



EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CO-OPERATION
AUSTRIA-CZECH REPUBLIC 2007-2013
Gemeinsam mehr erreichen. Společně dosáhneme více.

Operational Programme 2014 – 2020 – Version 1.4

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SECTION 1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

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

1.1.1. The contribution of the programme to the EU 2020 strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following the orientation of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Territorial Agenda 2020 and taking into account the specific characteristics and challenges analyzed for the Austrian-Czech border region the main elements of the programme’s strategy are:

- Strengthening the existing co-operation and communication structures and the institutional capacities
- Developing an innovative and skill oriented economic and social system
- Securing the regional, social and cross border accessibility in regard to jobs, housing, public and private services, innovation and know-how, natural and cultural assets
- Strengthening the regional economies' resilience to climate risks

- Improving the quality of the natural and cultural resources
- Harmonising the (regional) legal and institutional framework

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

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

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

The programme area and the socio-economic structure

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

Map: Programme Region



The cross border region is characterized by villages and small and medium sized towns on the one hand and the urban agglomerations of Vienna, , Brno and Linz. Around 80% of the settlements are villages with a population below 2.000 inhabitants.

Vienna (1,7 Mio.) and Brno (379.000) are the most important centers in the region. The numerous medium-sized and small cities in the region function as regional administrative and local economic centers (Linz 191.000, St. Pölten 52.000, České Budějovice 94.000, Jihlava 51.000). Rural regions close to the urban centers are – measured in demographic or economic terms – mostly the dynamic ones while the peripheral parts – poorly connected to economic urban centers – are declining in terms of population and jobs.

Demographic development

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

Economic development

The Austria-Czech border region is characterized by a very diversified regional economic structure manifesting in different types of regions: underdeveloped regions with weak and less competitive branches and enterprises, regions with structural problems where traditional industries are dominating on one side and very dynamic regions with an innovative and creative economic environment with a high level of establishing business and competitive enterprises on the other side. The disparities become also manifest between cities and the rural regions and between the Austrian and the Czech border region. The GDP per capita (PPP, 2010) reaches in the Austrian part of the border region an economic level of 135% compared to the EU-27 average - the determining factor here is Vienna, as strongest region. The strongest Czech region is Jihomoravský kraj with a GDP/capita corresponding to 75 % of EU 27 average followed by 68 % in Jihočeský and Vysočina 65 % in Vysočina (2010). (Source: Eurostat)

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

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

The dynamics of the economic development are based on the large and growing number of **SMEs**. In principle the size of enterprises in the Czech regions is higher than in Austria. Enterprises with more than 500 employees are dominating in branches like steel industry, chemicals/oil/gas, partly in the vehicle and automotive sector, the textile and leather and food and beverage production. With exception of some social and public services (e.g. health system, administration...) the tertiary sector is dominated by small enterprises. On the Czech side these

enterprises as well as establishments set up mostly by foreign investors. These enterprises contribute in a large extent to the economic growth in many regions. This new structure causes also changes in working conditions and income and thus to a trend towards a segmentation of the regional labour markets. In most cases the average size of an enterprise does not exceed more than 5-10 employees.

About 3 million people are **employed in the border region**, about two times more on the Austrian part than in the Czech region. The employment structure reflects the distinction and the disparities of the regional economic structures and potentials. The labour market centers are the urban agglomerations. For the people living in the rural areas these centers are the favourable commuting destinations.

The economic structure (branches), the level of regional income and the size of regional enterprises are determining not only the quantity and quality of employment and the economic growth potential but also generate the basis for the competitiveness of the innovation system. Together with the public and private R&I institutions imbedded into the national and regional innovation system (support structures, subsidies, research programmes, traditions...) the economic system and the labour market are the most important players to contribute to an increase in innovation and R&I activities.

. Needs related to economic growth by research & innovation

EU policy context

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

Strategic assignment of EU Initiative **Innovation Union** and its commitments will target in particular on: strengthen cross border matching of innovative firms with investors, ensure stronger involvement of SME in European R&I programmes, facilitate collaborative research and knowledge transfer, improve the use of ESI-Funds for research and innovation and others.

Two of the three priorities of **Horizon 2020** as EU Framework programme for research and Innovation are especially relevant for the Austrian-Czech Programme region:

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

The **National Reform Programmes (NRP)** of both member states put a strong emphasis on R&D. While the Austrian NRP emphasises the importance of investment in research, development and innovation and sets the target of 3,76 % in 2020 compared to 2,76% in 2010, the Czech NRP sets as a target 1% of GDP invested in R&D (public sector only).

Not only the NRPs but also other key strategic documents and regional strategies underline the importance of R&I for national and regional economies. (see Annex)

Characteristics

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

Concerning R&I the cross-border region is highly developed in the urban areas in Vienna and Brno followed by the Upper Austrian central region Linz-Wels. In these regions the 3% target declared by the EU is or can easily be reached. The other regions not urbanised regions are lacking behind.

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

Challenges and needs for cooperation

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

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

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

The allocation of the R&I institutions in the region shows a concentration although there are efforts for the diffusion of these activities. Technology transfer activities and the establishment

of R&I institutions in the peripheral areas should bring these locations and the regional enterprises closer to the national/international innovation system.

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

The most innovative enterprises are those of the secondary sector. Small and micro enterprises dominating in the service sector often do not have the capacities for systematic innovation strategies and whether the national nor regional innovation scheme is sufficient to support them in an adequate way. In general the innovative and development capacities are implemented by larger enterprises rather than by smaller ones. The attitude of small and medium enterprises to the R&I results (or even implementation of their own innovative activities) is rather weak.

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

- Construction,
- Renewable energy and Environmental technologies (e.g. Water treatment..)
- Wood processing
- Food processing
- Mechanical Engineering
- Biotechnology and Bioinformatics
- Microelectronics
- Plastic processing
- Automobile and Transport
- Mobility
- Information technology

Most of them are working on national level. The potential of cross border cooperation is not yet exploited.

Cross-border basic research networks by universities and basic research institutions are much more developed than cross-border networks of applied research. Czech and Austrian actors are rather involved in international innovation and patent networks, than in regional and cross border cooperation structures.

. Needs related to education and qualification

EU-policy context

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

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

The main national EU2020 targets are set in NRPs in the field of education. The target for Austria is to reduce the rate of drop-outs of pupils to 9.5% by 2020 and to raise the proportion of the 30 to 34 year-old tertiary graduated to 38%.

In the Czech Republic measures described in NRP and its targets (a maximum drop-out rate of 5.5% and 32% of persons aged 30–34 years with tertiary education) are part of a broader strategy in which structural reforms of the education system and, especially, its quality and interaction with labour market and business sectors' needs to play an important role. Beside other measures described in the NRP increasing the quality of vocational training in cooperation with employers seems to be most important in a regional/cross-border context.

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

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

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

Characteristics

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

In the last decades the educational level of women is rising as consequence of an increasing attendance rates and graduates in high schools and university. In spite of this development the concentration on specific fields of education and qualification or branches of studies follows a traditional male/female orientation (more technical courses and jobs/ social and communication issues).

The workforce of the border region is well trained. The share of employed persons with secondary education accounts about 80% in the Czech Republic and 67% in Austria. Concerning the tertiary education the Austrian border region reaches 16,1% and the Czech border region 18,0%. Major differences can be identified across the various age groups, between male and female and in a regional context.

The Austrian-Czech border region is well equipped with educational infrastructure. There are universities in Wien, Linz, Krems, in Brno and České Budejovice. In Jihlava there is a College of

Polytechnics and a Faculty of Management was set up in Jindřichuv Hradec. Higher vocational education is mostly concentrated in the large cities, the Fachhochschulen in Austria are located also in medium and smaller towns to foster regional development and cooperation with regional/local enterprises. On secondary level the school systems offer a general and specialized education, there are technical schools, schools for management and business and also for health and social affairs.

Challenges and needs for cooperation

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

Apart from the technical and economic capabilities language learning and thus an insight into other cultures is one of the most important issues for the development of the region and the development of the cross border co-operation process. The number of secondary, higher schools and colleges where Czech or German became part of the official curriculum is growing on both sides of the border.

Demographic changes with a perspective of an ageing population and a decrease of the population share in pre-productive age in some parts of the border region have implications for optimising the infrastructure, especially for pre-school, primary and secondary education. Existing partnerships and links between municipalities (and towns), which are providers of pre-school and primary education offers a good basis for an extension of cooperation also to the field of education. Early childhood education and primary education can effectively address the growing interest of inhabitants to better explore the Austrian-Czech region and to improve the understanding of official languages.

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

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

Needs related to environment and natural and cultural resources

EU-policy context

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

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

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

The strategy also refers to **EU 2020 headline target**: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right, increase the share of

renewable energy in the final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency

Reference national and regional documents are: the **National Reform Programmes** setting out the **national targets** in the field of shift towards a resource efficient and low-carbon economy as described in part *Climate protection and energy* and primarily in its part *Efficient use of natural resources – efficiency of resources* of the Austrians NRP and also directly reflects reform objective no. 6 “*Support of low-carbon competitive and environment friendly economy*”, namely in the field of “*Environment quality improvement and decreasing of greenhouse gas emissions*” in the Czech NRP.

With these main tasks the NRPs respond to the **Position papers from the EU for Austria and the Czech Republic**. For the cross border programm the following proposed priorities for funding are taken into account.

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

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

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

Another relevant policy instrument is the **EU Water Framework Directive (2000)**, which establishes a common basis for actions in the field of water policy and integrated river basin management. Following the guidelines of this framework until now some bilateral projects in the border region were started and realized for the Thaya/Dyje and the March/Morava river system.

Characteristic

Landscape and protection of nature

The Austrian – Czech border region covers an area of 49,738 km² and offers a variety of very different landscapes: in the western part the low mountain range, one of the oldest geological formations in Europe, the Danube valley forms the southern boundary. Towards the Eastern

part the landscape changes into hills and the granite and gneiss highlands, valleys and lowlands. The Carpathian region forms the border in the southeast. Moravský kraj is one of the most significant karst areas in Central Europe. The northern Vienna Basin is a depression between the Alps. The river systems Danube, the Thaya/Dyje and the March/Morava do not only form the character of the landscape, they are also the living environment of specific fauna and flora and part of the National park system in the region. In the region a number of reserves (National parks, nature parks, natural landscape reserves, Natura 2000 areas) were founded to protect natural and cultivated landscapes and preserve them for future generations. In the programme area are located

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

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

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

In some cases especially the national, nature parks and Biosphere Reserve are well connected to the touristic infrastructure and are important elements of the regional touristic attractions. As example the information center of the Thayatal-Podyjí national park counts more than 25.000 visitors per opening season, for a less developed region a very high potential.

Climate change

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

Water

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

Land use

Intensity of land use is steadily growing – natural character of landscape is changing, esp. by intensive agricultural use and construction activities in the area - road constructions, growing of

municipalities etc. Especially in the eastern part of the Czech programme area the landscape has considerably changed if compared to the original natural landscape as consequence of natural risks. Among other reasons this is caused mainly by the enormous proportion of arable lands reaching nearly 50 of total area.

Air Pollution

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

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

Cultural Heritage

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

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

Challenges and needs for cooperation

The aim of the European biodiversity strategy running until 2020 is to conserve and enhance natural assets and to manage them sustainable, ensuring nature delivers what we need. This should protect species and their habitats, help to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts and contribute to meeting the goals of the EU's resource-efficient Europe initiative. The strategy focus on 6 targets, this programme is oriented on 3 of them:

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

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

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

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

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

Major challenges for sustainable tourism include:

- preserving natural and cultural resources
- limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations, including use of natural resources and waste production
- promoting the wellbeing of the local community
- reducing the seasonality of demand
- limiting the environmental impact of tourism related transport
- making tourism accessible to all
- improving the quality of tourism jobs.

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

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

Needs related to cooperation and regional governance

EU-policy context

Strengthening institutional and administrative capacity at all levels, in all fields and promoting good governance principles is important in order to underpin structural adjustments regarding the cross border cooperation. Reducing regulatory and administrative burdens and promoting high standards of transparency, integrity and accountability in public administration also helps to increase productivity and strengthen competitiveness of the cross-border region. In this

respect, the priority should focus on reducing the administrative burden on citizens and business and increasing the transparency, integrity and quality of public administration as well as its efficiency in delivering public services in all sectors (including though up-skilling in the fields of policy development, organisational innovations, e-governance and public procurement of innovative solutions)

Characteristic

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

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

Cross border cooperation structures enhance the competitiveness and innovative potential of regions. The Austrian-Czech border region has different active institutional networks operating in order to improve its exchange rates at the personal, economic and political level. The cooperation can be described along the following structure:

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

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

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

Challenges and needs for cooperation

Important challenges for the regional cross border governance system are:

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

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

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
<p>TO 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</p>	<p>IP 1a: Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;</p>	<p>The region provides valuable assets for an innovation and research based economic development (existing R&I infrastructure, university centres, innovative branches with innovative enterprises), but at the same time it is also facing severe challenges in this respect: mainly rural areas with R&I quotas below national average, lack of cooperation among R&I institutions across the border, insufficient technology and infrastructure. Considering the cross border dimension of R&I by establishing and developing or upgrading common infrastructure the cross border programm should contribute to the regional and national innovation strategy and complement the other ESI fonds</p>
	<p>IP 1b : Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies;</p>	<p>In the programme region the share of SMEs is very high, their contribution to R&I activities and their involvement within the innovation system is low. The innovation system is based on a considerable number of recognized public and private research institutions, universities as well as on scientific parks and the numerous large scale enterprises running their own R&I departments or the specialised regional clusters. Establishing networks and support through technology transfer activities based on the existing innovation strategies can help to open the access and the integration to the regional innovation system. Following this approach the programme will focus on areas like infrastructure, business services and support for business, technology transfer and research. In addition to the regional and national activities the cross border cooperation will extend the activity level of enterprises and contribute to strengthen their position in the competitive surroundings.</p>
<p>TO 6:</p>	<p>IP 6 c: Conserving, protecting, promoting</p>	<p>The natural and cultural heritage is an</p>

<p>Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</p>	<p>and developing cultural and natural heritage</p>	<p>important factor for regional integration, basis for a high level of living quality and not at least for local and regional economic development. Some of these attractions are not properly developed. In many cases insufficient touristic infrastructure and/or accessibility limit the effective utilization of these natural and cultural resources. In this context a balance between sustainability in economic, socio-cultural and environmental terms is required. The IP 6c was selected to increase the level of region's attractiveness by protecting the environment and to promote an ecologic and economic sustainable development limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations and extending jobs especially in the service and tourism sector.</p>
	<p>IP 6 d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services including through Natura2000, and green infrastructure</p>	<p>The (protected) natural resources is not only an unique wealth of the region. It sets also certain limits on infrastructure development as well as on some economic activities. The main environmental challenges in the region are the protection of the sensible landscape taking into account the demographic and economic development (e.g. water, land, energy) and the consequences of climate change.</p> <p>In order to ensure an effective contribution of this programme to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy the IP 6d was selected to face the main environmental challenges in the region like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing land use as consequence of demographic and economic development with negative effects on the biodiversity - the negative impacts of climate change affecting the regional ecosystem, the local population and the economic system - The risk of destabilization and vulnerability of biodiversity
	<p>IP 6 f: Promoting innovative technologies to improve</p>	<p>The combination of good natural conditions, a strong tradition in</p>

	environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution	environmental protection, a broad know how in environmental technologies, existing (specialized research institutions) are the basic conditions for developing and implementing new approaches, new products and procedures. Selecting this IP the programme will contribute to resource efficient and eco-innovations by implementing innovative technologies and pilot projects.
TO 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;	ETC Reg. Article 7 (a) iii Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes	For a smart and inclusive development and growth policy skills and qualification are the main assets, especially to improve and foster the cross border activities. In a cross border context the development of social innovation and civilization techniques (e.g. languages, cultural activities, common skills, joint basis of experiences...) are very important for the joint development process.
TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration.	ETC Reg. Article 7 (a) iv Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions;	Cross border activities are based on intensive co-operation and communication processes. In the last years joint governance structures and networks including several institutions, regional actors and the civil society have been established. Network analysis show that there are specific needs to implement and to strengthen the existing networks and cooperation platforms as well as creating new possibilities promoting cooperation between organisation, the administrative sector and the citizens.

1.2. Justification for the financial allocation

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

As main elements of the common strategy were formulated:

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

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

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

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

- knowledge, research and innovation, integration SMEs into the innovation system and the establishment of systems for cross-border information exchange
- a green and more resource-efficient and competitive economy, including cross-border mobility and taking into account the impacts of climate change.
- the preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage as main elements to strengthen sustainable tourism as part of a territorial strategy aimed at achieving employment-friendly growth;
- ecological stability and an improved ecosystem
- the development of the administrative capacity and strengthen the cross-border cooperation structures

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

The overall programme budget amounts EUR 115.076.394 with an ERDF contribution of EUR 97.817.933. The cross border programme is to be understood as a supplement to the national and regional programmes for investment for growth and jobs and the ESF programme focusing on common and cross border specific activities. This approach is expressed in the allocation of the financial means for thematic objective 1 and 10 where about 26,2 Mio Euro corresponding to app. 26,7 % of the total ERDF budget is for seen.

The high importance of environmental and resource efficiency issues is demonstrated by the budgetary allocation: 45,4 Mio. EUR or app 46 % of the total ERDF programme budget is reserved for activities under this priority. Within this thematic objective the IP 6c - protecting,

promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage - is the most important one with a share of app 33 % of the total programme budget followed by protecting and promoting biodiversity and ecosystem services. This high share of the budget reserved for 6c reflects, among others, the need of upgrading, modernization and valorisation of the cultural and natural heritage for recreation and touristic activities. In order to increase cross-border accessibility of the existing cultural and natural heritage these activities will be accompanied by reconstruction road infrastructure and by improving the management of traffic flows.

20,37 Mio. EUR which is app. 21% of the ERDF programme budget will be available for projects under thematic objective 11, a thematic objective very important for a cooperation programme. In contrast to the other thematic objectives the expected project size will be smaller and so much more projects can be realized within this thematic objective.

The budget line for the technical assistance counts 6% which is 5,9 Mio. EUR ERDF funding.

The allocation is based on the experiences in the former periods, the information on planned projects and activity gathered in the regional workshops and the planned projects prepared by the administrative bodies. Being in line with Article 6 of the ETC regulation 80% of the ERDF allocation has been concentrated on four of the thematic objectives. Also the ex-ante evaluators indicated in their interims reports that a more concentrated approach is required. Following their recommandations a reduction of thematic objectives and of investment priorities structural modifications were made. The allocation follows the requirement to use the available European, national and regional financial means in an efficient and effective way aiming to support the cross border development, to achieve a value added, a visibility and efficiency of supported action as high as possible.

Financial allocation by IPs

IP	Euro	Share in %
1a	7 419 201	7,58 %
1b	5 063 100	5,18 %
6c	32 586 081	33,31 %
6d	7 475 234	7,64%
6f	5 358 234	5,48 %
10	13 675 112	13,98 %
11	20 369 075	20,82 %
Technical Assistance	5 868 896	6%
Total	97 817.933	100%

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

Priority axis	ERDF support (in EUR)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective	Investment priorities	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)				
<1.2.1 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.2 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.3 type='N' input='G'>	<1.2.4 type='S' input='G'><1.2.9 type='P' input='G'>	<1.2.5 type='S' input='G'><1.2.1 0type='P' input='G'>	<1.2.6 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.7 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.8 type='S' input='G'>	<1.2.9 type='S' input='G'>

SECTION 2. PRIORITY AXES

2.1 Priority axis 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

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

2.1.1.1. Specific objective

Improved and extended research and innovation capacities

The region is provided with a considerable number of highly recognized research institutions and advanced infrastructure in innovative branches with high value added such as: biotechnology, material engineering, nanotechnology, ICT and automotive industries and others.

The ranking of the *Innovation Score Board* identifies the programme region partly as an innovation leader (eastern part of Austria), as an innovation follower (eastern part of the Czech regions and western part of Austria's region) and the western part of the CZ region as a moderate innovator.

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

The envisaged results of these investments are:

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

The chosen indicator "research quota" one of the Europa 2020 main target indicators represents the level of R&I activities. The planned interventions will contribute to an increase of the R&I expenditure so an effect to the research quota is expected.

2.1.1.2. Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.1.1.3. Result Indicator

Table 3 : Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 1	Research quota - share of R&I on the GDP	%	2,7	2011	3,0	Eurostat,	Every 3 years

Information for BPG members - change of R&I quota 2009 2,58% to 2011 2,71%)

2.1.1.4 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

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

- a) Preparatory studies and planning activities for investments in R&I infrastructure which will be jointly used/shared by cooperating R&I institutions from both sides of the border
- b) Investments in new jointly used/shared R&I facilities or extension and modernisation of technology facilities, research capacities, laboratories which are of regional/cross border interest
- c) Supporting concrete joint cross-border R&I activities (projects) using existing R&I capacities on one and/or the other side of the border with the aim to realize economies of scale and by joint use to increase utilisation of existing capacities, instead of purchasing similar capacities on both sides of the border and fostering the preparation of the implementation of results.

Main target groups

- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences and studies
- enterprises
- non-profit sector
- public sector

Types of beneficiaries

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

2.1.1.5 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

- interventions reflect socio-economic situation of the region (needs and/or potentials) and have a noticeable positive effect on socio-economic development

- the project contributes to a better cohesion and integration of the joint region and / or contribute to the strengthening of a common identity

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

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

2.1.1.6 Output indicators

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

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

2.1.2. Investment Priority: Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation,

networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

2.1.2.1 Specific objective

Fostering the involvement of enterprises (primarily SMEs) in the innovation system

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

The envisaged results are:

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

This investment priority is focused on the involvement of enterprises (primarily SMEs). The success of these interventions will be measured by the indicator “R&I expenditures in the business sector”. The data will be taken from Eurostat.

Table 3 : Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI 2	R&I expenditure in the business sector in % of GDP	%	1,8 %	2011	2,2%	EUROSTAT,	Every 3 years

Information for BPG members - R&I expenditure in % of GDP 2009 1,64 % to 2011 1,77%)

2.1.2.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

Based on the existing national and regional innovation strategies it is very important to concentrate on the unutilized cross border potential in the business sector as well as on the cooperation of public and private research institutions (incl. universities) with the business sector. SMEs as a key segment

for the local and regional economies in cross border area as well as large enterprises acting as “innovation regional leaders” have potential to boost the innovativeness and to form innovative networks and chains. The planned interventions will support this approach in the following way:

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

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

- a) Joint research projects, technology transfer and know-how transfer between research/technology institutions and businesses (incl. necessary R&I equipment)
- b) Systemic measures to facilitate enterprises (primarily SMEs) in joining the innovation system and using results of regional R&I system (incl. specific services in R&I sector - intermediation of information, contacts, consultancy and other assistance to enterprises (primarily SMEs) aiming at their increased innovativeness)
- c) Promoting networking and cooperation activities among research institutions, education/research institutions, universities and businesses.
- d) Support will be provided to networking and cooperative actions that enable enterprises (primarily SMEs) to use results of R&I, increase their innovativeness and support them in entering the innovation system.

Main target groups

- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- enterprises esp. SMEs
- non-profit sector
- public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- enterprises
- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- non-profit actors
- chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.1.2.3. Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

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

Table 4 : Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP3	Number of services to support enterprises innovativeness introduced or improved	services	8	monitoring	Every 2 years
OP4	Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	enterprises	6	monitoring	Every 2 years

2.1.2.4. Performance framework

Table 5 : Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
1	output indicator	OP2	Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	research institutions	2	15	monitoring	
1	output indicator	OP3	Number of services to support enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	enterprises	1	8	monitoring	
1	financial indicator		eligible expenditures certified	in %/EUR EFRE	20%/ 2,5 Mio.	100%/ 12,48 Mio	monitoring	

2.1.2.5. Categories of intervention

Tables: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Strengthening research, technological development and	058 Research and innovation infrastructures (public)	3.120.575,25

innovation	059 Research and innovation infrastructures (private, including science parks)	624.115,05
	060 Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	4.368.805,35
	061 Research and innovation activities in private research centres including networking	1.248.230,10
	062 Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefitting SMEs	1.872.345,15
	063 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefitting SMEs	1.248.230,10

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	01 Non-repayable grant	12.482.301,00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	8.737.610,70
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	3.120.575,25
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	624.115,05

2.2. Priority Axis Environment and Resources

2.2.1. Investment priority: Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage

2.2.1.1. Specific objectives

Valorisation of the cultural and natural heritage of the common region in a sustainable way

The rich cultural and natural heritage of the region described in the analysis should, in a coordinated way, be protected, made better accessible and be cautiously further developed and promoted in order to maintain this rich diversity for future generations and to valorise their potentials for a diversification of local economies and a sustainable development of the region. This approach follows the orientation of EU tourism strategy and policy: The quality of tourist destinations is strongly influenced by their natural and cultural environment and their integration into the local community. Long term sustainability requires a balance between sustainability in economic, socio-cultural and environmental terms.

Some of these local and regional attractions are not properly preserved and developed. There are many cases where insufficient infrastructure and/or accessibility limit the effective utilization of these natural and cultural resources. Cooperation and common approaches in the process of recovery, protection, promotion of natural and cultural heritage and making it accessible both for citizens and guests of the region provide great potential for valorising of these assets and implementing positive synergies. A common approach to cultural and natural heritage is the way to common history, to the culture of the society on both sides of the border and to the development of a common identity and ecological stability. Removal of this kind of barriers will help to develop the border area in a sustainable way.

The envisaged result is the sustainable valorisation of the rich natural and cultural heritage potential of the region. This should be manifested in:

- coordinated / common strategic approaches to protection, development and promotion of cultural and natural heritage,
- better developed and preserved sites and attractions of common interest in the region
- advanced touristic infrastructure and better accessibility of the cultural and natural heritage

For measuring the results of the planned intervention the indicator “Change of the number of overnight stays” was chosen. The planned activities have the potential to increase the attractiveness of the region. More attractiveness means more guests and as an important effect more overnight stays. The touristic development is not exclusively dependent on a qualitative touristic supply but also on external effects e.g. the economic cyclical development and/or changes in the consumer habits.

Table 3: Programme specific result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ¹ (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI3	Change of the number of overnight stays in the region	Number - change in %	22, 97 Mio.	2013	+5%	National statistics	Every 3 years

2.2.1.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

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

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

Local and regional touristic development is strongly connected with the development of the existing transport infrastructure. Especially in rural and peripheral region the reconstruction and the development of the transport facilities is a basic asset for starting and increasing the touristic dynamic. On the other hand a high touristic intensity often leads to pressure on the local and regional transport infrastructure especially in regions where the level and the quality are not in accordance with the standards necessary for advanced touristic locations and/or do not have the capacity to absorb the existing traffic (e.g. locations of international interest).

In this sense supported actions within this Investment Priority may target the following areas (types of actions):

- a) Systemic measures of common character (e.g. studies, strategies, plans, systematic promotional activities) in the field of preservation, development and utilization of cultural / natural heritage
- b) Reconstruction, recovery and promotion of cultural / natural sights and monuments
- c) Preservation, development and promotion of the cross-border region's intangible cultural heritage
- d) Support the utilization of the cultural/natural heritage potential by investment in sustainable (public) touristic infrastructure and information facilities
- e) Reconstruction, upgrading and improving transport infrastructure and management of traffic flows in context with touristic locations and with the need to improve accessibility of existing cultural and natural heritage

¹ For ERDF and Cohesion Fund the target values can be qualitative or quantitative.

Main target groups

- resident population
- tourists
- enterprises esp. SMEs
- non-profit sector (esp. involved in protection, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage)
- public sector (esp. involved in protection, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage)

Types of beneficiaries

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

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.2.1.3. Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

- the project has a clear intervention logic and expenditures are effective

- the project outcomes have a sustainable character (where applicable)

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

- Supported heritage needs to be open to the public
- Investments in cultural/natural sights and monuments will be in line with relevant regional, national or commonly agreed strategies/concepts
- Only those studies, strategies, plans and similar cross-border mechanisms and solutions will be supported which are able to demonstrate evidence or realistic assumption on their real/practical application in sustainable development of common area
- Projects increasing accessibility of cultural and natural heritage by reconstructing, upgrading and improving transport infrastructure and management of traffic flows will, as a rule, have to fulfill criteria of **complementarity** and **interrelation** with other relevant activities (investments) - i.e. road construction must complement/interrelate other investments financed by the cross-border programmes or other programmes under the Investments for Growth and Jobs objective in the 2014-2020 period, realised in the field of conserving, protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage.
- Any project of reconstruction, upgrading and improving transport infrastructure and management of traffic flows, submitted for support by the cross-border programme Austria-Czech Republic, will have to prove in advance fulfilment of this condition which will also be a subject of assessment of the project and decision of *Monitoring Committee*.

2.2.1.4 Output indicators

Table 4 : Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 5	Number of cultural/natural heritage elements with improved attractiveness	elements	8	Monitoring	Every 2 year
OP 6	Number of cross-border mechanisms to ensure joint management of common heritage	mechanisms	12	Monitoring	Every 2 year
OP 7	Number of newly built/improved elements of touristic infrastructure	elements	5	Monitoring	Every 2 year
OP 8	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	km	12	Monitoring	Every 2 year

2.2.2. Investment priority: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services including through Natura2000, and green infrastructure

2.2.2.1 Specific objectives

Increase of ecological stability and improvement of ecosystem services

Landscape and natural habitats in the programme area have been and are being adversely affected by humans. Every day several hectares of agricultural and forest land in the region are built up for settlements, infrastructure, energy production, disposal or economic reasons. These tendencies have a negative impact on biodiversity and on the functioning of ecosystems and lead to their destabilization and vulnerability.

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

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

Thus the expected results of the Investment Priority include:

- increasingly coordinated approaches and common solutions to tackle issues of landscape transformation, mitigation of climate change effects and conservation of biodiversity,
- measures of Green Infrastructure realized as an instrument helping to maintain biodiversity in common cross-border region and to assist the ecosystems to function properly,
- to have better managed, protected and gradually upgraded natural habitats and vulnerable landscapes,
- to have enhanced knowledge and awareness of the population and the local communities regarding ecological stability

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

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ² (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 4	Increase in quality of environment and ecosystem services in cross-border region	scale		2014		Survey (relevant actors in the field of environment /landscape protection) organized by the MA in autumn 2014	3 x

2.2.2.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

To protect and restore the variety of species and to secure the ecosystem is essential for obtaining the living conditions and for sustainable socio-economic development of the region. In both countries the biosphere strategies are following the ecosystem approach as the leading principle in ecosystem management. This means an integrated management of land, water and living resources, that promotes their conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

Following the national strategies and goals the interventions under this IP can be summarized under the following bundles:

Coordination, Management, Public awareness

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

Ecosystem services and risk prevention

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

Following types of actions will be promoted:

- a) Investments in Green infrastructure, i.e. natural and landscape elements that are contributing to:
 - The prevention of flooding and/or water retention (such as floodplain restoration, wetlands, re-naturalizing rivers and river banks etc.),
 - The adaptation to climate change or the mitigation of negative effects (incl. measures dealing with droughts),
 - An easier migration of species in the joint region (artificial landscape elements etc.)

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

- b) Coordinated preparation and/or implementation of NATURA 2000 and other concepts for protected areas and other measures supporting the preservation of biodiversity
- c) Preparation and implementation of joint cross border mechanisms – like researches, studies, strategies, plans, coordinated management approaches, awareness raising and education activities and other structural cooperative measures in the field of nature and landscape protection and utilization

Main target groups

- resident population
- tourists
- enterprises esp. SMEs
- non-profit sector
- public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- public authorities (state, municipalities, regions and their organisations)
- non-profit actors involved in protection, management and promotion of environment
- chambers and associations involved in protection, management and promotion of environment

Specific territories targeted

Programme area.

2.2.2.3 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

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

2.2.2.4 Output indicators

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 9	Number of elements of green infrastructure realized	elements	4	Monitoring	Every 2 years
OP 10	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of nature, landscape and biological species management	mechanisms	10	Monitoring	Every 2 years

2.2.3 Investment priority: Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution

2.2.3.1. Specific objectives

Fostering the utilisation of eco-innovative potential of the region

The Europe 2020 Strategy requests Member States and regions with its initiative on "A Resource Efficient Europe" to remove barriers that hold back resource efficiency and so create the right set of incentives.

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

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

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

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

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value ³ (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 5	Level of eco-innovation activities in the region (regional diffusion of eco-innovative activities/technologies)	Scale		2014		Survey (relevant actors in the field of environment /landscape protection) organized by the MA in autumn 2014	3x

2.2.3.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

Eco-innovation is understood as any form of innovation aiming at significant and demonstrable progress towards the goal of sustainable development. This can be achieved either by reducing the environmental impact or achieving a more efficient and responsible use of resources⁴.

Such kind of innovations will be supported in cases where a significant and demonstrable progress towards the goal of sustainable development is realized new to the whole programme area as well as cases when such a progress is new to its part - e.g. introduction of innovative processes which are being successfully realized in one part of programme area and through the supported cooperation action introduced at another part of programme area (as a pilot project, transfer-know how, good practice etc.).

Following types of actions will be supported:

- Realization of cooperation pilot projects for testing and implementing innovative technologies and approaches to improve environmental protection in joint region (e.g. waste management)

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

⁴ (see also: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/faq/index_en.htm)

- Innovative projects realized cross-border that focus on energy efficiency incl. implementation of low-energy solutions (management plans, pilot actions, know-how and good practice transfer etc.).
- Research, studies, strategies, plans and other mechanisms realized cross-border to promote innovative technologies and approaches in the field of environment protection and resource efficiency

Main target groups

- resident population
- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- enterprises
- non-profit sector
- public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- public and private R&I institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- public authorities (state, municipalities, regions and their organisations)
- non-profit actors involved in protection, management and promotion of environment
- chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.2.3.3 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

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

2.2.3.4 Output indicators

Table 4: Common and programme specific output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 11	Number of eco-innovations introduced in the cross-border area	eco-innovations	3	Monitoring	Every 2 years
OP 12	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of eco-innovations	mechanisms	3	Monitoring	Every 2 years

2.2.3.5 Performance framework

Table 5 : The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or,	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator
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	where appropriate, result indicator)							or, where appropriate
6	Output indicator	OP5	Number of cultural/natural heritage elements with improved attractiveness	Elements	1	8	monitoring	
6	Output indicator	OP8	Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads	Km	3	12	monitoring	
6	Output indicator	OP10	Number of cross-border mechanisms in the field of nature, landscape and biological species management	Mechanisms	2	10	monitoring	
6	financial indicator		eligible expenditures certified	%/EUR ERDF	25%/11.354.887	100% 45.41 9.549	monitoring	

2.2.3.6 Categories of intervention – Input = experts proposal – allocation in % of TOs total budget, prepared for further discussion

Tables: **Categories of intervention**

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	090 Cycle tracks and footpaths	2.725.172,94 €)
	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	3.179.368,43
	092 Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets	2.270.977,45
	093 Development and promotion of public tourism services	2.270.977,45
	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	4.996.150,39
	095 Development and promotion of public cultural and heritage services	2.270.977,45

	034 Other reconstructed or improved road (motorway, national, regional or local)	13.625.864,70
Environment and Resources	085 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure	3.179.368,43
	086 Protection, restoration and sustainable use of Natura 2000 sites	2.270.977,45
	087 Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures	3.633.563,92
Environment and Resources	013 Energy efficiency renovation of public infrastructure, demonstration projects and supporting measures	2.270.977,45
	017 Household waste management, (including minimisation, sorting, recycling measures)	2.725.172,94

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	01 Non-repayable grant	45.419.549,00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Environment and Resources	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	4.541.954,90
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	9.083.909,80
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	31.793.684,30

2.3. Priority axis Human resources development

2.3.1 Investment Priority: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes

2.3.1.1. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Extension of common supply of education and qualification activities in order to utilize human resources potential in cross-border region

In general terms the population and the labour force of the region is well educated and qualified. But at the same time dynamics of the economic development call for an adaption process also in the field of education and qualification. This means a higher coherence of the educational systems with the needs and possibilities of the cross-border labour market and the integration of enterprises (esp. SMEs due to their higher flexibility) in the qualification system.

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

The envisaged results are:

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

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

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 6	Joint education and qualification supply	Number		2012		In AT: e.g. Landesschulräte, NÖ Bildungsgesellschaft... In CZ (?)	Every 3 years

2.3.1.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

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

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

Within the IP and with the aim to reach the specific objective, following types of activities as examples may be realized:

- d) Adaption of educational conditions/systems to the economic and cultural needs of joint region (meeting the needs of labour market etc.)
- e) Actions to support harmonisation of the vocational education system for meeting the needs of joint labour market (e.g. joint schemes to support long-term traineeship of students in companies across the border - "Dual education")
- f) Development and implementation of common systemic measures and jointly realised programmes in the field of education in form of:
 - study plans/curricula,
 - student and staff exchange,
 - preparing basic principles for harmonization and acceptance of qualifications,
 - specialised bilateral trainings schemes
 - language learning

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

Main target groups

- resident population
- educational institutions
- enterprises
- public sector (esp. labour market institutions)

Types of beneficiaries

- educational institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences
- public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- non-profit actors involved in education
- chambers and associations

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.3.1.3 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

Strategic relevance:

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

Educational infrastructure (as a part of supported action) is funded only under condition that:

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

2.3.1.4 Output indicators

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

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 13	Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders <i>(REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)</i>	persons	700	Monitoring	annual
OP 14	Number of cross-border mechanisms to promote joint training and education	mechanisms	6	Monitoring	annual

2.3.1.5. Performance framework

Table5 : Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
	Output indicator		Number of participants in joint education and training schemes to support youth employment, educational opportunities and higher and vocational education across borders	persons	100	700	monitoring	
	Output indicator		Number of cross-border mechanisms to promote joint training and education	mechanisms	1	6	monitoring	
	financial indicator		eligible expenditures certified	in %	17%	100%	monitoring	

2.3.1.6 Categories of intervention

Tables: **Categories of intervention**

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	114 Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training	3.418.778
	117 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	10.256.334

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	01 Non-repayable grant	13.675.112

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Human resources development	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	6.153.800
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	3418778
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	4.102.5334

2.4. Priority axis: Sustainable networks and institutional co-operation

2.4.1 Investment Priority: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions

2.4.1.1 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Fostering cross-border co-operation of communities and institutions in joint region

During the last years very good and fruitful neighbourly relations are arising not only as a result of the existing institutional and professional networks and the existing governance structures but also in the daily contact of citizens and organisations of the civil society.

Cross border cooperation structures enhance the competitiveness and innovative potential of regions. The Austrian-Czech border region has different active institutional networks operating in order to improve its exchange rates at the personal, economic, social, cultural and political level. This represents a common pillar in order to build a cohesive identity by means of cross border cooperation projects.

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

- intensified coordination, harmonization and cross-border integration of services, standards, planning and activities of administrative structures and public service providers on both sides of the border (institutional level) and
- intensified intercultural exchange with the main goal of stable integration and growing together (community level).

Reaching these goals is intended by realization of wide range of cooperation activities between citizens, communities and institutions and making use of participation and civil society activities.

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

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value (2023)	Source of Data	Frequency of reporting
RI 7	Level of cooperation, integration, harmonization and coherence in local/regional governance	Scale				Survey organized by the MA in autumn 2014	3x

2.4.1.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

Within the investment priority and with the aim to reach the specific objective the following types of activities may be realized:

- a) Fostering the cooperation of municipalities, cities and regions and other institutions within public sector

- b) Strengthening of networks (esp. of NGOs) on local/regional level and fostering the potential to extend cooperation with clear cross border approach and targets
- c) Fostering small scale integration, cooperation between citizens and institutions and other local cohesion activities (SPF).

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

Examples of concrete areas/activities within above mentioned types:

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

Main target groups

- resident population (local communities)
- tourists
- enterprises
- non-profit sector
- public sector

Types of beneficiaries

- public authorities (state, regions, municipalities, and their organisations)
- non-profit actors
- chambers and associations
- public and private R&I institutions
- educational institutions
- universities and universities of applied sciences

Specific territories targeted

Programme area

2.4.1.3 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

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

- the project contributes to the specific objective(-s) of relevant Investment Priority
- coherence with relevant strategies/concepts at regional/national level

Partnership:

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

Regional relevance:

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

CBC character of the intervention:

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

Specific quality of the project:

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

Horizontal principles:

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

State aid:

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

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

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

2.4.1.4 Output indicators

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

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OP 15	Partners involved in cross border activities	partners	60	Monitoring	annual
OP 16	Partners involved in realization of small project	partners	438	Monitoring	annual

2.4.1.5 Performance framework

Table 5 : The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
11	Output indicator		Partners involved in cross border activities	partners	8	60	Monitoring	
11	Output indicator		Partners involved in realization of small project	partners	70	438	Monitoring	
11	financial indicator		eligible expenditures certified	EURin %	15%	100	Monitoring	

2.4.1.6 Categories of intervention

Tables : Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional co-operation	119 Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance	20.369.075

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional co-operation	01 Non-repayable grant	20.369.075

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Sustainable networks and institutional co-operation	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	6.110.722,5
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	8.147.630
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	6.110.722,5

2.5. Priority axis: Technical Assistance

2.5.1 Specific objectives and expected results

Ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme

The use of Technical Assistance funds should ensure the functioning of all major bodies which act in programme implementation, i.e. in particular the Managing Authority, the Joint Secretariat, the FLC, Audit and Certifying Authorities, the Regional Bodies and the National Authority.

The key results of the programme are successful projects with visible outputs. The services supported from Technical Assistance are considered as a mean to achieve this result. The programme management bodies should ensure competent services to the beneficiaries throughout all stages of the Project Management Cycle, i.e. from project generation, selection and contracting to control and closure. With a view to the European level the programme management bodies will ensure sound reporting which in the end should contribute to the acknowledgement of the programme achievements by the relevant Commission services. Thus reporting should assist to demonstrate the value-added of ETC-programmes.

A further dimension is the work in information and communication.

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

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

2.5.2 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

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

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

- Adequate staffing of Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat
- Adequate resources primarily for FLCs and also for Regional Bodies and National Authority
- Office and IT cost for these bodies
- Services required by the Audit and Certifying Authorities
- Development and maintenance of the Monitoring System
- Publicity and information measures

- Services related to evaluation, indicator development and programming for the forthcoming period
- Closure of the programme 2007 – 2013

2.5.3. Output indicators

Table 11 : Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data
OP 17	No of projects committed and successfully closed (P)	Number		Monitoring
OP 18	Number of major publicity events (P)	Number	2	Monitoring
OP19	Number of compulsory information events for beneficiaries at project start (P)	Number	12	Monitoring

2.5.5. Categories of intervention

Tables: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority Axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	0121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring, inspection	4.988.561,6
	0121 Evaluation and studies	440.167,2
	0122 Information and communication	440.167,2

Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	01 Non-repayable grant	5.868.896

Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
Technical Assistance	01 Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	1.173.779,20
	02 Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	2.347.558,40
	03 Rural areas (thinly populated)	2.347.558,40

SECTION 3 Financing plan - Input from the MA

3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in EUR)

Table 15:

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<i><3.1.1 type='S' input='G'></i>								
<i>ERDF</i>	4.851.696	7.084.133	10.116.591	18.381.785	18.749.421	19.124.409	19.506.898	97.714.933
<i>IPA amounts (where applicable)</i>								
<i>ENI amounts (where applicable)</i>								
<i>Total</i>	4.851.696	7.084.133	10.116.591	18.381.785	18.749.421	19.124.409	19.506.898	97.714.933

)

3.1.1 Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in EUR)

Table16: **Financing plan**

	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b) <u>(2)</u>	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)
					National Public funding (c)	National private funding <u>(1)</u> (d)		
Priority axis 1	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	12.482.301	2.202.759	734.253	1.468.506	14.685.060	0,85
Priority axis 2	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	45.419.549	8.015.215	2.671.738,33	5.343.476,67	53.434.764	0,85
Priority axis 3	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	13.675.112	2.413.256	804.418,667	1.608.837,33	16.088.368	0,85
Priority axis 4	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)	Total eligible cost	20.369.075	3.594.543	1.198.181	2.396.362	23.963.618	0,85
Priority axis 5 (TA)	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)		5.868.896	1.035.688	345.229,3331.035.688	690.458,6670	6.904.584	0,85
Total	ERDF	Total eligible cost	97.814.933	17.261.461	5.753.820,33?	11.507.640,7?	115.076.394	0,85
Total	Total all Funds	Total eligible cost	97.814.933	17.261.461	5.753.820,33?	11.507.640,7?	115.076.394	0,85

3.1.2. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective - Basis final financial table

Table 17

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
<3.2.B.1 type='S' input='G'>	<3.2.B.2 type='S' input='G'>	<3.2.B.3 type='N' input='M'>	<3.2.B.4 type='N' input='M'>	<3.2.B.5 type='N' input='M'>
TOTAL				

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

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
<3.2.B.8 type='S' input='G'>	<3.2.B.9 type='N' input='G' Decision=N >	<3.2.B.10 type='P' input='G' Decision=N >
Total		

SECTION 4. Integrated approach to territorial development

In the CBC programme no application of specific instruments according to EU regulations such as Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) is fore seen.

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

The Programming area is part of the Danube Region. The Operational Programme pays due attention to the European Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) both in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase.

In programming, the definition of the strategy, the selection and description of the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the operational programme take into consideration in particular the following EUSDR targets, priority areas and “actions” of the EU Strategy and the Action plan 2010 (SEC 2010 1489)⁵ shown in the following table

Danube Strategy			OP AT-CZ
Pillar	Priority Area	Actions	TO and IPs
Building Prosperity in the Danube Region	To develop the Knowledge Society through Research, Education and information technologies	<p>To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure</p> <p>To strengthen universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points</p> <p>To foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in areas of competence in the Danube Region</p> <p>To improve business support to strengthen the capacities of SMEs for cooperation and trade</p> <p>To support enterprises through high performing training and qualification</p>	IP 1a, 1b, 10

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/danube/action_plan_danube.pdf

		<p>schemes</p> <p>To eliminate cross border barriers and bottleneck to people and business</p> <p>To improve framework conditions for SMEs in areas where competitive infrastructure is missing</p>	
	To invest in people and skills	<p>To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies</p> <p>To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments</p>	TO 10
Connecting the Danube region	To promote Culture and Tourism, People to People Contacts	<p>To build on cultural diversity as strength of the Danube Region</p> <p>To enhance cooperation and contacts between people of different origins, to encourage creativity, and provide a driving force for cultural innovation and economic development, based on heritage, traditions and tourism.</p> <p>To establish the Danube Region as important European tourist destination”</p> <p>To further enhance interconnection and cooperation in education and scientific and research activities for tourism”</p> <p>To improve planning and infrastructure for tourism”.</p> <p>To support the improvement of the quality of tourism products</p> <p>To promote sustainable tourism</p>	6 c
Protecting Environment in the Danube region	To restore and maintain the quality of water	<p>To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure</p> <p>To foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address</p>	6 d

		agricultural pollution”.	
	To manage environmental risks	<p>To develop and adopt one single overarching floods management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin</p> <p>To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including “green infrastructure: Example of project: To support the Morava-Thaya Basin initiatives</p> <p>“To strengthen operational cooperation among the emergency response authorities in the Danube countries and to improve the interoperability of the available assets</p> <p>Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research</p> <p>To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods</p>	6 d
	To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soil	<p>To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity</p> <p>To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively</p> <p>To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species</p> <p>To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats”</p> <p>To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)</p> <p>To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development</p> <p>To educate children and young people</p> <p>To build capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters</p>	6 d

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

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

Section 5: Implementing provisions for the cooperation programme

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 21: Programme authorities

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

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

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

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body and department or unit	Head of the authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Center for Regional Development of the Czech Republic CZ-120 00 Praha 2	Mag. Markéta Reedová, MPA Director general
	Office of Government of Lower Austria Group of Spatial Planning, Environment and Transport (RU) A-3109 St. Pölten	Head of respective Control Group
	Office of Government of Upper Austria Department for Economics A-4021 Linz	Head of respective Control Group
	Office of Government of Vienna Department European Affairs A-1080 Vienna	Head of respective Control Group
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, Department Audit Authority CZ - 118 10 Praha 1	PhDr. Evžen Mrázek, Head of department
	Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria A-1014 Wien	Mag. Susanna Rafalzik

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

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

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

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

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

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

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

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

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

In the Czech Republic the Member State is represented by the Ministry for Regional Development ("National Authority for the Czech Republic"), Prague.

Certain member state tasks of the programme implementation are delegated to the following Krajs in the Czech Republic ("Regional Bodies"):

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

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

Implementation structure

Managing Authority:

The tasks and responsibilities are outlined under the Article 125 of Regulation 1303/2013 (further on CPR for Common Provision Regulation) and Article 23 of Regulation 1299/2013 (further on ETC Regulation).

The representatives of the two Member States, Czech Republic and Austria, fulfil coordination tasks within their respective responsibilities and support the programme bodies in implementing the programme.

Joint Secretariat (JS)

The Secretariat performs the following tasks:

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

Certifying Authority

The tasks and responsibilities are outlined under Article 126 of CPR and Article 24 of the ETC Regulation.

In this period the Office of Government of Lower Austria takes over this task from the Austrian Federal Chancellery.

Audit Authority

The tasks of the Audit Authority are defined in Article 127 of CPR and Article 25 (2) of the ETC Regulation.

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

The Audit Authority shall cooperate with the group of auditors (GoA) composed of a representative from each Member State participating in the programme. The Czech Member State will be represented by the Ministry of Finance.

Control bodies:

- satisfy themselves that responsibility for verifications pursuant to Article 125(4) point a) of CPR are clearly assigned to both participating Member States together with delegated authorities (controllers) verify that the co-financed products and services have been delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries has been paid and that it complies with applicable law, the operational programme, eventual eligibility rules established at programme level in accordance with CPR, Article 125.(5) and the conditions for support of the operation;
- satisfy themselves - in accordance with Article 23 of the ETC Regulation – that expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been verified by the designated controller. Verification mentioned in previous point include the following procedures: i) administrative verification of each application for reimbursements submitted by beneficiaries and ii) on-the-spot verifications of operations the latter may be carried out on a sample basis which is proportionate to the amount of public support granted to an operation and the risk level identified by the audit authority (CPR, Art. 125(5b) 125(6))
- ensure that beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations are reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred; the beneficiaries have to maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation;
- put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified;
- set up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of point (g) of Article 72 of CPR;
- draw up the management declaration and annual summary;

Monitoring Committee (MC)

According to the Article 47 of the Regulation (EU) Nr. 1303/2013 the Member States establish in accordance with the Managing Authority within 3 months after the approval of the Operational Programme by the European Commission a bilateral Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee is the highest decision-making body and bears overall responsibility for programme guidance and implementation.

The main tasks of the Monitoring Committee are outlined in the above mentioned Regulation.

Project cycle

Project application

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

Project assessment and selection

Since officially no intermediate bodies are foreseen, the whole project assessment phase runs under the overall responsibility of the JS. The JS organises the process of project assessment (exact details and responsibilities will be described in a description of the management and control system as well as in internal manuals)..

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

Contracting

After the MC approval and meeting all programme conditions the Managing Authority issues the ERDF contract. A template of the contract is available on the programme website.

ERDF payments

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

Monitoring

As stipulated in Articles 74 and 112 63 and 102 of the CPR, data exchange between the programme and the European Commission will be carried out electronically (by means of the CSFSFC 2014 system). On the side of the programme, the monitoring system (according to Article 72 of the CPR) shall provide data and information needed to fulfil the management, monitoring and evaluation requirements.

In accordance with Article 122(3) of the 112 CPR, the programme will ensure that if possible already with programme start but no later than 31 December 2015, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority as well as the Control bodies can be carried out by means of an electronic data exchange system.

The monitoring system – among others - will provide for the fulfillment of the below key functions:

- recording of work plan based on the Joint Annual Work Plan as approved by the Monitoring Committee;
- online calls for projects
- online submission of expenditures to the first level controller and online validation of expenditure;
- online progress and financial reporting;
- online progress and financial monitoring;

- online certification and payments;
- reporting and administration of irregularities and implementation of recoveries;
- online provision of information for audit purposes;
- online exchange of data with the European Commission.

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

- Data integrity and confidentiality;
- Authentication of the sender within the meaning of Directive 1999/93/EC4;
- Storage in compliance with retention rules defined in accordance with Article 132140 of the CPR
- Secure transfer of data;
- Availability during and outside standard office hours (almost 24/7, except for technical maintenance activities);
- Accessibility by the Member States and the beneficiaries either directly or via an interface for automatic synchronisation and recording of data with national, regional and local computer management systems;
- Protection of privacy of personal data for individuals and commercial confidentiality for legal entities with respect to the information processed (according to Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Directive 1995/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data).

In order to transfer data to the European Commission, the administration system of the e-MS shall facilitate interoperability with the Union frameworks as required by Article 112 (3) of the REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 (CPR)

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

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

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

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

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

If the lead partner does not succeed in securing repayment from a project partner or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead partner, the Member State on whose territory the project partner concerned is located shall reimburse the managing authority the amount unduly paid to that project partner according to Article 27(3) of the ETC Regulation. The managing authority is responsible for reimbursing the amounts recovered to the general budget of the Union, in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down below. The MA will reimburse the funds to the Union once the amounts are recovered from the LP/PP/MS.

For an irregularity or financial correction on programme level that cannot be linked to a specific Member State, the liability shall be jointly borne by the Member States. Details are regulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

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

5.5 Use of the Euro (where applicable)

Expenditure incurred in currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly exchange rate of the European Commission in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification to the managing authority or the controller in accordance with article 23 of this regulation.

5.6. Involvement of partners - This chapter will be finished at the end of the discussion process by the experts

Developing programmes according to the “partnership principle” is a distinct requirement by EU legislation. According to Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) the preparation of the cooperation programme should involve a partnership with competent national, regional and local authorities. The partnership shall also include the following partners: competent public authorities; economic and social partners; and relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non discrimination.

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

The programme introduced a number of platforms for effective communication with relevant partners and stakeholders throughout the programming process. The programming group for preparation of the programme for 2014-2020 was established in 2012 and held 15 meetings. Members of the Programming Group are:

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

The Monitoring Committee has been informed periodically about the status of the programming process. Beside the programming group an intensive discussion process was organised in the Krajs/Länder. Regional stakeholders, representatives of regional and civil associations, representatives of the science sector, social and cultural institutions, regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners and non-governmental organisations were participating several thematic workshops. These workshops offered the opportunity to discuss the programme strategy and priorities.

In July 2013 an internal consultation process was started. The document has been discussed within the regional administrative system, several departments (eg. Environment, transport, education and science...) took the possibility to react on the draft version of the OP. Their proposals have been intertrated in the OP. In autumn (Oct./Nov. 2013) a public consultation was organised based on an online questionnaire. This questionnaire was published on the programme website and was open forweeks,persons participated. (results see Annex). *(to be described more)*

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

Section 6: Coordination

In *Austria* the overall coordination of EU structural funds falls within the competence of the Federal Chancellery which represents the fund corresponding resort for the ERDF. As the coordination function derives from regional policy as well as spatial planning, the execution takes place from the outset in close cooperation with the Länder. The institutional framework for the national coordination of cohesion policy takes place in the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK), which is also responsible for the elaboration of the Austrian Partnership Agreement “STRAT.AT 2020”. This coordination efforts aim at ensuring the complementarity of ESI funds specific activities and avoiding overlaps.

The coordination platforms organised by the ÖROK for the ERDF are the Working Group “Managing Authorities” for the objective Regional competitiveness and Employment & Convergence phasing out Burgenland, the Working Group “Cross-Border-Cooperation” (AG CBC) for the objective European territorial bilateral cooperation and the National Committee for transnational and network programmes. The working group CBC assures important linkages to other committees, enhances synergies and increases the visibility of ETC CBC in other committees for structural funds. Through better information on existing concerns and possibilities of other ETC stakeholders it enables more rapid and better harmonized decisions. These three working groups are installed at the ÖROK Subcommittee on Regional Economy, which represents the central coordination committee for regional policy questions in Austria as well as their implementation.

The working group CBC consist of representatives of the Länder (“regional bodies”), managing authorities of the CBC programmes, representatives of the federal chancellery and the federal ministries which are relevant for the implementation of bilateral ETC programmes (Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, Ministry of Science and Research, Ministry of Education the Arts and Culture, Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology) as well as economic and social partners and a representative of the National Contact Point for transnational and network programmes. Thus, Ministries responsible for the national ESF and EAFRD programmes as well as some Priority Area Coordinators for the EUSDR are in direct exchange with the programme partners. As the working group is installed in the framework of the ÖROK, a close coordination with the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal (IGJ) is ensured as well.

The main focal points of the working group CBC are

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

In the framework of the strategic monitoring process of the Partnership Agreement “STRAT.AT 2020” all ESI funds and objectives will be considered be it in common events, seminars, studies, evaluations, etc. The strategic monitoring process will built upon the good experiences gained from the coordination mechanism of the implementation of the NSRF in the current structural funds

period. As regards contents, the process pursues the objective of promoting the exchange of experiences and reflection, as well as to generate practical impulses. This establishes a framework in Austria, which in addition to administrative and ESI funding-related issues, supports a content-based or dialogue-driven discussion for information, reflection and learning processes for all Austrian regional policy actors in charge. This coordination mechanism strengthens the strategic discussions, the interaction, the exchange of experience and use of synergies among ESI funds.

Besides the coordination between ESI funds, the integration of EU co-financed bilateral measures in various policy fields on national and regional level is of importance. In this respect, the ÖROK takes over an “informative” role as both levels are integrated. However, the embedding of ESI co-financed measures in the (regional) development policy is subject of the Länder.

Furthermore, coordination with other union instruments relevant for policy areas concerned by the ERDF is important. In the programme area particularly HORZION 2020 and LIFE are relevant for the selected objectives of the programme.

In Austria HORZION 2020 will be accompanied in its implementation by the Ministry of Science and Research. The regional contact points (for the current 7th Framework Programme) are responsible for the coordination of RTDI policy and regional development strategies as well as for the embedding of the European research and development funding measures at the regional level. As a result of the preparation of the partnership agreement, the corresponding ministry intends to install a platform for responsible ESI funds actors and stakeholders of the RTDI policy in Austria.

The LIFE programme will be accompanied by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, Environment and Water Management. In this programme the thematic objectives 6 (environment and resource efficiency) is addressed so an adequate attention will be paid to the connection with LIFE.

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

The primary objective during the preparation of the programmes was to identify links between the different programmes, define potential synergies and mutual complementarity of intervention and agree on the manner in which these links will be monitored during the implementation of the programmes. The entire process was coordinated with the preparation of the Partnership Agreement. Key platforms in this phase, which also involved the National Authority of the ETC-programme Austria -Czech Republic, were particularly the working party set up to prepare the Partnership Agreement as well as the working groups developing the several programmes. The question of links between the programmes and coordination mechanisms has been resolved, particularly in the working group developing the programmes, where the management authorities of all future ESI fund operational programs as well as the representatives of the National authority for the ETC-programme Austria - Czech Republic were included.

In relation to this, based on the results of discussions with the management authorities concerned, overviews were drawn up of potential synergy and complementarity between the various different activities in the cross-border cooperation programmes and the programmes of Objective 1. From an institutional viewpoint, coordination during the implementation of the programmes will be assured on the national level particularly through the National Coordination Authority as part of the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic. This umbrella body for all operational programmes in the Czech Republic proposes measures to assure synergy across the programmes, and also assures complementarity and synergy between interventions specified by the Partnership Agreement and between other strategic documents, specifies suitable tools for managing complementarity and synergy, and is also in charge of other activities. The National Coordination Authority manages also

the activities of the working parties and platforms where the coordination and implementation of the programmes is discussed and information is shared between the management authorities.

In terms of thematic focus, in relation to the Czech Investment for Growth and Employment programmes there are links concerning the following themes:

Thematic objective 1

Regarding the infrastructure for R&D there is a significant complementarity between support for the construction, upgrading and supplementing of strategically important R&D infrastructure in the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education (OP RDE), including the planned use of this infrastructure in the form of open access. Sharing between a greater number of partners and support for the shared cross-border use of R&D infrastructure in cross-border cooperation programmes should optimise the use of research and innovation capacities in the border region. There is also potential for complementarity in support for the establishment of strategic partnerships in workplaces abroad, participation in programmes involving cooperation in international research and the establishment of long-term partnerships in the public and private sectors as part of the implementation of RIS3 in OP RDE and support for cross-border research cooperation in basic research from cross-border cooperation programmes.

As regards the open access use of research infrastructure and research cooperation with leading workplaces abroad funded from OP RDE, synergy may be expected with regionally targeted support for the shared use of know-how and infrastructure capacities in border regions.

In terms of research, development and innovation the ETC-programme Austria – Czech Republic is also linked to the Operational Programme “Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness (OP EIC)”. Support for the establishment and development of corporate research and development centres in OP EIC is complementary to support for cooperation in research and innovation between SMEs and research and innovation institutions as part of the ETC-programme Austria – Czech Republic, as it will increase the capacities available to enterprises for cross-border cooperation. Services designed to support innovative infrastructure and the cooperation network will make SMEs better qualified for participation in cross-border research projects; complementary support for the further development of clusters and innovation networks across borders from OP EIC may result in the development of specific services with a view to the needs and the interconnection of a cross-border innovation system in the border region and could help to promote the direct involvement of entities across the border in their activities. Support for applied research and the introduction of innovations from OP EIC has a synergistic effect in combination with support for cross-border research and innovation cooperation between SMEs and research institutions from cross-border cooperation programmes. Support from OP EIC will also enable multilateral international cooperation in research.

Thematic objective 6

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

As regards rural areas, it will also be possible to exploit complementarity with the “Rural Development Programme of the Czech Republic (RDP) for the period 2014-2020”. In the Czech Republic the RDP will support non-productive investments in forests – including measures to enhance the recreational potential of forest land (including signage, the construction and reconstruction of trails for hikers, the construction of play and educational features, the creation of rest areas, shelters, information boards, etc.). Creating suitable links between RDP activities and investments supported in the programme territory under the Austria-Czech Republic ETC-programme will on the one hand achieve a greater effect due to the broadening of their impact (e.g. trails in forests could help to support activities and this considerably boost tourist figures), while on the other hand these investments supported under the RDP may be featured in promotional materials or concepts implemented with funds from the Austria - Czech Republic ETC-programme. Such complementarity has the potential for mutual synergy between both tools.

Thematic objective 10

The planned intervention in relation to cross-border education (TO 10) also has a direct link to IROP, which is expected to support the development of education capacity at all levels (with the exception of tertiary education). Infrastructure and facilities acquired in this manner can serve well for related educational activities with a border dimension. Improved educational infrastructure, whether improved internal connectivity, acquired advanced technologies and equipment and modifications of facilities for standard teaching or to cater to pupils with special educational needs, may be used for the effective implementation of joint programmes and education-related activities. There is also a reverse link between programmes, whereby studies, analyses and strategies created for educational purposes in the shared border region from the OP -Austria – Czech Republic may provide an information base or may become one starting point for the further development of the requisite educational capacities in the region in question acquired subsequently with support from IROP.

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

Thematic objective 11

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

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

Synergy can also be expected between support for research and development in basic technology and innovation, which form the basis for competitiveness in a number of existing and newly emerging branches of industry (ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology, etc.) in the priority “Leading Position in Industry”, if the results of supported R&D are used in cross-border projects supported under the Austria - Czech Republic programme, either as part of support for basic research (IP 1a) or applied research (IP 1b). There is similar potential for synergy in the “Social Challenges” priority.

With the **LIFE+** programme, which is aimed at speeding up changes in the preparation and implementation of EU environmental protection policies, only marginal synergy can be expected to result through the transfer and implementation of proven solutions and good practice.

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

TO 6 has suitable complementary events with the National Tourism Development Programme implemented in the Czech Republic. This is, by nature, a complementary tool, both in terms of its focus and the size of the events involved. The programme focuses primarily on improving supplementary infrastructure designed to increase the appeal of tourism and not only provides minor amenities for tourists (rest areas, hygiene facilities, etc.), but also explores the issue of the accessibility of tourist attractions for tourists with special needs (disabled people). While this supplementary infrastructure is the main focus of the national programme, under the Austria – Czech Republic programme they are somewhat more secondary in nature, and so complementary activities can be implemented as part of both programmes (e.g. features for disabled people in tourist spots or at tourist attractions revitalised using funds from the ETC programme). Likewise, there is also a potential link between mechanisms of a non-investment nature supported from the ETC programme and investments under the national programme in the Czech Republic (e.g. the implementation of features to improve access for disabled people on the basis of joint studies /strategies supported in the context of Austrian-Czech cooperation).

Why focus on disabled people ? remark CK

SECTION 7. Reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries

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

Drawing conclusions from experiences made in previous programming period **sound manuals, handbooks, an up-dated programme-website** as well as ample guidance are critical for successful application and implementation as well as closure of projects. Efforts will be intensified in order to widen the information-base at all phases of the project-life-cycle and hence, avoid misunderstanding right from the start.

Apart from proper guidance and support structures the making use of the new **simplified cost options** available for the 2014-2020 period (cf. Article 18(1) of the ETC Regulation) is foreseen.

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

Furthermore – where possible – the “**Harmonised Implementation Tools**” (**HIT**) (e.g. Application Form, Reports etc.) will be applied.

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

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

SECTION 8. Horizontal Principles

8.1. Sustainable development

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

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

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

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

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

8.2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

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

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

The European Commission leaves the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the programming and implementation up to the Member States. As quoted

above, the requirements of the CPR demand that Member States ensure that non-discrimination is taken into account in the preparation and implementation of programmes. In concrete terms, this means wearing non-discrimination 'spectacles' in the drafting of programmes and in their implementation.

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

8.3. Equality between men and women

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

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

SECTION 9. Separate elements

9.2. Performance framework of the cooperation programme - will be generated automatically

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

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

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

LIST of involved partners

This list will complement the description of partnership arrangements and the involvement of partners outlined in section 5.6.

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

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

- Draft report of the ex-ante evaluation, with an executive summary (mandatory)
- Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme (mandatory)
- A citizens' summary of the cooperation programme (as appropriate)
- SWOT Analyses
- Bibliography for the analyses
- Questionnaire for public consultation
- Indicators - methodological remarks Pre-Agreement