

Interreg VI–A Italy–Austria
Cooperation Programme

THE PROGRAMME IN A NUTSHELL

Overview Cooperation
Programme Interreg VI-A
Italy-Austria 2021-2027



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This brochure is for information purposes only. The text of the Programme approved in Italian language by the European Commission with Decision C(2022)4260 final of 16/06/2022 is the only authentic text.

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COHESION POLICY FOR GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE

EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective is part of the EU's Cohesion Policy. It promotes cooperation between European regions through interventions designed to stimulate **the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development** of territories and **the cohesion and competitiveness** of Europe. Interreg is the Union's main instrument to support cooperation between regions and countries.

The European Cross-Border cooperation, known as Interreg A, supports cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them.

It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union.

Strengthening its economic, social and territorial cohesion is one of the main objectives of the European Union. The **Cohesion Policy** is dedicated to it. For the 2021-2027 programming cycle, the EU allocates 32.4% of its budget resources to this policy (392 billion euros of the total 1,210.90 allocated).

Through the Cohesion Policy the EU directs financial resources to specific areas that require interventions aimed to **remove economic and social imbalances**. In the case of Italy and Austria, Cohesion Policy resources derive primarily from the following EU funds:

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, in particular through the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective
- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**
- **Just Transition Fund (JTF)**

The Interreg 2021-2027 programmes mainly intend to support cross-border mobility, promote environmental protection, emergency services, qualified jobs and access to public services.

The importance of cross-border cooperation is such that it represents the largest share of the budget dedicated to ETC, i.e. 72% of the available resources (about 6.5 billion euros).



With a surface area of more than **50.000 km²** and a population of more than **5,5 million people** (in 2022), the **Interreg VI-A Italy-Austria** cooperation programme area covers the border region between Italy and Austria in a territory that includes **19 NUTS 3 areas, divided into six Regions, Countries or Autonomous Provinces** (three in Austria and three in Italy).

ITALY

REGIONS OR AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES

AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF BOLZANO –SOUTH TYROL
 REGION VENETO
 AUTONOMOUS REGION FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

AREAS NUTS 3

Bolzano-Bozen ITH10
 Belluno ITH33
 Vicenza ITH32
 Treviso ITH34
 Pordenone ITH41
 Udine ITH42
 Gorizia ITH43
 Trieste ITH44

AUSTRIA

REGIONS

LAND TIROL (TYROL)
 LAND SALZBURG (SALZBURG)
 LAND KÄRNTEN (CARINTHIA)

AREAS NUTS 3

Klagenfurt – Villaco AT211
 Bassa Carinzia AT213
 Alta Carinzia AT212
 Lungau AT321
 Pinzgau-Pongau AT322
 Salzburg und Umgebung AT323
 Innsbruck AT332
 Tiroler Oberland AT334
 Tiroler Unterland AT335
 Außerfern AT331
 Osttirol AT33

5,5

million people (in 2022)

50.000

km² covered area

430

km of border

PROGRAMME THEMATIC ORIENTATION

Faced with major changes in recent years in the economic, social and environmental spheres, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union has outlined **five strategic objectives** on which Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 focuses.

On the basis of the results of the analyses on the cooperation area's needs and potential and results of the public consultations, the Interreg VI-A Italy-Austria programme has decided to concentrate its financial resources on **4** of these **strategic objectives**, which include **5 specific objectives**:



A more competitive and smarter Europe through the promotion of innovative and smart economic transformation and regional connectivity;

Specific objective 1.1 - Enhancing research and innovation capacities, uptake of advanced technologies.



A greener, climate-neutral and resilient Europe low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy;

Specific objective 2.4 - Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention, resilience, considering ecosystem approaches.

Specific objective 2.7 - Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution.



A more social and inclusive Europe through the implementation of the European pillar of social rights;

Specific objective 4.6 - Supporting culture and sustainable tourism for economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation.



A Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories;

Specific objective 5.2 - Fostering sustainable integrated and inclusive local social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism, and security in areas other than urban.



In addition, the programme selected the **Interreg specific objective "A better cooperation governance"**: "enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular with a view to resolving legal and administrative obstacles in border regions".

Photo © Barbara Franzelin / LPA

PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

The strategic and specific objectives have been divided into **five programme priorities**:



1. INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Priority 1 invests in the areas of smart specialization strategies, promotes investment in research and development, supports new businesses on issues of cross-border relevance, and contributes to energy transition issues and energy efficiency.



2. CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Priority 2 focuses on the issues of civil protection, risk prevention, ecosystems, environmental protection and strengthening biodiversity.



3. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CULTURE

Priority 3 promotes sustainable tourism models by fostering quality tourism, health tourism, and the digitization of tourism and cultural offerings through the contribution of cultural and creative enterprises.



4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)

Priority 4 finances the implementation of four cross-border local development strategies through Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The strategies intervene with a 'bottom-up' approach, involving a variety of actors in the area.



5. REDUCING CROSS-BORDER OBSTACLES

Priority 5 addresses digital solutions designed by the public administration for citizens, sustainable mobility, tackling 'brain drain,' supporting employment, shared use of health services, and reducing cross-border barriers.



ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES BY PRIORITY

The programme has a budget of **EUR 91.339.757**, of which 80% comes from ERDF funds and 20% from national contributions.

The following principles were taken into account in the financial allocation between the different priorities:

- Thematic focus
- Compliance with cohesion policy objectives
- Local development needs emerging from context analysis

FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMPARED BY PRIORITY

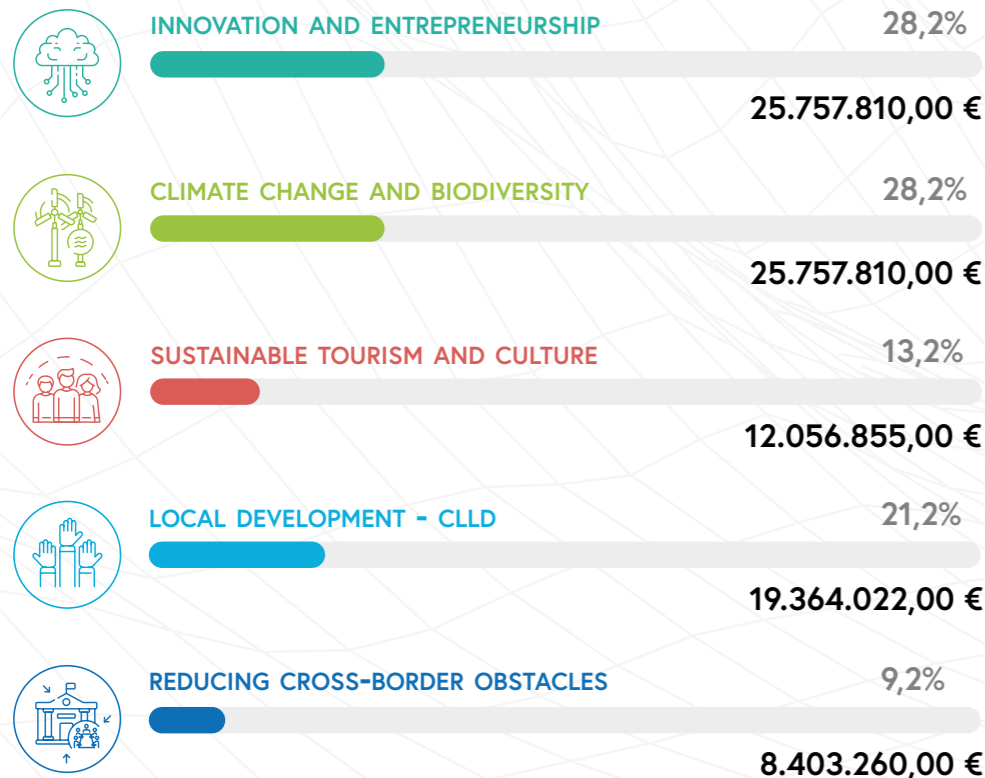
PRIORITY	2014-2020	2021-2027
1. INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	22.150.892,00 €	19.258.176,00 €
2. CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY	24.879.920,00 €	19.258.176,00 €
3. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CULTURE		9.014.472,00 €
4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)	13.126.919,00 €	14.477.773,00 €
5. REDUCING CROSS-BORDER OBSTACLES	17.146.804,00 €	6.282.812,00 €
ERDF TOTAL	77.304.535,00 €	68.291.409,00 €
Additional resources from national funds Co-financing rate 20 %	92.575.256,00 €	91.339.757,00 €

CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Italy-Austria contributes to the EU's climate targets with more than **18 million** investments, representing 25% of the EU contribution to the programme and divided between the first and second priorities:

PRIORITY	SO	TOTAL €	EU QUOTE	CLIMATE CONTRIBUTION €	CLIMATE CONTRIBUTION %
1	1.1 R&D	25.757.810	20.606.248	7.006.125	34,0%
2	2.4 climate	14.309.894	20.606.248	11.333.436	55,0%
	2.7 biodiversity	11.447.916			
<i>remaining priorities</i>		39.824.137	31.859.309		
PROGRAMME		91.339.757	73.071.805	18.339.561	25,1%

In addition, the programme contributes to the protection of biodiversity promoted by the EU with more than **11 million** investments, which are included in Special Objective 2.7 and account for more than 12% of the total.





INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

1.1 enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

OUTPUTS

- 60 organisations cooperating across borders
- 13 enterprises cooperating with research institutions
- 23 pilot actions
- 12 jointly developed solutions

RESULTS

- 30 organisations cooperating across borders after project completion
- 6 solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations

BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries will be SMEs, with a focus on micro-enterprises, public and private research centres (including universities), start-ups and spin-offs.



INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

P R I O R I T Y



CHALLENGES

The priority addresses the need to strengthen the role of enterprises, promoting investment in research and development and enhancing technology transfer. Particular emphasis is placed on the need to promote and encourage complementarity between the programme regions' smart specialisation strategies, especially in the areas of sustainable new technologies, life sciences and ICT and digitisation for enterprises.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to increase support for research and innovation, also directing it towards green transition topics, such as energy efficiency, sustainable technologies and circular production processes, in continuity with the activities of the EUSALP macro-regional strategy and the transnational Alpine Space programme.

The main focus is given to interventions that are complementary to the partner regions' RIS3 strategies, such as energy transition, **start-up and entrepreneurship support**, and **'circular' production processes**. Priority is also given to interventions aimed at the development of **new and sustainable technologies**, **'life sciences'** and **ICT and digitisation**.

ACTIONS

Actions under this priority include the adoption or further scaling-up of solutions developed during project implementation and the construction of medium- to long-term collaboration networks and platforms in research and innovation. The main types of actions include

- Awareness-raising, information and training actions (e.g. cooperation and technology transfer activities between key cross-border research and development actors on energy transition, entrepreneurship, circular economy and life sciences)
- Development, adoption and transfer of technologies, know-how and good practices (e.g. development of innovative solutions for energy efficiency, study and production of new bio-based materials, development of machine learning models and digital products)
- Preparation and implementation of material and infrastructure investments (e.g. development of innovative software, support for the transition of production firms, initiatives to improve ICT connectivity, etc.).



CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- **2.4** Promoting climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention, resilience, considering ecosystem approaches
- **2.7** Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution

OUTPUTS

- **67** organisations cooperating across borders
- **16** pilot actions

RESULTS

- **34** organisations cooperating across borders after project completion.

BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries will be local and regional public bodies, including Civil Defence organisations, associations and voluntary organisations cooperating with institutions, research and development centres (public and private), schools and educational facilities, parks and natural heritage protection and promotion organisations, and nature associations.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

P R I O R I T Y

2

CHALLENGES

The protection of the environment and the enhancement of biodiversity have a cross-border horizon and are particularly necessary in mountainous areas. Such challenges require actions that take into account the number, spatial extent and economic importance of natural sites, as well as protected natural areas in the territory, such as Natura 2000 reserves, MAB (Man and the Biosphere) reserves, regional and national parks.

OBJECTIVES

The programme identifies two specific strategic areas of priority intervention: resilience to climate change and the protection of nature and biodiversity. The objective is, on the one hand, **to make the cooperation territory (especially the mountainous area) less vulnerable to the different types of natural risks related to climate change**, by supporting, among other things, cross-border risk prevention and risk mitigation initiatives; on the other hand, to help preserve the precious biodiversity of which the Alpine territory is rich.

ACTIONS

The actions of this priority aim to create long-term cooperation on the theme of climate change and the protection of biodiversity with the objective of ensuring a more effective response through coordination, harmonisation of procedures and cooperation between the actors in the cross-border area. The main interventions include:

- Awareness-raising, information and training actions (e.g. risk prevention through ecosystem support services, forecast analyses on hydrogeological instability scenarios, training and awareness-raising actions on the culture of prevention)
- Policy formulation and/or implementation at cross-border level (e.g. cooperation between areas in different regions facing similar risks and pooling of resources)
- Development, adoption and transfer of technologies, know-how and good practices (e.g. identification of early warning systems, development of 'smart villages', elaboration of disaster management systems)



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CULTURE

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

4.6 Supporting culture and sustainable tourism for economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation.

OUTPUTS

- 30 organisations cooperating across borders
- 9 pilot actions

RESULTS

- 15 organisations cooperating across borders after project completion.

BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries will be tourism enterprises and associations, tourism agencies, institutions managing natural sites, cultural and creative businesses.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CULTURE

P R I O R I T Y

3

CHALLENGES

The cooperation area, although attracting fifty million tourists a year, needs to increase its potential in terms of tourist attractiveness and economic development by effectively mobilising its resources. To achieve this, it is necessary to increase the competitiveness of tourist destinations and balance it with the protection of the environmental system and the requirements of territorial cohesion.

OBJECTIVES

Through the interventions of the priority, the programme aims to increase **the value of the cultural heritage of the cooperation area** by developing routes and services made available to an incremental number of tourists, different in terms of age, cultural level, language, and form of access (experiential, digital, museum, performance, etc.).

ACTIONS

The operations financed promote the valorisation of cultural and tourist assets and heritage. They mainly concern:

- Awareness-raising, information and training actions (e.g. through the enhancement of eco-sustainable tourism, training courses and pilot actions, support for museum offer, etc.)
- Drafting and/or implementation of policies at cross-border level (e.g. improvement of the cross-border tourist offer, landscape protection and valorisation projects, creation of territorial strategies for the development of slow tourism, etc.)
- Development, adoption and transfer of technology, know-how and good practice (e.g. development of intelligent methodologies to optimise transport, design of sustainable tourism products, elaboration of itineraries linked to the cultural and historical heritage)
- Preparation and implementation of tangible and infrastructural investments (e.g. cross-border ecotourism actions for the protection and valorisation of the natural area, through projects for the development of facilities).

The programme also supports interventions in the cultural tourism sector through the CLLD instrument (Priority 4), if the local strategies themselves identify this sector as a priority field of actions.





LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

5.2 Fostering sustainable integrated and inclusive local social, economic and environmental development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism, and security in areas other than urban.

OUTPUTS

- 4 Community-led local development (CLLD) strategies supported

RESULTS

- 3500 Civil society actors involved in cross-border strategies (CLLD)

BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries, within the CLLD areas, will be represented by the plurality of actors in the territory that can take action on the specific issues identified by the territorial strategy: from nature associations to small businesses, from local authorities to research centres, from educational institutions to cultural associations, and so on.



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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD)

P R I O R I T Y

4

CHALLENGES

CLLD - Community Led Local Development - is a way to promote 'bottom-up' local development and with its participatory approach involves citizens to the design of interventions to tackle social, economic and environmental challenges. The four CLLD areas of the programme are cross-border; i.e., each includes territories on both sides of the border.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to **strengthen local integration and to promote social, economic and environmental development at local level as well as the cultural heritage**. The CLLD strategies are implemented through the action of the LAGs - Local Action Groups (the main coordinating and implementing element of the strategies) - and are addressed to a plurality of actors in the territory, who can develop project initiatives in the thematic fields defined in the strategies.

ACTIONS

The CLLD territories autonomously identify their priority areas of intervention, facilitating the 'bottom-up' collection mechanism of needs and proposals that is typical of this instrument. The priorities of the CLLD territories are directly linked to the priorities of the European Union, financing initiatives that respond to territorial needs that only local actors are able to define. Actions may therefore be carried out, for example, in the areas of multilingualism protection, culture, tourism, the creation of smart villages, and more.

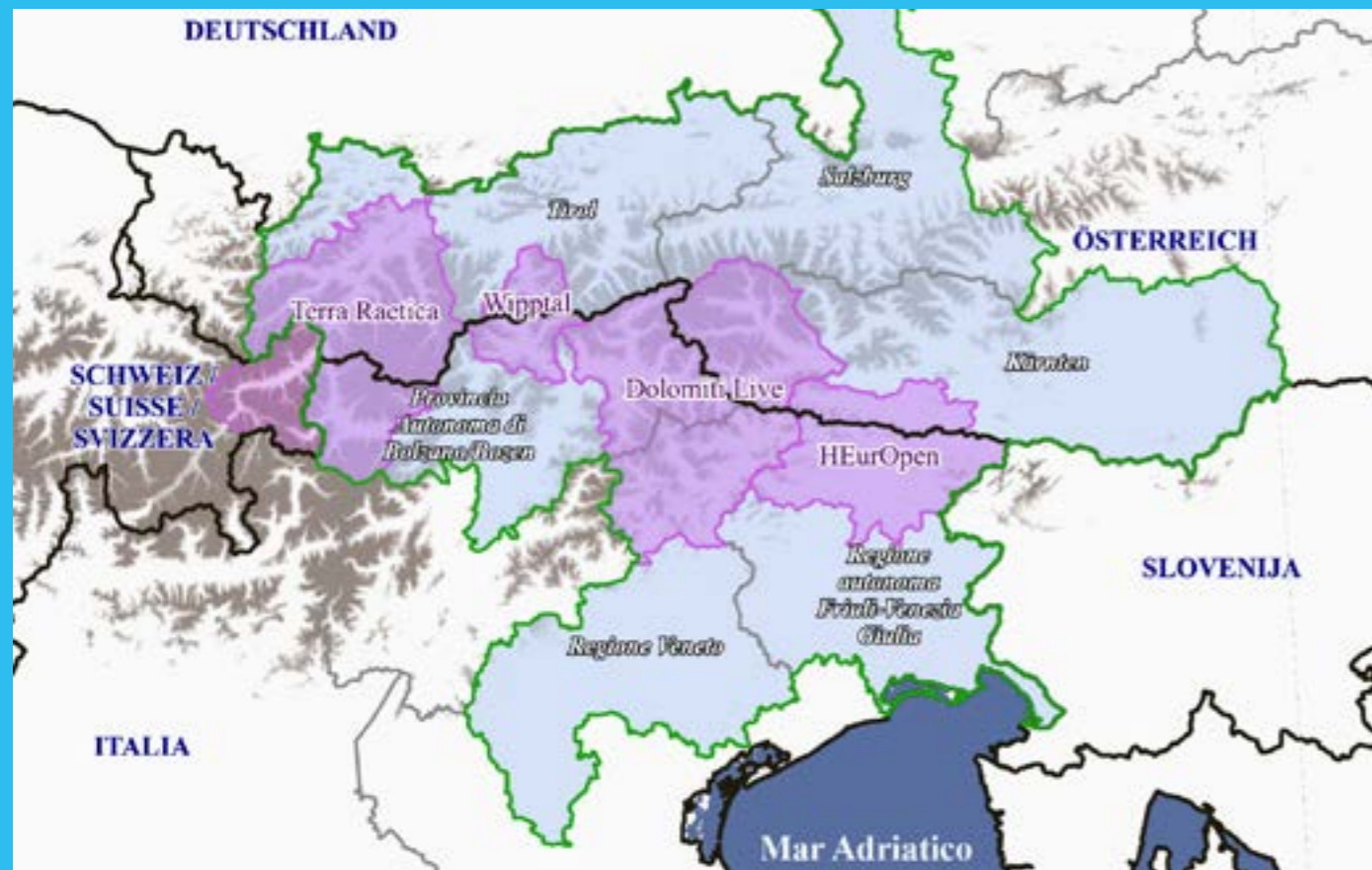




LOCAL DEVELOPMENT – CLLD AREAS

The 4 CLLD areas approved by the programme, covering over 17.000 km² with a population of more than 480.000 inhabitants, are:

1. "Terra Raetica": Landeck, Imst, Vinschgau, Lower Engadina;
2. "Wipptal": South Tyrol;
3. "Dolomiti Live": East Tyrol, Val Pusteria, Alto Bellunese;
4. "HEurOpen": Hermagor, Gemonese, Canal del Ferro e Val Canale, Carnia.



CLLD AREAS

	TERRA RAETICA	WIPPTAL	DOLOMITI LIVE	HEUROPEN
Population	151.681	36.170	193.262	101.600
Area covered	5.989 Km ²	1.141 Km ²	6.405 Km ²	3.692 Km ²
Municipalities	73	16	102	58
Planned Small Projects	64	15	25	22
Panned Medium Projects	18	10	26	10
Projects FA	-	5	12	8
Functional Area	-	✓	✓	✓





REDUCING CROSS-BORDER OBSTACLES

INTERREG SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Enhancing an efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular with a view to resolving legal and administrative obstacles in border regions”.

OUTPUTS

- 27 organisations cooperating across borders
- 8 pilot actions
- 4 solutions for legal or administrative obstacles across border identified

RESULTS

- 14 organisations cooperating across borders after project completion
- 4 legal or administrative obstacles across borders alleviated or resolved

BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries will be local authorities and European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), as well as other stakeholders with characteristics matching the objective of the priority (however, the establishment of partnerships formed exclusively by private actors is excluded).



© 2022, Aerial view of highway road pass in Alpine mountains of Austria / stock.adobe.com



REDUCING CROSS-BORDER OBSTACLES

CHALLENGES

The programme aims to support the identification and implementation of governance solutions at regional and local level that help to tackle and overcome cross-border obstacles in the territory, especially administrative and legal ones, and to jointly develop cross-border services. In this regard, the programme intends to activate multi-level governance processes through the involvement of decision-makers at both local, regional and national level. Only in this way can the basis for successful cross-border cooperation be ensured.

OBJECTIVES

Through this priority, the programme intends to **uncover cross-border obstacles that limit cooperation** by implementing analysis processes on existing legislation, as well as by developing common law-making procedures to eliminate these obstacles.

ACTIONS

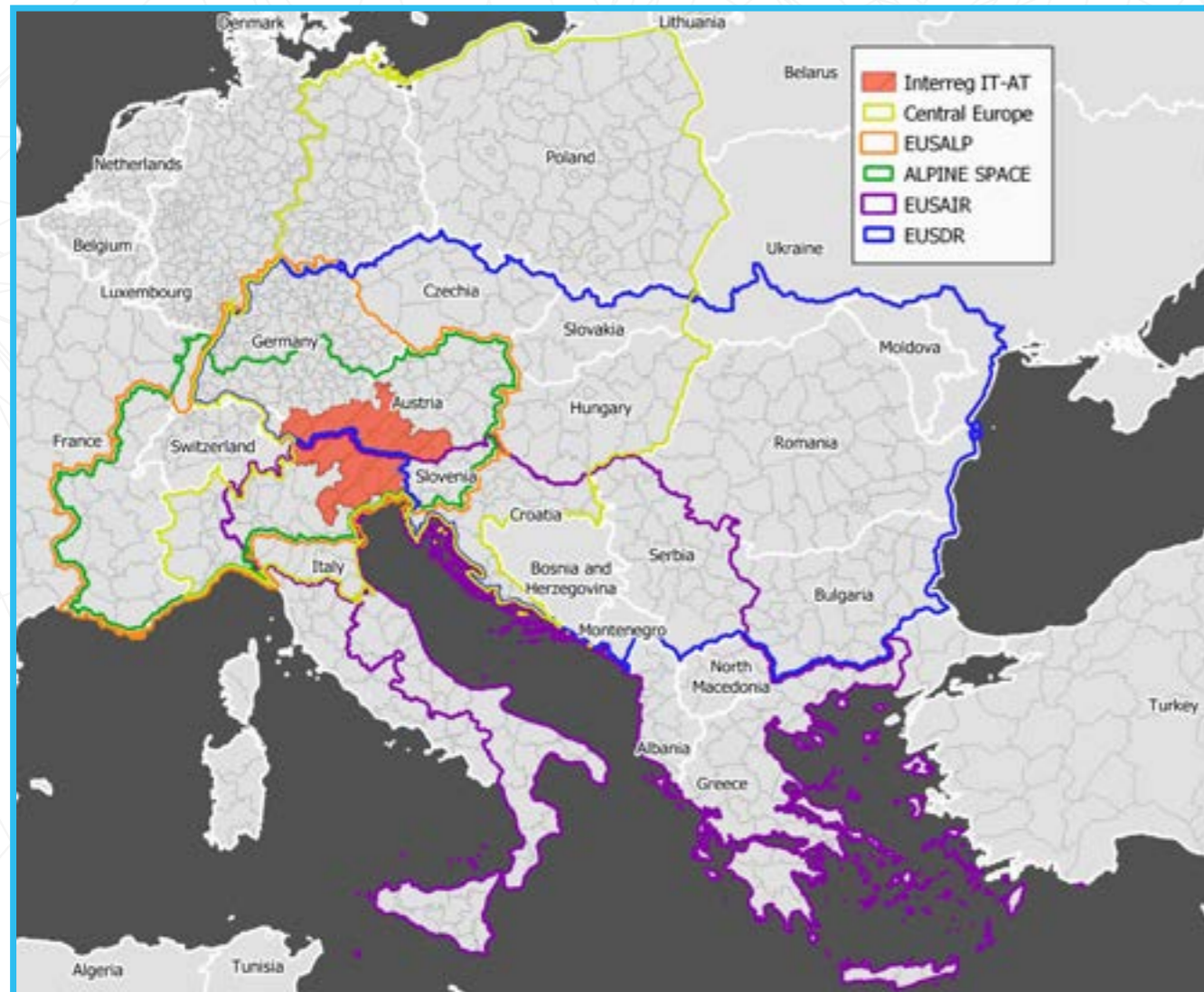
Actions under this specific objective aim to reduce or remove obstacles, particularly legal and administrative ones. The following may be the main types of action included:

- Awareness-raising, information and training actions (e.g. integration and harmonisation of territorial data in local information systems, social innovation initiatives in the field of healthcare and its digitisation, promotion of an efficient use of resources and reduction of CO2, etc.).
- Drafting and/or implementation of policies at cross-border level (e.g. cooperation in the field of telemedicine, development of policies to boost sustainable electric mobility, etc.)
- Development, adoption and transfer of technology, know-how and good practice (e.g. digitisation of municipal archives, building missing connections in mountain and peripheral areas, etc.).

PRIORITY 5



THE PROGRAMME AREA AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER INTERREG PROGRAMMES AND MACRO REGIONAL STRATEGIES



THE INDICATORS SYSTEM - OUTPUT INDICATORS

PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	ID	INDICATOR	FINAL TARGET
1	1.1	RC087	Organisations cooperating across borders	60
		RC010	Enterprises cooperating with research institutions	13
		RC084	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	23
		RC0116	Jointly developed solutions	12
2	2.4	RC087	Organisations cooperating across borders	37
		RC084	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	11
	2.7	RC087	Organisations cooperating across borders	30
		RC084	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	5
3	4.6	RC087	Organisations cooperating across borders	30
		RC084	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	9
4	5.2	RC080	Community-led local development strategies supported	4
5	-	RC087	Organisations cooperating across borders	27
		RC084	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	8
		RC0117	Solutions for legal or administrative obstacles across border identified	4

THE INDICATORS SYSTEM - RESULT INDICATORS

PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	ID	INDICATOR	FINAL TARGET
1	1.1	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	30
		RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	6
2	2.4	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	19
	2.7	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	15
3	4.6	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	15
4	5.2	ISI	Civil society actors involved in cross-border strategies (CLLD)	4
5	-	RCR82	Legal or administrative obstacles across borders alleviated or resolved	4
		RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	14

SIMPLIFIED COST OPTIONS

	STANDARD UNIT COSTS	FLAT RATE	FLAT RATE FOR ALL OTHER COSTS	REAL COSTS
STAFF COSTS	✓			
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE		✓	✓	
TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS		✓	✓	
EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND SERVICE COSTS			✓	✓
EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURE			✓	✓
INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURES AND BUILDING INTERVENTIONS			✓	✓



GOVERNANCE OF THE

The bodies responsible for managing the programme work in continuity with previous programme cycles, in order to build on the knowledge acquired, the experience gained and the networks created:

- **Managing Authority (MA)**: responsible for the overall management of the cooperation programme. The Managing Authority of the programme is the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol;
- **Monitoring Committee (MC)**: the supreme decision-making body of the programme, whose tasks include, inter alia, the examination of problems affecting the results of the programme; the analysis of results and the achievement of prefixed objectives;
- **Steering Committee (SC)**: appointed by the MC and mainly responsible for the selection of eligible projects;

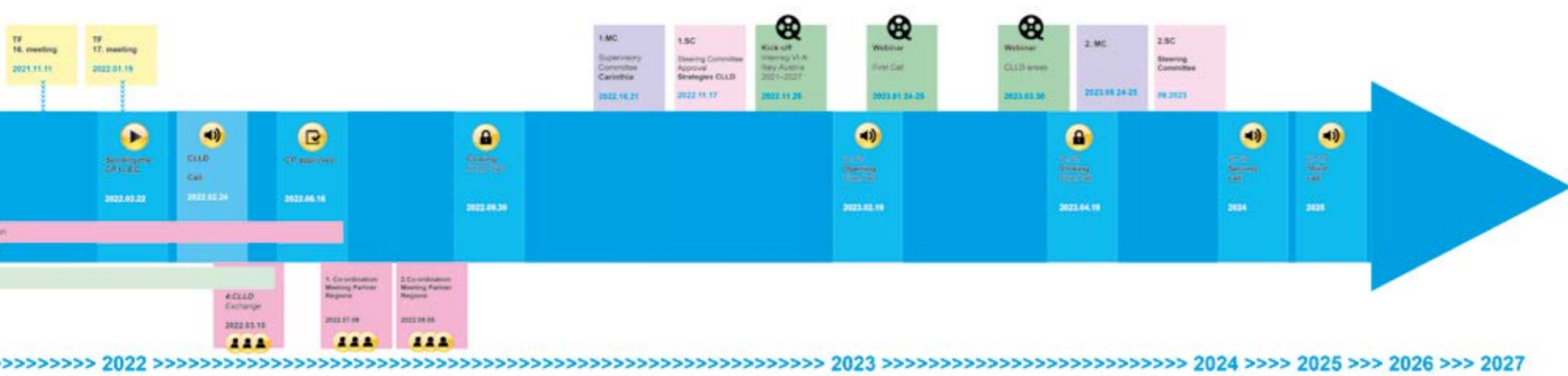
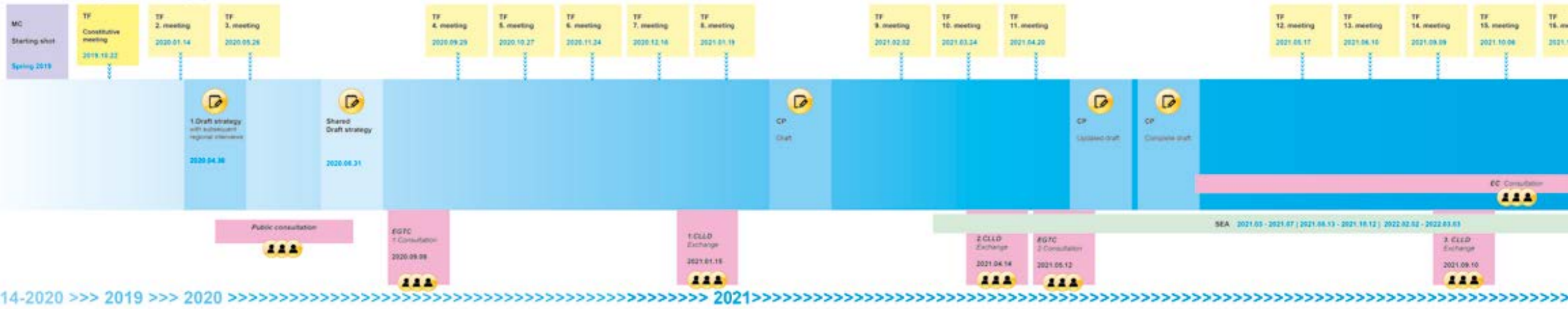
INTERREG IT-AT PROGRAMME



Photo © Claudia Corrent / LPA

- **Joint Secretariat (JS)**: responsible for supporting the other structures of the programme in carrying out their functions. In addition, the secretariat supports the beneficiaries in all administrative matters related to project implementation. The SC is established at the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol;
- **Regional Coordination Unit (RCU)**: first reference point in the regions for potential beneficiaries. The RCOs assist the Joint Secretariat in providing information on the programme in their respective territories and verify the coherence and synergies of the projects with local, regional and national policies;
- **Inspection and Control bodies**: are established in the six programme regions and control the expenditure reported by the beneficiaries, carrying out the so-called “First Level Control – FLC”.
- **Audit Authority (AA)**: responsible for the effective functioning of the management and control system. It works in close synergy with the MA informing it of the outcome of the controls and providing recommendations for improvements;

PROGRAMMING PROCESS AND MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE



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