertion of news on the Programme website related to the Calls for standard projects;
- Issuing of news related to Calls No 1/2016 1b, 2/2016 4e, 3/2016 6c, 6d, 6f and 4/2016 11 ETC for the standard projects' applications on the Programme website;

- Use of the Programme existing social media channel (Twitter) to promote the launch of the Programme and opening of Calls for standard projects and applicant workshops.

Attendance and feedback - Around 750 participants joined the public events illustrated as follows:

- 16 representatives of Programme authorities and structures joined the meeting on the on-line system (FEG) in Trieste on March 16th, 2016;
- 385 participants were present at Programme kick-off meeting in Udine on June 9th, 2016;
- 55 participants at the local event in Venice on June 29th, 2016;
- 180 participants at the INFO DAY organized in Postojna on July 14th, 2016;
- 40 potential applicants took part in the Training session on FEG platform in Trieste on September 1st, 2016 and
- 51 potential applicants attended the Training session on FEG platform in Štanjel on September 2nd, 2016. This event was also available on demand (95 views).

The results of the questionnaires submitted for the two biggest events (09.06.16, 14.07.16) revealed that the about 60 % of the attendees expressed appreciation for speakers, topics debated, organization and level of communication and about 40% chose the Internet as their primary media channel (Programme website).

Based on the Communication Strategy, the MA and the JS carried out also the following **minor information and communication activities** including:

- Updating the section “Programming Period 2014-2020” on the 2007-2013 Programme website;
- Handling the public procurement procedure for the elaboration of the new Programme website layout (contract value EUR 27.992,59, signed in December 2016 with Pomilio Blumm Srl);
- Issuing tweets on the Programme Twitter profile: @InterregITASLO;
- Participation in events at EU level (10th-13th, October European Week of Regions and Cities 2016 in Brussels).

The Slovene Info Point provided information to potential beneficiaries in their own territories by:

- Updating institutional websites with information related to the implementation of the Programme;
- Assuring media coverage by issuing reports and press releases;
- Sending direct emails to Programme stakeholders and potential applicants (around 1.000 contacts from MA/JS, 630 direct emails managed by the Slovene Info point, and about 200 direct emails managed by Veneto Region).
- Participating in events at EU level (September, 27th- 2nd annual Conference “EU Budget Focused on Results” in Brussels; September, 21st-23rd - “5th Meeting of the Approval Authorities of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation” in Budapest).

Programme website www.ita-slo.eu - Traffic to the Programme website was high after the publication of the Calls No 1/2016 1b, 2/2016 4e, 3/2016 6c, 6d, 6f and 4/2016 11 ETC. The most visited pages include the Homepage and the Section “Programming Period 2014-2020”. In 2016, 80.198 individual users (so called “Unique visitors”) accessed to Programme website www.ita-slo.eu.

Media coverage - The MA involved Media offices of Friuli Venezia Giulia Region in order to issue press releases and ensure significant levels of coverage throughout 2016, especially for the kick-off event of the new Programme and the publication of calls for standard projects. The Slovene

Info point, in cooperation with MA/JS, published the calls for tender on the Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia. While Veneto Region provided the publication of news on the Veneto Region official website. News on the kick-off event and the publication of calls for standard projects appeared on Institutional websites and newspaper of the Programme area.

Social media activity - The MA, with the support of the JS, kept developing the Programme's social media presence on Twitter (Programme profile: @InterregITASLO), with the following 2016 results:

- 26 Tweets
- 2817 Profile visits (Number of times users visited the Programme profile page)
- 19340 Tweet impressions
- 28 new followers
- 13 mentions
- 57 followings.

Interreg Communication Network - In 2016 the MA staff kept in touch with the Interreg Communication Network promoted by INTERACT programme taking part to Basecamp Platform groups.

Internal meetings - Before the establishment of the MC of the Programme, 2 Task Force meetings took place in January (11 and 28.01.16). On March 7th, 2016 a preparatory meeting for the establishment of the MC was held in Trieste. On March 8th, 2016 the Rules of Procedure of the MC were approved and the MC was formally established in its first meeting held in Nova Gorica (Slovenia). The second MC meeting was held in Postojna (Slovenia) on May 20th, 2016.

About 30% of the budget planned on Programme Communication Strategy was spent on information and communication activities in this reporting year.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 14(4), subparagraph 2 (a), (b), (c) and (f), of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

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

The Programme foresees the implementation of an ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) in the EGTC GO area, that comprises the area of the Municipality of Gorizia, Municipality of Nova Gorica and Municipality of Šempeter Vrtojba (Section 4 of CP). The ITI is composed by 2 pilot actions which are in line with the Investment Priorities and contribute to the Objectives of the Programme. The ITI is implemented according to the "Sole Beneficiary" model and it is managed by the Office for Intermediate Body (OIB), a separated and functional independent Unit of the EGTC GO that will act as Intermediate body (Section 5.3.1 of CP) - Art. 11 of Reg (EU) 1299/2013.

During the 2nd MC meeting (Postojna, May 20th, 2016) a Working Group on the ITI was set up. The WG met 3 times (Jul, Aug, Sep) to finalize and get a prior agreement on the following documents:

ITI Management and Control System, Agreement establishing the functions and tasks of the IB between MA and OIB and the Application Package for the ITI procedure (Guidelines ITI implementation, Template application form ITI, Technical annex to Application Form, Sole Beneficiary statement, Template of Subsidy contract). The Italian Government confirmed the Italian national co-financing to the EGTC GO on October 14th 2016 (note No. 2750 - 14/10/2016) as sole beneficiary of the ITI. The MC, by written procedure, approved the documentation to invite the EGTC GO to submit project proposals for both ITI projects (2/12/2016 - 13/12/2016). Both projects have been approved in February 2017 at the 3rd MC meeting.

On December 20th the Agreement between the MA and the OIB was signed. On December 21st 2016 the MA sent the Application Package to the EGTC GO SB (the deadline for the submission of the project proposals was January 23rd 2017).

The decision to implement ITI through EGTC GO, with the role of intermediate body and sole beneficiary in two functionally separated units, was long debated in the WG.

In line with the programme provisions, the so called “light” delegation of tasks to OIB was agreed, which includes the selection/assessment procedure, the monitoring and reporting of the projects, the check on the applications for the reimbursement. The FLC and the procedure of the reimbursement remains in charge of the MA/FLC of the Programme and of the CA. Based on the Agreement signed between the MA and the OIB, it was drafted the Description of Management and control System for ITI and transmitted to the AA as part of the designation procedure. A specific FLC procedure has been adopted for the ITI projects, taking account that there is only one beneficiary (EGTC GO) but it could be supported by “implementing bodies”.

The sole beneficiary model represents a new methodology in cross-border cooperation, strongly supported by ETC strategic documents. The programme decided to confirm it as it was recognised that, to produce a significant territorial growth in the cross-border territorial context comprised among the three cities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempetr-Vrtojba, the economic and social regeneration needs to pass through a high level of innovation and concentration (in term of resources and competences).

It was decided to entrust the EGTC GO with the implementation of the ITI as sole beneficiary of both projects because it is the only organization on the concerned part of the programme area which has territorial competence on the whole cross-border area and it is at the same time owned by the three municipalities, on an equal basis.

On this basis and in line with EU legal and programming framework, the programme gave mandate to the EGTC GO to act as sole beneficiary in the implementation of both ITI projects. This management procedure guarantees the three municipalities not only the sharing of the decision making process and the joint control of the achievements of the outputs, but also reduced administrative barriers, caused by the existence of the border and more consistent long term oriented promotion and facilitation of cross-border cooperation.

In line with the programme provisions,, the two pilot actions “Isonzo - Soča” (IP 6c) and “Health” (TO 11) thanks to mentioned innovative inclusive instruments, contributes to the delivery of new solutions in support of the integration of the single urban area of the three cities. This experience could be a good role model for the other cross-border areas through EU and for the future agenda of integration process throughout EU.

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

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

The Programme area takes part to two macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), moreover the Danubian Strategy (EUSDR) affects the Programme in the Slovenian side of the Programme area.

The synergies between the programme and macro-regional strategies is explained in the Cooperation Programme (section 4).

In the Application Form the applicant must provide the following information:

- to indicate the Strategy (EUSALP/EUSAIR) relevant for the project
- to describe the project contribution in the achievement of Strategy objectives

In project assessment a specific criterion is foreseen to assess the synergy of project proposals with the above mentioned strategies. According to the Assessment Manual the criterion is “*The project clearly contributes to EU macro-regional strategies*”.

Regarding the published calls, the assessment process is still ongoing.

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

12. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AT PRIORITY AXIS AND PROGRAMME LEVEL (Articles 21(2) and 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

For the purpose of assessing progress towards the achievement of milestones and targets set for financial indicators in the years 2018 and 2023, table 4 of Part A of this Annex shall have the following two additional columns:

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

PART C

REPORTING SUBMITTED IN YEAR 2019 AND FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (Article 50(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN – PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

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- (1) Targets are optional for technical assistance priority axes.
 - (2) OJ L 286, 30.9.2014, p. 1.
 - (3) Structured data required for the report on YEI which is to be submitted in April 2015 in accordance with Article 19(3) and Annex II of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013.
 - (4) ERDF support is fixed in the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.
 - (5) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.
 - (6) In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

ANNEX 1: CITIZEN'S SUMMARY

CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report

The Cooperation Programme between Italy and Slovenia supports the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The total Programme budget is EUR 91.682.299,00, with EUR 77.929.954,00 from the European Regional Development Fund and EUR 13.752.345,00 as National counterpart (public and private).

It covers the entire period 2014-2020 capitalizing on the experiences of 2007-2013 Programme, which financed 87 projects focused on competitiveness, research and innovation, protection and development of cultural and natural resources, and cross-border services.

The INTERREG V-A Italy-Slovenia Programme intends to implement smart solutions answering to territorial challenges in the fields of innovation, low carbon economy, environment, natural and cultural resources, and institutional capacity building.

The overall objective of the INTERREG V-A Italy-Slovenia Programme is:
“Promote innovation, sustainability and cross border governance to create a more competitive, cohesive and liveable area”.

The Programme is guided by a Monitoring Committee which shall supervise the implementation of the Programme; the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee took place on 8th March 2016 and the list of voting and non-voting representatives for each Member State was adopted, together with the *Rules of Procedure of the Monitoring Committee*.

The Joint Secretariat was established in Summer 2016, with 5 contracted bilingual working units whose main function is to support and help potential beneficiaries.

The main effort of the Programme in 2016 was the launch of the first four calls for standard projects. A call for each of the four Priority Axes of the Programme was published in June 2016, with the following financial allocations:

- **Priority Axis 1: *Promoting innovation capacities for a more competitive area*** - Specific Objective 1.1: Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area; with a financial allocation of 8.892.232,30 euro (70% of the total ERDF available for standard projects);
- **Priority Axis 2: *Cooperating for low carbon strategies*** - Specific Objective 2.1 Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning; with a financial allocation of 5.689.493,00 euro (100% of the total ERDF available for standard projects);
- **Priority Axis 3: *Protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources*** - Specific Objective 3.1: Conserving, protecting, restoring, and developing natural and cultural heritage - Specific Objective 3.2: Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory - Specific Objective 3.3: Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management; with a financial allocation of 7.367.838,80 euro (70% of the total ERDF available for standard projects);

- **Priority Axis 4: Enhancing building and cross border governance** - Specific Objective 4.1: Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges; with a financial allocation of 6.185.193,70 euro (70% of the total ERDF available for standard projects).

A total of 160 project proposals were submitted through the online Monitoring tool " on line FEG" (Front-End Generalizzato):

Calls for standard project proposals n. 1/2016 1b, 2/2016 4e, 3/2016 6c, 6d, 6f e 4/2016 11 ETC: PROJECT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED			
Priority Axis	Specific Objective	Description	No. of project proposals submitted
PA 1	1b	Strengthen the cooperation among key actors to promote the knowledge transfer and innovative activities in key sectors of the area	62
PA 2	4e	Promotion of implementation of strategies and action plans to promote energy efficiency and to improve territorial capacities for joint low-carbon mobility planning	13
PA 3	6c	Conserving, protecting, restoring and developing natural and cultural heritage	43
	6d	Enhance the integrated management of ecosystems for a sustainable development of the territory	10
	6f	Development and the testing of innovative environmental friendly technologies for the improvement of waste and water management	10
PA 4	ETC	Strengthen the institutional cooperation capacity through mobilizing public authorities and key actors of the Programme area for planning joint solutions to common challenges	22
		Total	160

In order to highlight the main contents of the new Programme and the most important information related to the first four calls for standard projects, the Managing Authority, in accordance with the programme partners, organized the event “Building bridges between cross-border experiences 2007-2013 and perspectives 2014-2020” in Udine (Region Friuli Venezia Giulia), on 9th June 2016. Two **info days** were also organized respectively in Veneto Region (14th July) and in the Republic of Slovenia (29th July). Moreover, the MA, with the support of the JS, has undertaken a number of targeted information and **communication activities**, in order to help ensure the submission of eligible applications to the new Programme.

In order to implement the programme's provisions related to the **Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)** approach, adopted by the Cooperation Programme in compliance with Article 36 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the main steps undertaken in 2016 were the signature of the Agreement between the Managing Authority and the EGTC GO to act as Office of Intermediate Body and the launch of the invitation to the EGTC GO to submit project proposals as Sole Beneficiary of the ITI projects. The pilot actions adopted under the ITI were:



- “**Isonzo - Soča**” pilot action will develop an integrated cross-border network of cycling and walking paths to establish the first urban cross-border park to increase sustainable mobility in the urban area of three cities and to attract tourists with a sustainable impact on the economy of the whole urban territory. A common marketing and communication agenda will be established;

- “**Health**” pilot action intends to build a network of integrated services providing a joint use of the health systems of the EGTC GO area, to implement the Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare. At the moment, Italian and Slovenian informative systems are not connected making difficult for citizenship to have information about health services in EGTC GO area. Thanks to the pilot action, a new IT network will be created, giving the opportunity to provide cross-border citizenship a wider range of healthcare services. A single booking system will be set up, offering the citizenship a more efficient sanitary system. Specific protocols for the free movement of patients will be set up between the two sanitary systems for the reimbursement of health services. In connections with this horizontal activity, two specific actions will be developed to establish joint medical working group in the field of mental disease and pregnancy.